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# Sacrilege in Dinéah: Native Encounters with Glen Canyon Dam

Sonia Dickey

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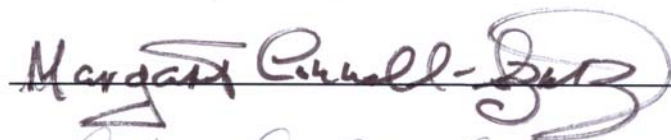
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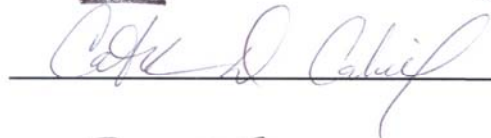
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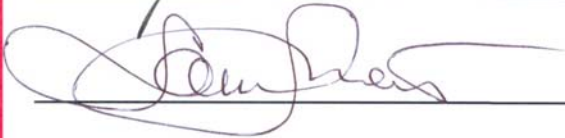
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**SACRILEGE IN DINÉTAH:  
NATIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH GLEN CANYON DAM**

**BY**

**SONIA L. DICKEY**

B.A., History, Georgia Southern University, 1998  
M.A., History, Georgia Southern University, 2001

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
History**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May 2011

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation spotlights indigenous encounters with Glen Canyon Dam and places Native peoples, especially the Diné, at the center of the dam story. In doing so, it exposes the façade masquerading a less pleasant and creditable reality surrounding the dam than historians have conventionally offered. Considering traditional knowledge; relationships to homeland; pivotal moments in Navajo history, such as the Long Walk and the Bosque Redondo and the stock reduction of the 1930s and 1940s; as well as mid-century Navajo Tribal Council concerns, this study uncovers a multifaceted story of water and energy development in the Southwest. In this version, the Navajo Tribal Council becomes a major player. Through its efforts to secure irrigation projects, beneficial land deals, valuable waterfront property, and advantageous mineral leases, the council actively participated in the environmental degradation of *Dinétaah* (the original Navajo homeland). Its deeds reflected the exploits of the federal bureaucracies and politicians attempting to orchestrate the entire scheme. The actions of Native leaders and their push for much needed revenue on the Navajo Reservation during the postwar era

resulted in a form of internal colonialism through resource development that mirrored the efforts of external interests to turn habitat into money, all at the expense of the tribal council's constituents. The People, those Diné who resisted both internal and external forces urging them to abandon their ancestral ties to a particular place, whether McCracken Mesa in San Juan County, Utah, Manson Mesa near Page, Arizona, Rainbow Bridge in San Juan County, Utah, or Black Mesa, Arizona, possessed a profound connection to their motherland, an unbreakable bond that embraced both the physical and metaphysical worlds around them. Equipped with generations of lore, both practical and mythic, the People related lifeways and experiential methods appropriate to their respective homeland. "Sacrilige in Dinétah: Native Encounters with Glen Canyon Dam" aims to highlight the People's struggle for self-determination, tribal sovereignty, and religious freedom while they combated a representative government run amuck. Themes of relocation and resistance emerge, both exemplifying the People's profound connection to the desert world enveloping them.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: “On the Wall of the Garden, A Legend Did Say”: Native Narratives about Glen Canyon.....	15
Chapter 2: “Rock the Boat, Skin the Goat”: Navajos’ Struggle to Maintain Land-use Rights in Southeastern Utah.....	46
Chapter 3: “Cool Clear Water, Where You Can’t Never Tell”: Navajos and the Origins of Glen Canyon Dam.....	82
Chapter 4: “I Can’t Help You with Your Troubles, If You Won’t Help with Mine”: The Great Debate over Navajo Rainbow National Park.....	118
Chapter 5: “Paradise Waits on the Crest of a Wave”: The Navajo Nation and Industrial Tourism.....	162
Chapter 6: “Don’t You Let that Deal Go Down”: Navajo Water Rights and the Black Mesa Struggle.....	199
Conclusion.....	230
Bibliography.....	236

## Introduction



During the fall of 1969, seventy-five-year-old Norman Rockwell traveled from his studio in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to the contorted canyonlands of southeastern Utah. That year, Rockwell participated in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's nascent Visiting Artist Program, a publicity campaign that recruited prominent American artists to create imaginative renditions reflecting their impressions of the agency's largest and, in some cases, most controversial projects. Best known for his idyllic illustrations of small-town America that frequently graced the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Rockwell landed the gig at Glen Canyon Dam.

John DeWitt, the bureau's public relations specialist, and Glen Canyon Dam public relations director W. L. "Bud" Rusho escorted Rockwell and his wife Molly Punderson on a tour of the region. Despite the ghastly weather, they explored the newly completed Carl Hayden Visitor Center overlooking Lake Powell and boated to Rainbow Bridge National Monument, fifteen miles upstream from Glen Canyon Dam. When they finally arrived at the downstream visitor viewpoint framing the concrete cork and Glen

Canyon Bridge, Rockwell appeared bewildered. Speechless. The illustrator remained silent, walked out to the rim of the canyon, contemplated the scene, and eventually turned and asked, “You want me to paint that?” “It’s nothing but a mechanical drawing.” “Where’s the human interest?” “Well, there’s some Navajos living around here,” Rusho proffered. The idea of adding locals piqued Rockwell’s interest. “Do you think you could find such a family,” he inquired. Rusho admitted he did not know any Navajos but assured Rockwell he would find a family quickly. Rusho, DeWitt, and the Rockwells then piled into the government-owned vehicle and headed south toward the Navajo Nation.<sup>1</sup>

Traveling barely a mile, they stopped at the first hogan they saw. Just an “ordinary hogan,” Rusho recalled years later. The public relations guru guided the car down a “rough, dirt road,” parked, and waited a few minutes before he approached the house. Dismal and rainy, the day seemed less than perfect for such an important marketing venture. A middle-aged Navajo man came to the door. “I don’t speak English,” the man insisted, “don’t speak English.” “[That’s] too bad,” Rusho replied. “[Because] I’ve got an artist out in the car [who] would like to sketch you doing something.” The man appeared weary of government officials as he swore again, “I don’t speak English.” “[But] it’s Norman Rockwell,” Rusho responded. “*Norman Rockwell*,” the Navajo man exclaimed, “I’ll be right out!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1, W. L. “Bud” Rusho, interview by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation senior historian Brit Allen Story, 27 June 1995, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 123, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup> Rusho interview, 116.

A few minutes later, John Lane, his wife, and their daughter and son met Rusho, DeWitt, Rockwell, and Molly at the family's corral to fetch their horse. Rusho had explained earlier that, "they needed a young family, perhaps a horse, and maybe a dog." Rockwell staged the entire scene at the stable. He sat the Navajo woman atop the mount and placed the boy beside his father, while Molly took 35mm slides of "everything we were doing."<sup>3</sup> Although overshadowed by her husband's fame, Molly possessed her own artistic talents. She typically photographed the settings Rockwell painted. He would then rely on Molly's images to produce his iconic illustrations. Before Rusho, DeWitt, and the Rockwells left the Lane homestead, Rockwell paid John several dollars for his help. Interestingly, the Lane family never posed in front of Glen Canyon Dam. Rockwell viewed their livestock stable and a distant sand hill as the ideal venue for capturing the "human interest" connected to the dam.

Rockwell's final rendition portrays the Lane family standing on the rim of Glen Canyon, overlooking the dam at presumably the same visitor viewpoint where Rockwell had informed DeWitt and Rusho that he painted people, not objects. From here, Glen Canyon Dam looms in the background, almost as if the illustrator saw the structure as an afterthought. Instead, the Lane family seizes the viewer's attention. The Diné woman, dressed in traditional clothing, sits atop the horse, just as she had posed at the family's corral, facing the "mechanical drawing." The Navajo boy, beside his father, slumps his shoulders and clinches his fists. Wearing dungarees, a red shirt, and a cowboy hat, with his hair pulled back and wrapped in white yarn, John Lane cocks his left hip and looks at the dam. His hands open; his back turned. Rockwell does not reveal their faces, but the

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1, Rusho interview, 123.

subjects' body language denotes sadness. Anger. The artist also illustrated an eagle and a hawk flying overhead, perhaps symbols of the federal bureaucracy responsible for the massive water-control project. Finally, Rockwell employed "a tried and true strategy to make his paintings work" by superimposing a sad dog gazing into the canyon.<sup>4</sup>

Rockwell's impression of Glen Canyon Dam appeared at odds with Reclamation's PR mission. Instead of upholding the dam as one of the bureau's best engineering feats, the artist seemed to view it as a technological wonder built on Native land but largely intended to benefit non-Native people. Although Reclamation meant for Rockwell to paint the dam in a positive light, his final rendition presented a dispossessed people, a population stripped of their land, their water, their way of life. *Glen Canyon Dam* (1969) reflected the artist's growing concern for social justice. During the 1960s, Rockwell consciously abandoned "this communal, sort of New England world that he had . . . mythologized for the better part of 40 years" and began to illustrate scenes from the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>5</sup> During this time period, Rockwell produced some of his most compelling images, including *The Problem We All Live With* (1964); *Murder in Mississippi* (1965); *New Kids in the Neighborhood* (1967); *Glen Canyon Dam* (1969); and *Christmas in Bethlehem* (1970). All these canvases critiqued social injustices occurring around the globe. Whether Rockwell realized the sordid history behind Glen Canyon Dam or its impact on the region's Indian peoples remains unclear, but the artist certainly dwarfed the dam in his final presentation, while he magnified a Native presence

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>5</sup> John Coffey, quoted in *Norman Rockwell and Civil Rights*, Leoneda Inge, 17 December 2010, radio broadcast, WUNC 91.5, North Carolina Public Radio, [http://wunc.org/programs/news/archive/Nli121710\\_Norman\\_Rockwell.mp3/view](http://wunc.org/programs/news/archive/Nli121710_Norman_Rockwell.mp3/view).

in the area. Given his personal and professional transformation during this era, Rockwell's positioning of the Lane family seems rather explicit.

Few places in the West equal the symbolic power of Glen Canyon Dam. From its inception, writers, photographers, singer-songwriters, river runners, and political and environmental activists, including Wallace E. Stegner, Edward Abbey, Katie Lee, Martin Litton, and Eliot F. Porter, have lamented its construction, which destroyed one of the most famous and beautiful canyons of the entire Colorado River system. In 1956, hoping to regulate the erratic flow of the Colorado River, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation began construction on Glen Canyon Dam as the primary feature of the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSP). The CRSP, a series of dams designed to help the upper Colorado River basin states (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming) maintain an even flow of water to the lower Colorado River basin states (Arizona, California, and Nevada) during years of drought, combined irrigation capabilities with power production for the first time in Reclamation's history. The Colorado River Storage Project consists of four main storage areas: Flaming Gorge Dam on the Green River in Utah, Navajo Dam on the San Juan River in New Mexico, the Wayne Aspinwall Units or Curecanti dams on the Gunnison River in Colorado, and Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River in Arizona. According to former Reclamation commissioner Floyd E. Dominy, who directed the agency from 1959 to 1969, the latter served as the lynchpin for the whole CRSP, primarily because the Colorado River Compact of 1922 necessitated a big dam at Lee's Ferry, Arizona, the arbitrary dividing line between the upper and lower basins.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Floyd E. Dominy, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, six-part radio series,

On 21 January 1963, seven years after Congress passed the CRSP, Bureau of Reclamation officials slammed the dam gates shut. The 710-foot barricade choked the Colorado River, flooded Glen Canyon, and created Lake Powell, a 186-mile slackwater reservoir that straddles the border of Arizona and Utah. Acting as the centerpiece for the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and providing a source of hydroelectric power for the exponential growth of southwestern cities, including Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles, the lake flooded hundreds of acres of Navajo land and removed several hundred Diné from their ancestral homeland.

The controversial story of Glen Canyon Dam and the creation of Lake Powell stands as tall as the concrete barrier wedged between the sandstone walls towering above the riverbed below. By the time of the dam's completion, the inundation of Glen Canyon had become a war cry for a growing, angry, and more radicalized environmental movement. Groups like Earth First!, inspired by Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), even daydreamed about blasting the barrage into smithereens, while big dam proponents, including Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, Arizona senators Carl T. Hayden and Barry M. Goldwater, and Commissioner Dominy, saluted its redemption of the desolate desert. Likewise, recreationists rejoiced in the beauty made accessible by Lake Powell. Yet, the plethora of writings on Glen Canyon Dam all but ignores the concerns of Native peoples who inhabit the Colorado Plateau and their stake in the development of the Colorado River.

Similar to Rockwell's painting, this dissertation spotlights indigenous encounters with Glen Canyon Dam. And, like Rockwell's rendering, this project places Native

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produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

peoples, especially the Diné, at the center of the dam story. In doing so, it exposes the façade masquerading a less pleasant and creditable reality surrounding the dam than historians have conventionally offered.<sup>7</sup> Considering traditional knowledge; relationships to homeland; pivotal moments in Navajo history, such as the Long Walk and the Bosque Redondo and the stock reduction of the 1930s and 1940s; as well as mid-century Navajo Tribal Council concerns, this study uncovers a multifaceted story of water and energy development in the Southwest. In this version, the Navajo Tribal Council becomes a major player. Through its efforts to secure irrigation projects, beneficial land deals, valuable waterfront property, and advantageous mineral leases, the council actively participated in the environmental degradation of *Dinétaah* (the original Navajo homeland). Its deeds reflected the exploits of the federal bureaucracies and politicians attempting to orchestrate the entire scheme. The actions of Native leaders and their push for much needed revenue on the Navajo Reservation during the postwar era resulted in a form of internal colonialism through resource development that mirrored the efforts of external interests to turn habitat into money, all at the expense of the tribal council's constituents. The People, those Diné who resisted both internal and external forces urging them to abandon their ancestral ties to a particular place, whether McCracken Mesa in San Juan County, Utah, Manson Mesa near Page, Arizona, Rainbow Bridge in San Juan County, Utah, or Black Mesa, Arizona, possessed a profound connection to their motherland, an unbreakable bond that embraced both the physical and metaphysical worlds around them. Equipped with generations of lore, both practical and mythic, the People related lifeways

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<sup>7</sup> For two comprehensive histories of Glen Canyon Dam, see Russell Martin, *A Story that Stands Like a Dam: Glen Canyon and the Struggle for the Soul of the West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989); and Jared Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed: Inventing Lake Powell and the Canyon Country* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999).

and experiential methods appropriate to their respective homeland. “Sacrilige in Dinétah: Native Encounters with Glen Canyon Dam” aims to highlight the People’s struggle for self-determination, tribal sovereignty, and religious freedom while they combated a representative government run amuck. Themes of relocation and resistance emerge, both exemplifying the People’s profound connection to the desert world enveloping them.

“Sacrilige in Dinétah” also attempts to “think like a watershed” and urges readers to view water and energy development in the Southwest within the context of home watersheds, those boundaries defined by Nature, not borders or fences demarcated by arbitrary geopolitical lines that separate one state from another. This concept borrows from western explorer John Wesley Powell, who advocated the creation of hydrographic basins governed by local watershed commonwealths when Euroamericans first settled the arid West during the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Powell envisioned the region as a mosaic of watersheds and argued that Americans settle each watershed and share its rivers and streams for agricultural practices rooted in white ideas of farming and irrigation. Admittedly, Powell proffered an ethnocentric approach to inhabiting the West, but his insight offered a more holistic method to developing the West than tactics driven largely by economics. When we study the history of water and energy development in the Southwest through the lens of home watersheds, a new narrative materializes, allowing us to see past events and their subsequent impact from Nature’s perspective, a point of view that includes not only humans but trees, mountains, waterways, rocks, plants, and

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<sup>8</sup> John Wesley Powell, *Eleventh Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, part 2, Irrigation* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1890); and John Wesley Powell, “Institutions for the Arid West,” in William DeBuys, ed., *Seeing Things Whole: The Essential John Wesley Powell* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, in cooperation with the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, 2001), 299–313.

animals. Had Congress realized Powell's "dream of watersheds as commonwealths," an environmental ethic that puts land or place above all else may well have permeated the cultural geography of the American Southwest.<sup>9</sup>

The Rio Colorado and its tributaries have directed the region's creation for thousand of years, serving not only as its lifeblood but also as its maker. The rill cascades from present-day Rocky Mountain National Park just north of Denver, Colorado. The river's 1,450-mile southwestern trek rambles through Colorado into southeastern Utah where it joins the Green River just south of Moab, Utah, in modern-day Canyonlands National Park. The headwaters of the Green River, likewise, spout from glaciers in the Wind River Mountains of western Wyoming. The Colorado River, now reinforced by the Green, continues on its southwestern journey, separating Arizona from Nevada and California. It then penetrates Mexico and finally reaches the delta at the north end of the Sea of Cortés. Acting as a tie that binds the ecological systems of Wyoming to those of western Mexico, the Colorado River feeds the Intermountain West, providing the region's inhabitants with water, food, and fodder, as well as intangible spiritual sustenance.

"Sacrilege in Dinétah" relates a fresh perspective on the history of Glen Canyon Dam by focusing on Native peoples who have inhabited the region for thousands of years and by considering the Colorado River watershed as an interconnected biosphere. The result is a chrono-thematic tale beginning with indigenous creation stories that demarcate tribal realities for Navajos, San Juan band of Southern Paiutes, and Hopis. These mythic structures tie their respective adherents to ecological spaces splattered all over the

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<sup>9</sup> Jack Loeffler, "Watersheds as Commons: Introduction," in author's possession, 2010, pp. 7–8.

Colorado Plateau. The lore centers on Glen Canyon, a place writer Abbey called the “living heart” of the Colorado River system. These stories factored largely into the Navajos’ struggle to maintain land-use rights on McCracken Mesa in San Juan County, Utah, where Montezuma Creek Navajos had grazed their livestock for generations before the intrusion of Mormon settlers. For years, federal officials had turned a blind eye to the atrocities occurring on this large swath of desert plateau. Not until the Bureau of Reclamation sought the People’s land to construct and maintain Glen Canyon Dam did the U.S. government acknowledge the hardships Montezuma Creek Navajos had suffered at the hands of local Bureau of Land Management administrators.

During the 1950s, federal bureaucrats, western politicians, grassroots lobbyists, and Navajo leaders hailed the Colorado River Storage Project as an economic enterprise for the tribe and vehemently pushed Congress for its passage. With Congress’s approval of the CRSP, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation immediately clamored for Diné land deemed essential to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam and to support all its manufacture apparatus, including engineers, equipment, and a town to house individual laborers as well as workers with families. Acutely aware of the termination and relocation clouds looming over Washington’s Indian policy, members of the Navajo Tribal Council risked losing Navajo acreage through eminent domain if they refused to relinquish the People’s land on Manson Mesa, home to many sheep-herding families who used Glen Canyon as a watering pocket for their livestock, just as their ancestors had done for generations. As soon as the U.S. government secured Native land for the dam’s assembly, federal bureaucrats tried to obtain additional sections of the Navajo Reservation for the region’s burgeoning tourist industry. This time, however, members of the Navajo Tribal

Council, led by Chairman Paul Jones and his successor Raymond Nakai, outlined their own agenda for developing the tribe's valuable shoreline along Lake Powell. Their actions conflicted with the People's desire to maintain traditional lifeways in spite of tourists encroaching onto their ancestral homeland. Finally, the gut-wrenching story of Black Mesa illustrates the multilayered, interconnected history of indigenous water rights, reclamation, and energy development in the American Southwest. At the narrative's center sits Glen Canyon Dam.

The repercussions of Glen Canyon Dam for the Navajo Nation resemble the ramifications of other federal reclamation projects built on Native land during the big dam era that began in the 1930s and ended in the 1960s. Particularly during the Cold War, public works projects and federal Indian policies seemed to parallel each other.<sup>10</sup> Like Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River in Washington state that flooded forty miles of the Spokane Reservation and destroyed Spokane ancestral fishing grounds; Shasta Dam on the Sacramento River in northern California that inundated Winnemem Wintu burial sites and ceremonial spaces; the Pick-Sloan Plan on the Missouri River that submerged tribal lands on multiple Sioux reservations in both North and South Dakota; Kinzua Dam on the Allegheny River in northern Pennsylvania that flooded one-third of the Senecas' Allegheny Reservation; and Tellico Dam on the Little Tennessee River in Tennessee that inundated long-abandoned Overhill Cherokee village sites, places some

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Cold War public works projects and federal Indian policies, see Laurence M. Hauptman, "Interiors," "Command Decision: General John S. Bragdon and the Kinzua Dam," in *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival: World War II to Red Power* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 85–104, 105–22, respectively; and Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians Revisited: The Continuing History of the Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2009).

Cherokees still consider sacred, Glen Canyon Dam swamped Navajo land but largely benefited non-Navajo people. All these dams purportedly enhanced flood control, irrigation, navigation, hydroelectric power, and recreation for the common good, but the indigenous populations living nearby rarely reaped the paybacks.

Built roughly at the same time as Glen Canyon Dam, Kinzua Dam, for example, flooded more than nine thousand acres of Seneca land on the Allegheny Reservation, including burial grounds and homesteads, medicinal and food plants, and the old Coldspring Longhouse, the ceremonial center of Seneca traditional life. In addition, the dam forced the removal of some seven hundred individual Senecas. Anthropologist Joy A. Bilharz argues that the tragedy of Kinzua Dam ultimately reshaped the Senecas' world and resulted in a heightened cultural awareness, especially among women; the impact of Glen Canyon Dam on the Diné is more difficult to ascertain.<sup>11</sup>

Unlike the Senecas who fought the construction of Kinzua Dam every step of the way, the Navajos, particularly the Navajo Tribal Council, urged Congress to pass the legislation that authorized Glen Canyon Dam's creation and eventually entered land negotiations to provide tribal acreage needed for the dam's construction. Reeling from the effects of stock reduction, their experiences during World War II, and postwar poverty, Diné leaders intended to shift their constituents away from stock-raising toward alternative sources of income, including farming and wage labor. At the time, federal bureaucrats and congressional representatives promised members of the Navajo Tribal Council that their people would find well-paying jobs on the reservation. Today, Navajos participate in the tourist industry associated with Lake Powell and hold "real jobs" in

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<sup>11</sup> Joy A. Bilharz, *The Allegheny Senecas and Kinzua Dam: Forced Relocation through Two Generations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

Page, at the dam, or at the Navajo Generating Station. Yet, widespread poverty continues to plague the Diné and many tribal members lack electricity or running water, while the tribe's natural resources (water and coal) primarily feed southwestern urban centers, largely populated by non-Indians. Historians have essentially ignored the history of this predicament, a conundrum some critics dub environmental racism.<sup>12</sup> "Sacrilege in Dinétah" aims to fill that gap. To explore this complex story, let us journey to the luminous landscape of southeastern Utah, where contorted canyons converge with generations of Native lore.

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<sup>12</sup> See Max Goldtooth, Peter McDonald, and Ron Milford, "Navajo Water Rights: Truths and Betrayals," *High Country News*, 21 July 2008, <http://www.hcn.org/issues/40.13/navajo-water-rights-truths-and-betrayals>.



Map courtesy Sarah R. Payne

## Chapter 1

“On the Wall of the Garden, A Legend Did Say”: Native Narratives about Glen Canyon

On a blistering, baked day in late spring 2003, as catabolic winds battered the cityscape, I loaded all my camping gear in the trunk of my car, unaware of my ultimate destination.<sup>13</sup> Wanting to escape the conurbation around me, I headed west out of Albuquerque toward the red canyon country of the Colorado Plateau. The cosmic slickrock desert summoned, and I answered its call. Road weary and parched, I crossed the continental divide and entered the political boundaries of the Navajo Nation outside Window Rock, Arizona, in mid-afternoon. It felt good to be in wide-open spaces and away from the city. I stopped at a local food mart to quench my thirst and continued west through Ganado; toward Keam’s Canyon; across First, Second, and Third Mesa of Hopiland; into Tuba City, Arizona; destined for Glen Canyon, now buried under the human-made waters of Lake Powell.

In this aridity-laden terra firma, three of the twelve distinct geophysical divisions that define the North American continent—the Great Plains; the Rocky Mountains; and the Inter-Mountain Plateaus, which include the Columbia, the Basin and Range, and the Colorado—converge just southeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, creating a mottled and mesmerizing topography collectively known as the American Southwest.<sup>14</sup> The surrounding landscape, a foreign, canyon-shredded scene outlined by mountains and dotted with sagebrush and juniper and piñon pines, represented a vastly disparate desert

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<sup>13</sup> For the chapter title, see Robert Hunter and Jerry Garcia, “Rosemary,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist and David Dodd, annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 68.

<sup>14</sup> Jack Loeffler, *Survival along the Continental Divide: An Anthology of Interviews* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2008), 5.

ecosystem that differed from the lush coastal waterways of Georgia and the South Carolina Lowcountry I had intimately known as a child. The sun-drenched rockscape jolted me as I pondered its power and the complicated processes that created its twisted geological formations and evocative ecological systems. I wondered if indigenous peoples living in this inhospitable land told stories about its creation. Not knowing what those narratives might reveal or how they might demarcate Native realities, I could not begin to understand the meaning those stories bestowed on the geographical points I encountered as I traversed the landscape. The numerous stories about the Colorado Plateau terrain transform its sites into places that abound with familial connections, cultural connotations and values, and spiritual affirmations. Combined, these elements impart a sacredness on the entire landscape and the individual sites that comprise it.

Deeply nestled among the red, rugged, isolated chasmal maze of Glen Canyon, near the base of *Naatsis'áán* or Head of Earth Woman (also known as Navajo Mountain) in southeastern Utah, lies *Tsé Nani' áhígíí*, roughly translated from Navajo to English as “rock arch.”<sup>15</sup> Commonly known as Rainbow Bridge, Tsé Nani' áhígíí stands 309 feet tall, spans 278 feet wide, and sits approximately at the confluence of Forbidden and Bridge canyons. Couching their explanation of its origin in a language of cause and effect, western geologists and climatologists, who often reject or contradict Native oral

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<sup>15</sup> Possibly owing to a difference in dialect among the various regions of Dinétah, there are several Diné words for Rainbow Bridge: Na'nízhoozhí, anglicized as Nonnezoshi or Nonnezoshe, Tsé Nani' áhígíí, Tse Nani'ani, and Tsé'naa Na'ní'áhí. For this project, I chose to use Tsé Nani' áhígíí because the respected Navajo Mountain–area singer Long Salt—the son of Navajo rain requester Pinetree and nephew of Blind Salt Clansman, who is credited as the first Navajo to “discover” Rainbow Bridge—referred to the rock arch in this way. Long Salt, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, American Tribal Religion series (Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1977), 40.

traditions, contend that a complicated combination of geologic and climatic conditions—uplift, laccoliths, pluvials, and glaciation—occurring for millions of years on the Colorado Plateau birthed both Naatsis’áán and Tsé Nani’ áhígíí. Compounding the process of erosion and creating greater water flow, Naatsis’áán breached the earth’s surface and rose over ten thousand feet above modern sea level between thirty and fifty million years ago. This laccolith, formed by an igneous intrusion between two layers of sedimentary rock causing uplift, intensified climatic activity and increased rainfall adding to an already swelling drainage system that created deeper and wider canyons in the Glen Canyon region. Tsé Nani’ áhígíí, dependent on what seems to be its older sister, followed on the heels of Naatsis’áán. Indeed, these two geophysical formations naturally rest on each other and almost always appear together in Native narratives.

A rare geologic feature sculpted by water, Rainbow Bridge began to materialize during the late Pleistocene era when streams, such as Bridge Creek, flowed off Naatsis’áán toward the Colorado River. On this journey, Bridge Creek meandered side-to-side, around and through thin sandstone alcoves that ultimately crumbled in its wake. This debris-laden water gnawed against a thin Navajo-sandstone fin situated on a thick Kayenta-sandstone base that jutted into present-day Bridge Canyon. Over time the stream cut a small opening in the fin’s foundation, surged through the aperture, and created Rainbow Bridge—a unique environmental attribute less commonly found on the Colorado Plateau than natural arches.<sup>16</sup> Tsé Nani’ áhígíí consists of Navajo sandstone, ancient wind-swept sand dunes that hardened into somewhat soft, porous, barren but beautiful, crimson and bronzed slickrock that today dominates the Colorado Plateau

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<sup>16</sup> National Park Service, “The Geology of Rainbow Bridge,” <http://www.nps.gov/rabr/naturescience/geologicformations.htm>

terrain. To a casual observer, the brown and red hues seem lackluster; to a more attentive viewer, however, the canyonlands shrouding Tsé Nani' áhígíí display a kaleidoscope of colors that includes tinges of ginger, gold, ruby, and plum. An artistic representation of the continuous struggle between water and wind, Tsé Nani' áhígíí stretches across Aztec Canyon and seemingly touches the base of Head of Earth Woman. From a distance, Naatsis'áán resembles a loaf of blue cornbread towering above the inverted mountains that crisscross the desert landscape.

For Navajos this land and its residents—the mountains, heavens, water, rocks, plants, animals, and humans—weave a web of life encompassing familial, natural, and supernatural elements that combine to create a home.<sup>17</sup> Navajo teacher and writer Grace McNeley explains:

The Navajo term *ké'tlool*—derived from *ké*, meaning “feet,” and *tlool*, meaning “root system”—expresses the concept of having a foundation for one’s life in the earth, much as a plant is rooted in the earth. . . . Let us visualize the central root as extending all the way back to Asdzáán Nádleehi, “Changing Woman”—who is Earth Mother herself. Developing from this main root is the complex web of kinship relations extending back even to ancestors and including clan relations, the extended family and the immediate family. Tied to this system are material goods, familiar surroundings and livestock. This webbing of earth, of ancestors, of clan and familiar surroundings all constitute a Navajo home, enabling those within it to flourish, to thrive.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Robert S. McPherson, *Sacred Land, Sacred View: Navajo Perceptions of the Four Corners Region*, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, no. 19 (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1992), 75.

<sup>18</sup> Grace McNeley, “Home: A Family of Land and People,” *Dine Be’iina* 1, no. 1 (1987): 161–64.

Barely upstream from Tsé Nani' áhígíí, for example, lies a beloved place of the Navajos. Illuminating the natural world in a bodily and organic light, Diné oral tradition contends that the San Juan River (male) once mounted the Colorado (female). This sexual union gave birth to cloud and rain people long before Glen Canyon Dam clogged the region's arteries and Lake Powell prudishly covered the rivers' nuptial bed.

Here, before and after Euroamerican settlers tried to subdue both the land and its Native populations, Navajos performed rain-requesting and Protectionway ceremonies. Drawing depictions of the site in the sand, Navajo Mountain-area singer Long Salt described his worship experience at the confluence of these two rivers: "Here was a river, and here too was a river. . . . Here . . . is where I had my prayers. There was rain at places, and I had gone there . . . for it."<sup>19</sup> Distinguishing this place from others, Long Salt's reverence for the water junction emerged from an inimitable event (the union of two distinct rivers and the subsequent birth of cloud and rain people) that transpired here. Shonto-area singer Ernest Nelson spoke of the rivers' crossroads as a place of protection and refuge. Nelson told anthropologist Karl W. Luckert that, "The sacred area is not limited to that immediate place alone. On a larger scale, beyond [Rainbow Bridge] is the River. The land [south of the San Juan River] belongs to the Navajo people. . . . [It] was laid down in the north so that people other than the Navajo people would be prevented from wandering about in this sacred area."<sup>20</sup> In other words, the river represented a natural barrier between Navajos and San Juan Paiutes. Although Long Salt and Nelson

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<sup>19</sup> Long Salt, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest Nelson, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 117.

recognized the religious and cultural significance of the rivers' confluence, each man adapted the oral tradition to fit his ideas of the hallowed space.

The accounts of Long Salt and Nelson demonstrate the holistic and participative nature of Native perspectives on land and ecology. Contrary to cultures embedded in a Judeo-Christian worldview that separates people from the natural world, indigenous religions often center on place and emphasize the interconnectedness of humans and the environment. Many Native origin stories, including those creation myths retold by Navajos, San Juan band of Southern Paiutes, and Hopis, contain a spatial versus a temporal dimension. Likewise, they connect indigenous peoples to the earth and sky around them. Referencing the Hopis' place of emergence, former Hopi Tribal Council chairman Vernon Masayesva explains, "It is our umbilical chord that connects us to our motherland."<sup>21</sup> Focusing on events that occurred at precise locations, creation stories demarcate the parameters of experienced reality, not the chronological procession of time. "Regardless of what subsequently happens to the people," writes Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr., "the sacred lands remain as permanent fixtures in their cultural or religious understanding."<sup>22</sup> This spatial philosophy reveals the cultural and religious values to which Native peoples adhere. Origin stories establish time and history rather than taking place within these temporal constructs.<sup>23</sup> They "arise out of the earth" and

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<sup>21</sup> Vernon Masayesva, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, program 1, six-part radio series, produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>22</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 1992), 67.

<sup>23</sup> Jerry H. Gill, *Native American Worldviews: An Introduction* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2002), 49–50.

revere ecological spaces in ways that western peoples rooted in a technological, man-made, time-centered, Judeo-Christian upbringing cannot fully comprehend. Likewise, they give environmental elements a life and spirit all their own. American Indian biographer Richard Erdoes and anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz from San Juan Pueblo write, “Mysterious but real power dwells in nature—in mountains, rivers, rocks, even pebbles. White people may consider them inanimate objects, but to the Indian, they are enmeshed in a web of the universe, pulsating with life and potent with medicine.”<sup>24</sup>

Many indigenous oral traditions recount mythical events that occurred during a time when humans, gods, animals, and the natural world lived amicably together and possessed the ability to move fluidly among each other. At some point during this mythological era, the gods decided to leave their human and animal companions but retained the ability to shape shift. Meanwhile, human and animal clans lost this quality and retained the shapes and skins they now don. Referencing Rainbow Bridge and its surroundings, Navajo Mountain resident Buck Navajo hinted at this relationship among “people” in mythological societies. “Where the outcropping of rock slopes to an end,” Buck Navajo recalled, “a long time ago, were those who walk among the mountains.” “‘Bear’ was one of them,” he continued. “Bear and Crow were some of them . . . Together with all kinds of other animals. At first they were like man.”<sup>25</sup> The Diné also believe the holy rock people who dwell on the floor of Forbidding Canyon at the foot of Tsé Nani’ áhígíí represent four shape-shifting gods who once inhabited a windswept cave

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, eds. *American Indian Myths and Legends* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xi.

<sup>25</sup> Buck Navajo, interview with Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 85.

carved into the canyon walls. These stone people listen attentively for human intruders. The gods likewise repeat and amplify the trespassers' voices, echoing the humans' sentiments. In fact some non-Navajo interlopers refer to this area as Echo Canyon. Navajos know better.<sup>26</sup> These rock dwellers, along with the sacred spring person who cooperates with the spring being at the top of Naatsis'áán, bless and protect the environs that comprise larger ecological, religious, and cultural systems associated with the arch.

In 1907, one Navajo bearing the moniker "Sharkie" revealed a "secret" to trader John Wetherill.<sup>27</sup> According to Sharkie, "It was all about a wonderful bridge of red rock, shaped like a rainbow, hidden in a deep canyon . . . where the tribal gods of the Navajos had dwelt for countless generations."<sup>28</sup> Describing Tsé Nani' áhígíí to John's wife Louisa Wade Wetherill, another Diné man locally known as "One-Eyed Man of the Salt Clan" claimed, "It is called the Rock Rainbow that Spans the Canyon. Only a few go there. They do not know the prayers. They used to go for ceremonies, but the old men who knew the prayers are gone."<sup>29</sup> One-Eyed Man of the Salt Clan appears to be the Navajo elder identified as Blind Salt Clansman, the first Diné credited with the "discovery" of Rainbow Bridge. A petroglyph once commemorated Blind Salt Clansman's journey to the foot of the rainbow. Local resident Lamar Bedonie remembered, "Against the rock

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<sup>26</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen C. Jett, "Testimony of the Sacredness of Rainbow Natural Bridge to Puebloans, Navajos, and Paiutes," *Plateau* 45 (spring 1973): 135.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Frothingham, *Trails through the Golden West* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1932), 36.

<sup>29</sup> One-Eyed Man of the Salt Clan, quoted in Stephen C. Jett, "Testimony of the Sacredness of Rainbow Natural Bridge to Puebloans, Navajos, and Paiutes," *Plateau* 45 (spring 1973): 136.

[Rainbow Bridge] Blind Salt Clansman was sitting on his horse. . . . in this manner Blind Salt Clansman and his horse's figures were engraved on the face of the rock—with him sitting on his horse. That is gone now. Someone destroyed it.”<sup>30</sup> Analogous with the destruction of Blind Salt Clansman's petroglyph, Tsé Nani' áhígíí and its environs and the cultural values associated with the rock arch face obliteration from the intrepid waters of Lake Powell and the subsequent introduction of industrial tourism to the Glen Canyon region. Traditionally, however, both Head of Earth Woman and Tsé Nani' áhígíí have long provided the Navajos with places of refuge and worship.

Similar to many Native oral traditions, the Navajos' various accounts explaining the origin of Tsé Nani' áhígíí appear malleable and changeable, depending on the raconteur's background and the circumstances that surround the retelling of stories. All, however, revere the rock arch and its hinterland as sacred space. While some suggest that Tsé Nani' áhígíí represents the “mythical path of the sun,” others assert that it symbolizes the solidification of rainbow people into rock.<sup>31</sup> According to Diné sheepherders who live nearby, Tsé Nani' áhígíí embodies two Rainbow people, male and female, bending together in petrified matrimony.<sup>32</sup> Their sexual union, akin to that of the San Juan and Colorado rivers, characterizes a delicate balance between the two genders and personifies the concept of *hózhó*, an untranslatable word that can only be attained in English by combining terms like beauty, harmony, and balance, concepts intrinsic to the Navajo

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<sup>30</sup> Lamar Bedonie, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 146.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert E. Gregory, quoted in Jett, “Testimony of the Sacredness of Rainbow Natural Bridge,” 137.

<sup>32</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 24.

worldview.<sup>33</sup> Anthropologist Charlotte Frisbie provides a more congealed definition of hózhó. She articulates its meaning as “continual good health, harmony, peace, beauty, good fortune, balance, and positive events in the lives of self and relatives.”<sup>34</sup> The marriage of the male and female rainbow persons also explains the origin of many rain people (rainbows and clouds) who eventually leave this sacred site and travel east toward Navajoland to bless its plants, animals, and people with water and life.<sup>35</sup> This story, combined with the one centered on the mythical marriage of the San Juan and Colorado rivers, demonstrates the importance of rain and water to Navajo survival. Both narratives emphasize the birth of cloud and rain people needed to nourish the People.

Another mythological story centered on Rainbow Bridge emphasizes the femininity in the natural world and tells of two female persons who wandered away from their Black Water home near Naatsis’áán and became lost. When they reached the eastern horizon, the females approached the holy water people living there and asked for help. These eastern gods did not permit the girls to remain but provided them with a rainbow as a means to travel home. Pointing west, the rainbow brought the two female persons back to Navajo Mountain. Upon their return, the females transported water from the spring below the rock arch to their hogan on Naatsis’áán. Here, they tasted the water that “made

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Zolbrod, *Diné Bahane’: The Navajo Creation Story*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Charlotte J. Frisbie, *Navajo Medicine Bundles, or Jish: Acquisition, Transmission, and Disposition in the Past and Present* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 24.

their bodies whole” and provided their prayers “straight and direct access [to the gods].”<sup>36</sup> Instructing them to land at the base of Head of Earth Woman, the gods decided that the female rainbow person would remain a rock arch and serve as a refuge and space for offerings and prayers.<sup>37</sup>

One account places Tsé Nani’ áhígíí in a larger global context. In this version, two male persons, Bear Man and Big Snake Man, traveled east to the Atlantic Ocean searching for rain. The men returned on the back of two adjoined rainbow people, one facing west and the other pointing east. Some Navajos believe that this rainbow union hardened into Tsé Nani’ áhígíí. Moreover, the area surrounding Rainbow Bridge became the permanent home of water. According to Nelson, Bear Man and Big Snake Man brought moisture from the ocean to Dinétah in a flint shell. The mythical heroes later buried the water-containing shell near Tsé Nani’ áhígíí. The shell in turn transformed into a sacred spring.<sup>38</sup>

This account simultaneously highlights a relationship between two rainbow entities and emphasizes the importance of animals in the Navajo worldview. Particularly, the storyteller focuses on the spiritual qualities of bears and snakes. This myth immortalizes these two animals. Powerful beings that heal, help, and protect, bears possess humanlike qualities and therefore demand respect as holy beings.<sup>39</sup> The Diné,

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<sup>36</sup> Floyd Laughter, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 47.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>38</sup> Ernest Nelson, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 108.

<sup>39</sup> McPherson, *Sacred Land, Sacred View*, 65.

likewise, associate snakes with rain and moisture, because these beings streak like lightning. “Molest a snake,” writes anthropologist Robert S. McPherson, “and the rains will stop.”<sup>40</sup> Although this story does not highlight the feminine in nature or a balance between male and female, it closely relates to the other anecdotes told by Navajo Mountain-area singers living near Rainbow Bridge, as each myth references a relationship or union between two rainbow entities.

All these origin stories provide a spatial construct through which Navajos view the environmental realities around them; they shape the way the People see their world. Moreover, these stories intersect with each other. Two common themes amongst them underscore the importance of water and the use of rainbows as a mode of transportation for mythical beings, thereby solidifying the sacredness of these natural elements in the Navajo worldview. In his literary translation of the Diné creation story, professor of English Paul Zolbrod frequently references rainbows and their function in Navajo mythology. Retelling the emergence of the People into the Glittering World or surface world, for example, and the early activities of Monster Slayer and Born for Water, Zolbrod mentions the use of rainbows as a means of transportation for the hero twins when they ran away from their mother Changing Woman, also known as White Shell Woman or White Bead Woman, to find their father Sun.<sup>41</sup> Ethnographer A. W. Buckland

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>41</sup> Zolbrod, *Diné bahane*, 195. While most renderings of the Navajo creation story agree that White Shell Woman is Born for Water’s mother, there appears to be some discrepancy concerning the identity of Monster Slayer’s mother. This sort of detail changes, depending on the storyteller and the circumstances surrounding the retelling of the myth. Some stories contend that Changing Woman is indeed Monster Slayer’s mother; others, particularly those myths focused on the western fringes of Dinétah, claim that White Shell Woman gave birth to Monster Slayer and Born for Water while in an

noted the significance of rainbows among Navajos when he wrote about the Navajo Mountain Chant in 1893. Buckland observed, “the anthropomorphic rainbow . . . [is] always represented, for th[is] [is] the roads by which the gods travel.”<sup>42</sup> Buckland’s conclusion about the role rainbows play in Navajo origin stories confirms later interpretations that describe these colorful beings as a path on which the sun traversed. In 1972, a Navajo Parks and Recreation Department flyer distributed to non-Navajo tourists visiting Rainbow Bridge National Monument also recognized rainbows as roads on which mythical beings crossed. According to the brochure, Tsé Nani’ áhígíí symbolizes a “solidified rainbow, a bridge across what once was a rushing torrent, over which a mythical hero traveled to safety.”<sup>43</sup>

In 1974, Navajo medicine man Nakai Ditl’oi, born near Oljato, Utah, north of Kayenta, Arizona, told a similar story in an affidavit given as part of a lawsuit filed against the Department of the Interior by him and other individual Navajos who wanted to prevent further drowning of Tsé Nani’ áhígíí by Lake Powell. Ditl’oi maintained that Tsé Nani’ áhígíí had served as a protective shield for Head of Earth Woman and the People since their creation. In his account, the Diné migrated west to Navajo Mountain where they fashioned a home for a god who possessed lightning to produce rain.

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adulterous relationship with Sun. Floyd Laughter retold this version to ethnographer Karl W. Luckert. Floyd Laughter, interview with Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 60–71.

<sup>42</sup> A. W. Buckland, “Points of Contact Between Old World Myths and Customs and the Navajo Myth, Entitled ‘The Mountain Chant,’” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 22 (1893): 353.

<sup>43</sup> Navajo Parks and Recreation Department, “Something about Rainbow Bridge: One of the Seven Wonders of the Navajo World,” folder 22, Rainbow Bridge National Monument Collection, Cline Library, Special Collections and Archives Department, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Lageinayai promised to protect the People in return for their kindness. Sometime later, however, some of Naatsis'áán's inhabitants left under the leadership of Danaiize, a god who "has the power to create and to travel on the rainbow."<sup>44</sup> In his retelling of the myth, Dítl'oi divulged to his audience that, "The Dine [*sic*] reached a canyon which they could not cross. The Dine [*sic*] did not know what to do. Danaiize told them he would create a rock rainbow which would be a bridge for the Dine [*sic*]. It was in this way that the Dine [*sic*] were able to cross the Canyon on the Rainbow Bridge."<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, Dítl'oi passed from this world before the courts reached a decision concerning Navajo religious claims to the rock arch in 1977. Dítl'oi's account, nonetheless, along with the one recounted on the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department flyer, discloses Diné sentiments that uphold the rock arch not only as a road on which gods travel but also a safe haven.

Similarly, Navajo Mountain survives today as a place of refuge and protection for Navajos. Luckert and McPherson and religious scholar Leland C. Wyman point to an early association between the Navajo hero twin, Monster Slayer, and Head of Earth Woman when he banished Paiute ancestors from the massif during mythological times.<sup>46</sup> Soon after Diné ancestors emerged into this world, the Glittering World, they encountered both beauty and difficulty. The stories that narrate this era dictate proper

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<sup>44</sup> "Medicineman Seeks Preservation of Sacred Rainbow Bridge," *Window Rock (Ariz.) Navajo Times*, 4 July 1974, p. B-8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 5; McPherson, *Sacred Land Sacred View*, 20; and Leland C. Wyman, *Blessingway* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), 565-67.

behavior as well as the consequences of slapdash and foolish conduct. During this epoch, the hero twins Monster Slayer and Born for Water journeyed through the Glittering World and used the supernatural powers bestowed upon them by Sun to rid the earth of monsters that threatened the People's survival. On one of his many jaunts, Monster Slayer hiked up Naatsis'áán and confronted "He Who Kicks Off Rocks" or *Tsé dah Hódziiltáíí*, a wicked brute living there. He Who Kicks Off Rocks made four failing attempts to destroy the hero twin upon Monster Slayer's ascent of the mountain. Monster Slayer then struck He Who Kick Offs Rocks with his flint club and hurled the fiend to his death. He Who Kicks Off Rocks landed in the canyon below Naatsis'áán, where his four children—two boys and two girls—claimed individual pieces of their father as keepsakes. These wretched beings, who demolished He Who Kicks Off Rocks's victims, initially fled Monster Slayer's wrath but eventually encountered the hero twin. Monster Slayer then banished the brood to the depths of the canyon and forbade them to reproduce. According to River Junction Curly, the Navajo storyteller credited with this version of the myth, He Who Kicks Off Rocks's offspring, despite Monster Slayer's edict, survive today as the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes.<sup>47</sup>

The Diné tell many variations of the Navajo creation story. Although the People may disagree over the exact number of underworlds, the events that occurred in each, and the colors assigned to those previous worlds, a basic accord circulates among Navajos concerning the major events of creation.<sup>48</sup> Zolbrod describes a slightly different

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<sup>47</sup> Wyman, *Blessingway*, 565–67.

<sup>48</sup> Ethelou Yazzie, ed. *Navajo History*, vol. 1, 2d. ed. (Rough Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Curriculum Center, 1982), table of contents.

adaptation of the myth, He Who Kicks Off Rocks. Zolbrod's rendering of this segment of the Navajo creation story takes place on the eastern fringes of Navajoland and holds Naatsis'áán in contempt. In Zolbrod's translation, Monster Slayer stabbed He Who Kicks Off Rocks, known in this version as the monster Who Kicks People Off of Cliffs, with a knife given to him by his father. Instead of striking the beast with a flint club, Monster Slayer slashed He Who Kicks Off Rocks multiple times before tossing him from the steep mountainside, where He Who Kicks Off Rocks lived, into the depths of the canyon below. When the brute fell to his death, his twelve children—as opposed to four—vigorously fought over his body parts and devoured his remains. Like River Junction Curly's version, Zolbrod contends that Monster Slayer pursued He Who Kicks Off Rocks's offspring, intending to kill them. River Junction Curly told Wyman that Monster Slayer banished the children to the canyon below Head of Earth Woman but ultimately spared their lives. These wretched beings, contends River Junction Curly, are the progenitors of southern Paiutes. In Zolbrod's version, however, Monster Slayer succeeded in killing all but one of the brood. Holding the surviving troll in his outstretched arms, the hero twin, profoundly struck by the monster-child's grotesque guise, "recoiled with disgust" and pointed the creature toward the north banishing him to Naatsis'áán where "the north wind batters the landscape" and the nights are longer than the days. At that moment, the monster-child became known as *jeeshóó*, the buzzard. According to Zolbrod, the offspring of *jeeshóó* dwell there among the Paiutes.<sup>49</sup> Zolbrod does not claim, however, that Paiutes descend from Tsé dah Hódziiltáíi.

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<sup>49</sup> Zolbrod, *Diné bahane'*, 243–45.

Both versions of the He-Who-Kicks-Off-Rocks myth cast a somewhat negative shadow on Naatsis'áán and the surrounding Rainbow Plateau. While one account seats the evil being on Head of Earth Woman's crest, the other sends the monster's offspring to the bastion in exile. No matter the minute details, however, both stories dictate the People's view of the cosmos as they focus on a specific place (Navajo Mountain) and emphasize the importance of that space in the Navajo worldview. All the origin stories centered on the Rainbow Plateau, including this myth, make an early connection to western Dinétah, establishing Navajos on or near Naatsis'áán and Tsé Nani' áhígíí since creation. They orient them religiously and culturally toward Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge.

Additionally, maintains Floyd Laughter, the maternal great-grandson of *Hashkéniinii* (The Angry One) who led a band of escapees west during Christopher Houston "Kit" Carson's roundup of Navajos before the Long Walk to *Hwéeldi* (Bosque Redondo) in the early 1860s, the Protectionway story transfers the twin gods from the eastern fringes of Dinétah to Navajo Mountain. Blessingway mythology from the Chuska Mountains area in the east did not view the relationship between Monster Slayer and Naatsis'áán in a favorable light. Owing to this disdain and perhaps a sense of separateness from those Diné forced on the Long Walk, Navajos who escaped to the Rainbow Bridge and Navajo Mountain area (Southern Paiute and Hopi territory) during the U.S. Army's removal of the People needed a tradition all their own.<sup>50</sup> Those refugees' descendents now see Naatsis'áán as a god and Southern Paiutes as relatives. In this ceremonial story, Monster Slayer, Born for Water, Changing Grandchild, and Reared

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<sup>50</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 43 n. 1.

in the Earth battled four animal people (Mountain Lion, Wolf, Black Eagle, and Buzzard) living on top of the San Francisco Peaks from their position on the crown of Head of Earth Woman. Shooting pine projectiles from their high vantage point, the hostile animal-like beings refused to be held in bondage by others. Monster Slayer defended Diné ancestors who dwelled on Navajo Mountain, catching, transforming, and planting the slugs as blue and white spruce and juniper trees. “In a miraculous way,” recounts Laughter, “he turned these things into medicine.”<sup>51</sup> Symbolizing a defensive shield for the People as they sought protection under the trees’ canopies, the conifers seemingly foretold the future struggle of the Diné when they fled the U.S. Army’s wrath in hopes of escaping forced relocation to the Bosque Redondo. Their safety during this trying time appeared almost as certain as Monster Slayer’s trees that welcomed the weary refugees to Head of Earth Woman.<sup>52</sup>

When Hashkéninii and his followers migrated to the Rainbow Plateau, the escapees used the hero twin’s medicine on Naatsis’áán as armor and the landscape surrounding Head of Earth Woman, including Glen Canyon and Rainbow Bridge, as an asylum. In an interview conducted by Luckert in the mid-1970s, Nelson divulged the Navajos’ spiritual connection to Tsé Naní’ áhígíí. Nelson, sixty-eight-years-old at the time, admitted that those Navajos who fled Carson and his cronies retreated to many locations before “the elders of our people turned to those holy places in the Rock-arch area” where “they gave prayers and offerings and asked for protection from our

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<sup>51</sup> Floyd Laughter, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 48–49.

<sup>52</sup> Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 48 n. 7.

enemies.”<sup>53</sup> The singer credits the determinate nature of Hashkéniinii’s band for the salvation of the People from potential deportation to Hwéeldi.

Hashkéniinii’s posse certainly did not constitute the first band of Navajos or Native peoples in general to settle the region enveloping Rainbow Bridge. In the late 1960s, anthropologists Mary Shepardson and Blodwen Hammond estimated that the Many Goats Clan (*Thízi láni*) had dwelled on or near the Rainbow Plateau and Navajo Canyon, adjacent to present-day Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, for seven generations, roughly equal to 175 years.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, the Salt Clan (*Áshijihí*), of Blind Salt Clansman fame, could trace their lineage back six generations. Many members of the Navajo Mountain community insist their ancestors lived in the area before and after their eastern counterparts relocated to Hwéeldi. Telling her grandparents’ story, Becky Smallcanyon of the Many Goats Clan recalled, “My great grandfather, Dugai Sikaad, was born and lived in the canyon. . . . the *Thízi láni* around here didn’t get any [sheep]. That’s because they were hiding out. . . . My grandmother’s husband . . . used to trade way into Utah. . . . with the Mormons. There wasn’t much water on Rainbow Plateau.”<sup>55</sup>

Inscription House resident Paul Begay simply said, “The land around here belongs to the

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<sup>53</sup> Ernest Nelson, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain*, 107.

<sup>54</sup> Mary Shepardson and Blodwen Hammond, *The Navajo Mountain Community: Social Organization and Kinship Terminology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 40.

<sup>55</sup> Becky Smallcanyon, quoted in Shepardson and Hammond, *The Navajo Mountain Community*, 41.

Navajos.”<sup>56</sup> Engulfed by an expanding Diné population, however, the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes and Hopis may not share Begay’s sentiments.

Before Diné settlers probed the Glen Canyon region, Southern Paiutes, ancestral Puebloans, and other indigenous communities dwelled there. This area represented a veritable middle ground for Native populations prior to Spanish, Mexican, and American settlement. Southern Paiutes alone consist of several small, autonomous bands that inhabit the piñon- and juniper-splashed plateaus overlooking Glen and Grand canyons. Their homeland extends east into Dinétah and west to southern California, representing areas of contact and exchange with Native groups who populated the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah, the Upland and River Yumans, the Utes of Colorado, the Navajos, and the Hopis.<sup>57</sup> Southern Paiute bands, which include the Kaibab, Las Vegas, Moapa, Shivwits, Uinkarets, Chemehuevis, and San Juan, reflect social groupings based on their geographical locations.<sup>58</sup> The San Juans, for example, refer to themselves as *tuyouipiningwi* or Rock River People, inhabiting the canyonlands that blanket Rainbow Bridge just south of the Colorado River near Navajo Mountain on the Rainbow Plateau. Despite their denial of tribal status by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a lack of federally recognized land, and their incorporation into the Navajo Reservation either by choice or through the BIA’s ignorance, the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes retain

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Begay, quoted in Shepardson and Hammond, *The Navajo Mountain Community*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine S. Fowler and Nancy J. Parezo, “The Ningwi (Southern Paiutes): The People of the Northwestern Frontier,” in *Paths of Life: American Indians of the Southwest and Northern Mexico*, Thomas E. Sheridan and Nancy J. Parezo, eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 163.

<sup>58</sup> Fowler and Parezo, “The Ningwi (Southern Paiutes),” 163.

distinctive social structures and survive and thrive on their traditional lands. In fact, they still seasonally farm in Paiute Canyon just east of Navajo Mountain.

The San Juans' origin story, analogous with creation myths of Native peoples in general, mirrors their territorial homeland and connects them to the sacred spaces within those boundaries. The creation myth for each band of the Southern Paiutes underscores the sacred elements associated with their land. All Southern Paiutes view themselves as relatives of Coyote and Water Woman's children. Some of them credit Water Woman, also known as Ocean Woman, with earth's creation; others claim that Wolf actually made the land and animals. They all, however, agree that Coyote carried the Southern Paiutes to their respective homelands in a narrow-necked water jar or basket with strict instructions from Water Woman not to open it until he found suitable terrain where the people could hunt and gather food. Coyote traveled east with the heavy basket loaded on his back. On his journey, Coyote, as Coyotes frequently do, became inquisitive about the burdensome, sound-laden cargo. Coyote's curiosity eventually overcame him.

Disregarding Water Woman's diktat, Coyote opened the jar. Much to his surprise, all the peoples of the world emerged and scattered in every direction. Coyote hurriedly sealed the jar, trapping Southern Paiutes inside. Panicking, Coyote took the basket to his older and wiser brother Wolf who reprimanded him for disobeying Water Woman but ultimately rescued his mischievous, folly-filled, younger sibling from embarrassment.

Wolf and Coyote designated names for the passengers, deemed them special people, and delivered the individual bands to their respective homes among the dull-hued spaces of

the desert highlands.<sup>59</sup> Coyote brought the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes to Glen Canyon overlooking the Colorado River. Here, he untied the sack and released the San Juans near present-day Page, Arizona, a few miles downstream from Rainbow Bridge.

Although this origin story does not specifically mention the rock arch, it lends itself to an interpretation that assumes the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes knew about Rainbow Bridge. After all, the San Juans certainly did not detach themselves from their natural surroundings. Their creation story dictated cosmological explanations for life's origin and the bands' traditional rapport with the natural world. The San Juans' established homeland centered on two locations: Willow Springs, near present-day Tuba City, Arizona, and Navajo Mountain. In fact, the entire strip of Utah south of Glen Canyon and the San Juan River temporarily existed as a Southern Paiute Reservation during the early twentieth century. The Paiute Strip, which once housed Rainbow Bridge and Navajo Mountain, now falls within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation. Out populated, the smaller tribe struggled against Southern Utes, Mormons, and especially Navajos in an effort to remain on the land Coyote chose for them.

Evidence exists, too, that suggests some San Juans intermarried with and adopted the cultural and religious practices of the Diné who viewed Tsé Nani' áhígíí as sacred space. Referencing the Navajo Mountain community in the 1960s, for example, Shepardson and Hammond cited twenty-four Diné matrilineages—descent through females—that constituted ten clans and three additional familial lines of San Juans, one of which consisted of the Southern Paiute *Áshijíhi* Clan that had inhabited the region for

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 164–65; and Pamela A. Bunte and Robert J. Franklin, *From the Sands to the Mountain: Change and Persistence in a Southern Paiute Community*, Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians, eds. Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 227).

six generations.<sup>60</sup> The presence of two clans sharing the same name from different tribes indicates a complicated web of ancestral roots among the western Diné and the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes. No matter the length of time San Juans occupied the rock-arch area or the extent of their relations with local Diné, Navajos living in the same vicinity sometimes snubbed Southern Paiutes and labeled them non-Navajo as the He-Who-Kicks-Off-Rocks myth evinced. That story situated the Paiutes in a forbidden, foreign, buzzard-laden land complete with monsters. Similarly, during the early twentieth century, when Wetherill asked his Navajo packer Sharkie to accompany him to the rock arch, Sharkie refused but suggested that Nasjah Begay or Ná'áashjaa' Biye,' a Southern Paiute bearing an obvious Navajo name, escort his trader friend because apparently Begay did not attach the same religious value to Rainbow Bridge as did Sharkie.

Euroamericans rooted in time, as opposed to space, obsessed over the earliest “discovery” of the rock arch, placing great import on who saw it first. Unless local Indians could potentially lead white explorers, anthropologists, or archaeologists to the rock arch, American expeditionaries did not care about Indian stories centered on the rock arch or whether Native peoples knew about Rainbow Bridge for centuries before Europeans arrived in the Glen Canyon region. Indigenous populations of the Colorado Plateau, in contrast, did not understand or bother with the sort of Euroamerican fixation on firsts. They viewed the rock arch and its hinterland as sacred space and attached a more profound meaning to it than American trespassers. For Euroamericans, however, Rainbow Bridge's existence and the awe it inspired could not be fully validated until white eyes had gazed upon the geologic marvel. In the sweltering heat of August 1909,

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<sup>60</sup> Shepardson and Hammond, *The Navajo Mountain Community*, 40.

two rival exploratory parties, one led by self-taught archaeologist and University of Utah dean Byron Cummings and the other piloted by surveyor William Boone Douglass under the auspices of the U.S. General Land Office (GLO), launched a joint foray in search of Rainbow Bridge. Both groups of men employed local Southern Paiutes as guides. Jim Mike, also known as Mike's Boy, worked for Douglass and his crew, while Nasja Begay labored under Cummings's directorship. "Seeing the white man's appreciation of this form of wind & water erosion," Douglass wrote to the Commissioner of the General Land Office (precursor to the Bureau of Land Management) after the group had surveyed present-day Navajo National Monument, "Jim told of a greater bridge . . . located on the north side of Navajo Mt. in the Paiute Indian Reservation."<sup>61</sup> Douglass explained to his boss that "bending a twig in rainbow-shape, with its ends stuck in the ground, Jim showed [us] what his bridge looked like."<sup>62</sup> Yet, when river runner and Colorado River historian Otis Reed "Dock" Marston interviewed Jim Mike in the early 1960s, concerning his stint with the Douglass expedition, Mike's Boy denied any reverence for Rainbow Bridge among Southern Paiutes. His Hopi neighbors must have felt differently.

Diverse, sometimes conflicting, oral traditions among the Hopis reflect the influx and integration of various indigenous cultures to Hopiland during the last six or seven centuries. Hopi clan migration stories situate some ancestors near Rainbow Bridge and Navajo Mountain. According to an unidentified elder of the Snake Clan during the late

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<sup>61</sup> William Boone Douglass, "The Discovery of the Great Rainbow Natural Bridge: From the Report of W. B. Douglass, Examiner of Surveys to the Commissioner, General Land Office," May 1910, folder 23, box 1, Rainbow Bridge National Monument Collection, Special Collections and Archives Department, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University Flagstaff, Arizona.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

nineteenth century, Hopis “at the general dispersal . . . lived in snake skins, each family occupying a separate snake skin bag, and all were hung on the end of a rainbow, which swung around until the end touched Navajo Mountain, where the bags dropped from it; and wherever a bag dropped, there was their house.”<sup>63</sup> The rainbow mentioned here arguably represents the rock arch. Likewise, this origin myth bestows great import on this place as it defines the Snake Clan’s birthplace. One undated newspaper article reinforced the elder’s claim when it carried the headline, “Hopis Maintain Rainbow Bridge Still Is Theirs.” In this brief commentary, reporter John Bristol charged that the Hopis worship Rainbow Bridge and see Navajos as invaders who “wrongfully make claim to the beautiful arch.”<sup>64</sup> Perhaps Bristol wrote his piece during the mid-1970s when tensions between the two Native groups escalated because of the U.S. government’s recent implementation of the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act (a.k.a. Public Law 93-531)—a divisive piece of legislation purportedly designed to settle the Navajo-Hopi land dispute that originated in the 1880s, when President Chester A. Arthur established the “Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Area,” 2.5 million acres of land “shared” between the two tribes.

Early twentieth-century archaeologists and explorers noted a shrine or altar once located at the base of Rainbow Bridge. Many of these educated white men alleged that it indicated an early Pueblo occupation. Cummings drew a hackneyed image of the noble Indian living in harmony with nature, a theory prevalent in early-twentieth century

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<sup>63</sup> Snake Clan elder, quoted in Victor Mindeleff, *A Study of Pueblo Architecture in Tusayan and Cibola* (1891; repr. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>64</sup> John Bristol, “Hopis Maintain Rainbow Bridge Still Is Theirs,” unidentified newspaper, n.d., folder 24, Rainbow Bridge National Monument Collection, Special Collections and Archives Department, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona.

thought and literature. In 1910, he told *National Geographic* readers that, “In its shadow on the bench at one side are the remains of what was probably an ancient fire shrine. One can easily imagine a group of cliff-dwellers gathered around a sacred fire with offerings to the Sun Father and Earth Mother.”<sup>65</sup> In 1932, folklorist and adventurer Robert Frothingham mused: “No wonder the ancient Indians invested it with supernatural powers and built an altar beneath it where they might propitiate their gods!”<sup>66</sup> These naïve ponderings hardly scraped the surface of Native cultural and spiritual meanings attached to Rainbow Bridge. In addition, they shine a child-of-nature light on indigenous populations living in the area that contributed to the degradation of Native peoples and the persistence of American Indian stereotypes common among early-twentieth-century Americans.

Indeed, Rainbow Bridge sits inside the Hopis’ original province. Anthropological investigations and Hopitu oral tradition indicate the movement of numerous clans, or families, that traveled sizeable distances from the north, east, and south before joining and integrating with the Hopis. The Snake and Horn clans and those people related to them, for example, migrated from the Navajo Mountain region south to Hopiland, which today encompasses a dozen villages positioned between Keam’s Canyon and Tuba City, Arizona.<sup>67</sup> The shrine or altar at the base of Rainbow Bridge certainly suggested an early Puebloan use of the rock arch, but geographer Stephen C. Jett argues its presence did not

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<sup>65</sup> Byron Cummings, “The Great Natural Bridges of Utah,” *The National Geographic Magazine*, 21, no. 2 (1910): 165.

<sup>66</sup> Frothingham, *Trails through the Golden West*, 56.

<sup>67</sup> Harold Courlander, ed., *Hopi Voices: Recollections, Traditions, and Narratives of the Hopi Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), xii–xiii.

necessarily indicate any sort of religious significance for Hopis.<sup>68</sup> The tribe, or at least some members of its clans, may disagree with Jett's assessment. Clearly the Hopi Snake Clan holds the geographical feature in high regard. Bristol's newspaper article—assuming it accurately describes the importance of the rock arch to Hopis—also disputes Jett's conclusion. Basing his story on the remembrances of Mormon missionary Christen L. Christensen, who proselytized among the Navajos, Hopis, and other Native groups for more than forty years, Bristol maintained that Hopis believe Rainbow Bridge represented the “last retreat as the battle [between Navajos and Hopis four hundred years ago] went against the first possessors of the land.”<sup>69</sup> Hopi ancestors undoubtedly knew about Rainbow Bridge and attached some sort of cultural and religious meaning to it. Perhaps the Hopis also used the rock arch as a place of refuge and protection. In this instance, however, Hopis saw the Navajos themselves as treacherous outsiders trespassing on their territory. Bristol points out the Hopis' spiritual attachment to Rainbow Bridge and their struggle to sustain religious practices there. “The Hopis worship the bridge,” Bristol continues, “and are strenuously persistent . . . that the Navajos are invaders . . . deep down in their hearts [the Hopis] cherish the belief, the conviction that the day will come when it is once more actually their arch.”<sup>70</sup>

Hopis call the rock arch *nanivokuuwi* (the rock that is round and is braced on both sides). In addition to the origin story of the Snake Clan, other Hopi myths surround Rainbow Bridge. These stories give this site value and transform it into a geomythic

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<sup>68</sup> Jett, “Testimony of the Sacredness of Rainbow Natural Bridge,” 135.

<sup>69</sup> Bristol, “Hopis Maintain Rainbow Bridge Still Is Theirs.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

place that teems with life, culture, and spiritual qualities. According to former Hopi tribal chairman Ferrell Secakuku, a member of the Snake Clan from Sipaulovi, Arizona, on Second Mesa of Hopiland, the Snake Clan's culture hero, Tiyo, trained during mythological times to raft the Colorado River, *Pisisvayu* in Hopi. To accomplish this goal, Tiyo ran in all four directions—north, west, south, and east—for four consecutive days. When he went west on the second day, however, Tiyo stumbled upon Rainbow Bridge. In an attempt to cross the natural bridge, Tiyo ran at great speeds, leaping over the seemingly insurmountable geologic feature. According to Secakuku, the Deer, Snake, Badger, and Bear clans attach cultural meaning to the rock arch because of Tiyo's bravery and determination to traverse the stone bridge.<sup>71</sup> In this story, comparable to those Navajo narratives associated with Tsé Nani' áhígíí, the rock arch represents a road over which gods or mythical heroes traveled.

Hopi origin stories narrate the formation of the Colorado Plateau on a larger scale. Indicative of the multifaceted nature surrounding Hopitu oral tradition, one myth credits Hard Substances Woman with creation while another story points to Spider Old Woman and the warrior brothers Pokunghoya and Polonghoya as the deities responsible for earthly and cosmological exploits. Pokunghoya and Polonghoya, for example, threw lightning bolts and piled mud in huge heaps, slashing the earth's surface and sculpting the environmental wonders of the Colorado Plateau as they played *nahoydadatsia* (a ball and

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<sup>71</sup> Ferrell Secakuku, quoted in National Museum of North American Indians, "Supawlavi Village, Hopi Nation," <http://www.indigenousgeography.si.edu/themes.asp?commID=1&themeID=2&lang=eng&fullCopy=1>.

stick game similar to shinny).<sup>72</sup> Through their playful adventures, the brothers dictated the course of the Colorado River through Glen and Grand canyons and formed the mountains, mesas, buttes and spires, and numerous canyons that sever the high desert landscape.

In addition to Rainbow Bridge, Navajo Mountain or *Tokonavi*, meaning Black Mountain in Hopi, represents a religious, cultural, and ancestral space for Hopis where they still pay ceremonial visits.<sup>73</sup> In his testimony in 2005, Secakuku maintained Tokonavi envelopes two hundred archaeological sites that belong to the Hopis. One hundred years prior to Secakuku's claim, an unidentified Snake Clan elder told ethnographer Victor Mindeleff about a pause in his family's migration at which time they built "round and square houses, and all the ruins between here and Navajo Mountain mark the places where our people lived."<sup>74</sup> Anthropologist Patrick D. Lyons contends that Tokonavi represents the ancestral home of many Hopi clans: the Antelope, Cholla Cactus, Deer, Dove, Elk, Flute, Horn, Lizard, Millet, Mountain Lion (Puma), Mountain Sheep, Nopal Cactus, Prickly Pear (Opuntia), Rattlesnake (Snake), and Sand.<sup>75</sup> Analogous with Navajo oral traditions concerning the landmass, Hopis insist that a natural spring lies at the crest of Tokonavi, symbolizing the origin or birthplace of rain clouds, which eventually drift east toward Hopiland to baptize its people with water and

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<sup>72</sup> Richard O. Clemmer, *Roads in the Sky: The Hopi Indians in a Century of Change*, Conflict and Social Change Series (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 15–16.

<sup>73</sup> Jett, "Testimony to the Sacredness of Rainbow Natural Bridge," 135.

<sup>74</sup> Snake Clan elder, quoted in Mindeleff, *A Study of Pueblo Architecture in Tusayan and Cibola*, 18.

<sup>75</sup> Patrick D. Lyons, *Ancestral Hopi Migrations*, Anthropological Papers of the University of Arizona, no. 68 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 88–91.

life. The parallel between Navajo and Hopi stories about these places in the vicinity of Glen Canyon seems almost too coincidental. The juxtaposition of the Hopi oral tradition with that of the Diné reveals a cross-cultural borrowing that highlights a possible Hopi influence on Navajo newcomers to the region. No doubt, however, both tribes, along with the San Juan Paiutes, view the rock arch and its hinterland as sacred space worthy of protection.

All these origin stories center on Glen Canyon, the Rainbow Plateau, and the individual sites that comprise the whole region. They reveal a familial, spiritual, and cultural interconnectedness to the ecological systems that encompass the rock arch and its shielding sibling Navajo Mountain. Likewise, indigenous oral tradition attaches profound meaning to these sites transforming them into sacred places. The stories demarcate the parameters of experienced reality for the Diné, the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes, and the Hopis. They highlight important aspects of life for these Native groups and divulge cultural, religious, and environmentally significant attributes, including water, creation, and protection from enemies. These mythic structures then engage indigenous peoples with their respective biospheres. Unlike a Judeo-Christian worldview that crystallizes its creation stories in time and separates its followers from the natural world, Native oral traditions tie their adherents to ecological spaces within their various cultural boundaries. These divergent environmental perceptions figured heavily in a land-use dispute over parts of San Juan County, Utah, that developed between Navajos who had long dwelled in the area and Mormon newcomers whose ancestors had only settled the region a few decades prior to 1950.



## Chapter 2

### “Rock the Boat, Skin the Goat”: Navajos’ Struggle to Maintain Land-use Rights in Southeastern Utah

Driving west from Cortez, Colorado, on a secluded highway southeast of Hovenweep National Monument in San Juan County, Utah, modern-day sojourners skirt along the northern parameters of the Ute Mountain Reservation and enter a remote section of the Navajo Nation known locally as the Aneth Extension.<sup>76</sup> Here, the road dips south until it reaches the banks of the San Juan River and turns west toward Montezuma Creek, Utah, a small community composed of little more than a post office and a café just inside the political boundaries of *Diné Bikéyah* (the Navajo Reservation). Desert scrub brush, oil fields and pipelines, sand dunes, hogans, abandoned uranium mines, fluted mesas, ancient petroglyphs, and dry creek beds that flow to the San Juan and eventually the Colorado River pepper the arid, windswept landscape, while canyons bifurcate its boundless, raw space. McCracken Mesa, a large swath of relatively flat land flanked on both sides by deep canyons littered with massive sandstone boulders, lies due north of Montezuma Creek. For six years during the 1950s, McCracken Mesa witnessed white ranchers, who primarily followed the industrialized tenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) and worked under the auspices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), commit unspeakable atrocities against local bands of Navajos and their livestock. This chain of events began less than a decade after stock reduction officially ended on the reservation. The violence eventually led to an acre-for-acre land swap that traded federally owned public lands on McCracken Mesa for tribal lands in

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<sup>76</sup> For the chapter title, see Robert Hunter and Jerry Garcia, “U.S. Blues,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist and David Dodd, annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 218.

Glen Canyon and on Manson Mesa, both areas deemed essential to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam and a town site at Page, Arizona.

Four years before engineers began the assembly of Glen Canyon Dam on 15 October 1956, Navajos who lived near Montezuma Creek and grazed their livestock on McCracken Mesa endured a level of sadism enacted against them, their animals, and their families reminiscent of the stock-reduction era of the 1930s and 1940s. Conflicts over land and resources ignited between Navajos and LDS newcomers almost immediately following the migration of Mormon settlers from Iron County, Utah, to the southeastern corner of the Beehive State during the late nineteenth century. The acts of violence perpetrated against the Diné during the early 1950s, however, represented a new epoch in their relationship. Citing the Utah abandoned horse statute (Utah Code 47-2) as justification for their madness, BLM range manager Dale H. Kinnaman and his associates unleashed a brutal campaign against Montezuma Creek Navajos that targeted their horses and burros, animals needed primarily for transportation and tending herds of sheep, goats, and cattle. The abandoned horse statute required BLM range managers to publish three consecutive notices of intent to eliminate abandoned horses, defined as mavericks “running at large on the open range,” in local newspapers, and to post broadsides at the county courthouse in Monticello and outside the county seat on public highways. Kinnaman complied, fully aware that most Montezuma Creek Navajos neither spoke nor read English. Pending federal and state court cases limited Kinnaman’s lawful abilities to drive Montezuma Creek Navajos and their sheep off Taylor Grazing Act lands. Instead, he relied on the legal mandates of the abandoned horse statute to rid public lands of the alleged Navajo menace. Kinnaman and San Juan County commissioners and ranchers

focused their energies on horses and burros because they knew Montezuma Creek Navajos could not survive without them. The local Diné used the animals to herd livestock, gather fuel, collect food, and travel long distances over rugged terrain.

During the roundup, range riders stole 115 horses and 38 burros that belonged to Navajos living near McCracken Mesa. These men haphazardly crammed too many horses into truck trailers when loading the brutes for transportation to government-owned and -operated corrals. If or when they could not handle the animals, Kinnaman and crew shot them, leaving their dead carcasses to rot on the open range. Attempting to soften the image of their actions, BLM officials insisted they killed only feeble or injured animals.<sup>77</sup> In one particular instance, federal agent Dee P. Black shot the foot of an animate horse whose leg jutted from a crowded truck bed. They either sold the survivors of this (appalling) ordeal locally or they trucked them to the nearest horsemeat plant or glue factory in Provo, Utah, some 350 miles from San Juan County. The advisory board for Utah Grazing District Six (San Juan County), incestuously comprised of local white stockmen guilty of committing these atrocities, retained the seventeen hundred dollars garnered through the horse sale. None of the Navajos received monetary compensation for their swindled stock nor did they have an opportunity to reclaim their animals. Indeed, on one occasion, Navajo herder Hosteen Sakezzie and his family tracked their horses for thirty-five miles, locating them at a U.S. government corral. During a conversation with Black in which Sakezzie asked the commissioner to return his horses, a local rancher retrieved several men armed with rifles from his vehicle. Sakezzie reported that these bullies then cocked their firearms, conveying to him and his family their intent to kill the

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<sup>77</sup> *Hatahley v. United States*, 351 U.S. 173 (1956).

Navajo clan if Sakezzie tried to retake his animals. Acknowledging this display of power, Sakezzie and his family returned home without their horses. In addition to this intimidation of local Diné and flagrant manipulation of the law, Kinnaman, Black, and other San Juan County ranchers clearly exerted racist behaviors when they directly delivered five horses that belonged to white men, and accidentally gathered with Navajo stock during the roundup, to their owners' pastures or corrals for a handling fee of \$2.50 per head.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, federal officials required Navajo claimants to pay sixty dollars per head, a fee consciously set beyond the financial reach of Diné herders, for returned horses and burros. In the end, San Juan County ranchers wanted local Navajos off their land despite Indian claims to it.

This story, which led to an eventual land swap beneficial to both Navajos and the U.S. government, seems to have fallen from the pages of Diné history and escaped Navajo cultural memory. Further, historians who know the Colorado Plateau's physical and cultural landscapes best have also forgotten the story's value, not only to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam but to the Montezuma Creek Navajos who stood their ground and fought for land-use rights to their homeland in spite of tremendous challenges and overwhelming political power. More importantly, the violence and terrorism directed at the area's Navajo population on McCracken Mesa signified the zenith of long and contentious battles between Mormon colonizers and Native peoples inhabiting the San Juan region. Although federal officials agreed to the land swap because the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation needed Diné lands for the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, its outcome favored local Navajos whose oral traditions dictated their relationship to homeland.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore, the tenacity of Navajo elders from Montezuma Creek to retain their land-use rights in southeastern Utah laid the foundation for future Diné land-tenure struggles associated with Glen Canyon Dam and the inundating waters of Lake Powell. McCracken Mesa and Glen Canyon indeed symbolized two politicized spaces altered and linked by the dam. Construction began on an autumn day in 1956, when U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower pressed a telegraphic button from his desk in the Oval Office signaling the start of a major mechanical feat that sealed the Colorado Plateau's fate. The president's seemingly effortless motion sent shock waves approximately twenty-four hundred miles through electrical wires to the dam site in Arizona, thirteen miles below the Utah border, blasting the red sandstone walls of Glen Canyon into smithereens.

Covering recent developments on McCracken Mesa, reporters for the *San Juan Record*, a small community weekly headquartered in the county seat of Monticello, failed to recognize, or perhaps understand, the historical presence of Native peoples in southeastern Utah long before Mormon settlement occurred here in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ancestral Puebloans represent the first indigenous peoples to inhabit the region followed by Utes and Southern Paiutes, southern Numic speakers of the Shoshonean language group who migrated from the Great Basin to the Colorado Plateau approximately one thousand years ago. The archaeological and ethnographic record for these two tribes continues to elude modern-day researchers. Several explanations exist for this investigative impasse, including the convolution of campsites and material remains owing to the paucity of pottery, nondescript dwellings, and the limited technology available to hunter-gatherer cultures. The Utes' employment of previous indigenous settlers' encampments and objects also contributes to the difficulties of tracing these

peoples. Furthermore, the Utes and Southern Paiutes spoke related dialects of the same language causing early Spanish explorers to classify them as Yutas. Anthropologist David M. Brugge notes that “the term *Yuta* . . . was obviously used as a general term for all Utes and Paiutes.”<sup>79</sup> By the 1700s, the Utes had adapted to an equestrian lifestyle, adopting aspects of Plains Indian culture, while Paiutes maintained a largely nonequestrian life way, operating in familial groups with no centralized leadership, organized religious practices, and common goals.<sup>80</sup>

San Juan County’s twentieth-century denizenry, primarily descendents of Mormon pioneers who traversed the Hole-in-the-Rock crossing through Glen Canyon in an attempt to open a short, direct route from Escalante, Utah, to the San Juan country during the winter of 1879 and 1880, seemed less concerned with Ute, Paiute, and even Hopi occupation of the region than Diné historical claims to it. Hopi creation stories certainly root them in this area, but perhaps the origins of Utes and Paiutes in other centers of the West made them appear less threatening to Mormon latecomers than the Navajo herders whose oral traditions and geomythic mapping demarcated tribal realities. The Navajo tribe’s adverse relations with Mormon settlers, beginning in the late nineteenth century, and its growing political prowess immediately following World War II, and continuing for the next three decades, may have contributed to an increased paranoia among San Juan County Saints who anticipated the Diné might eventually reclaim their ancestral territory.

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<sup>79</sup> David M. Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church Records of New Mexico, 1694–1875*, Research Report, no. 1 (Window Rock, Ariz.: Research Section, Parks and Recreation Department, Navajo Tribe, 1968), 19.

<sup>80</sup> Robert S. McPherson, *A History of San Juan County: In the Palm of Time* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Commission, 1995), 53.

By 1950, Mormons had lived in San Juan County, Utah, for only eight decades. Their relatively recent arrival in the area, when compared to the presence of Native peoples, did not prevent LDS members from claiming San Juan County as their “God-given” domain. Indeed, they believed in divine intervention. Their escape from religious persecution in the East and subsequent trek across the Great Plains into Deseret, a perceived promised land that originally encompassed parts of present-day New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado, and all of Utah, transformed this cohort of pioneers into God-fearing Saints. Survivors of the migration equated their self-imposed exile from the eastern United States to the Israelites’ flight from Egypt and wilderness journey into the biblical Promised Land. In both stories, the Israelites and the Saints emerged as “an ethnic body, a chosen race.”<sup>81</sup>

This paradigmatic belief system dovetailed with the Hole-in-the Rock expedition, culminating in Mormon settlement of southeastern Utah during the 1880s. During the winter of 1879, LDS president John Taylor issued a call to missionize the San Juan region. The church hierarchy envisioned ambitious goals, which included bringing the area’s Native population into the church’s fold; ensuring Mormon domination of southeastern Utah; opening up farmlands and pastures for cultivation and grazing; and building a foundation for LDS colonies to the north, south, and east of the San Juan region. Most of the 236 men, women, and children who comprised the mission, complete with eighty wagons and one thousand head of cattle, had resided in three Iron County, Utah, towns: Parowan, Paragonah, and Cedar City, all villages in the southwestern corner

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<sup>81</sup> Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 122.

of the territory.<sup>82</sup> Colloquially known as the Hole-in-the-Rockers, the expeditionaries survived a six-week trip that morphed into a six-month journey from Escalante, Utah, athwart 260 miles of arduous red-rock terrain into the depths of Glen Canyon through a narrow slit in its west wall at the tip of Kaiparowits Plateau on makeshift staves a thousand feet above the Colorado River. Nearly starved, the party then ferried their cattle-laden cargo through the frigid waters of the Rio Colorado near Hall's Crossing, across the Clay Hills, over Cedar Mesa, down Comb Wash, to the banks of the San Juan River, where they founded the town of Bluff.<sup>83</sup> Amazingly, San Juan County settlers did not lose a single human life during the entire ordeal. The Hole-in-the-Rockers also settled Blanding and Monticello, developing a murky relationship with the area's landscape and indigenous populations. Although the broken and battered red-rock country bewildered many San Juan Saints as they trudged across the Colorado Plateau, their unyielding faith in God comforted them in their attempt to conquer the surging sea of slickrock. "It's the roughest country you or anybody else ever seen," Elizabeth Morris Decker wrote to her parents back in Parowan, "it's nothing in the world but rocks and holes, hills and hollows," but the Saints "are just singing 'Come let us anew our journey pursue' before prayer."<sup>84</sup> From their point-of-view, the Saints' reliance on God for their survival and

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<sup>82</sup> Utah did not gain statehood until 1896.

<sup>83</sup> Amy Irvine, *Trespass: Living at the Edge of the Promised Land* (New York: North Point Press, 2008), 44–46.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Morris Decker, letter to Mother and Father, Grey Mesa, Utah, 22 February 1880, in David E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock: An Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1966), 197.

their willingness to proselytize in spite of harsh conditions pleased the “Heavenly Father” who rewarded them with a sacred space all their own.

The Hole-in-the-Rock expedition has become a central thread in San Juan County’s social fabric, a “springboard for a culture of cowpunching, road-building, and wilderness-conquering.”<sup>85</sup> Sixth-generation Utahn and Jack Mormon Amy Irvine argues “only God’s laws and cattle rule the land” in San Juan County. “Everything,” Irvine writes in her probing memoir about life in southeastern Utah, “is described, measured, and comprehended in terms of divine will and forage.”<sup>86</sup> Twentieth-century descendants of San Juan County’s LDS pioneers desperately wanted to rid their God-given land of pesky Natives, rooted in the same habitat through their own origin stories, to make way for Mormons and their cows.

Respected Navajo scholars Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton suggest that the Diné, Athabaskan language speakers, emigrated from their homeland in the interior of northwestern Canada, ultimately moving to the Southwest and appropriating various aspects of Puebloan cultures.<sup>87</sup> This southern migration theory represents the logos, the root word for logic, which, according to Navajo environmental historian Milford Muskett, “tells us how we got here but doesn’t tell us how to live.”<sup>88</sup> Navajo creation stories explain their occupancy of the region much differently. Their myths do not

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<sup>85</sup> Irvine, *Trespass*, 46.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton, *The Navaho* rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), 33.

<sup>88</sup> Milford Muskett, interview by Jack Loeffler, Seattle, Washington, 11 December 2008, in possession of author.

mention a northern exodus but rather a journey through four worlds before reaching the fifth, or Glittering World, they now inhabit. The Diné emergence story embodies the mythos that “taught us how we should interact with . . . spirits . . . each other, plants and animals, and culture and society.”<sup>89</sup> This idea of logos versus mythos epitomizes conflicting ideologies that divide Mormons and Navajos, especially as they relate to Nature. Navajo myths and stories dictate their rapport with the environment and its various components, whereas LDS Saints, reflecting Judeo-Christian philosophies, tend to view the natural world as a God-given sphere in need of caretakers who remain separate from its biotic community. These differing belief systems, then, shape the ways in which their respective adherents attach meaning to homeland.

In addition to Navajo oral traditions, archaeological evidence, too, reconfirms a Diné presence in San Juan County, Utah, well before the mid-nineteenth century. Tree-ring dates from archaeological ruins in White Canyon, a white sandstone side-section of Glen Canyon that begins on the southwestern slopes of the Bears Ears on the eastern banks of the Colorado River, indicate the earliest Navajo structures appeared in modern-day San Juan County, Utah, sometime around the seventeenth century. Additionally, Montezuma Creek, Butler Wash in Canyonlands National Park, and the Bears Ears near Natural Bridges National Monument contain archaeological evidence of a Navajo existence from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>90</sup> According to Navajo elders

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. For an intriguing discussion of mythos versus logos, see Michael Dames, *Mythic Ireland* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992).

<sup>90</sup> J. Lee Correll, *Through White Men’s Eyes, A Contribution to Navajo History: A Chronological Record of the Navaho People from Earliest Times to the Treaty of June 1, 1868*, 6 vols. (Window Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Heritage Center, 1979), 1:27, 45. For a discussion of the Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos’ presence in San Juan County, Utah, before Euroamerican settlement, see Robert S. McPherson, “Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos Come to

Hosteen Sakezzie, Caroline Naughty-Girl, Hosteen Kitsili, and Tomas Waving-Hand, all from Montezuma Creek, Diné oral traditions craft a narrative that places them “from time immemorial . . . in permanently constructed ‘hogans’” on public land in San Juan County.<sup>91</sup>

Traditional territory of the Utes and Southern Paiutes, the northwestern corner of Navajoland enveloping McCracken Mesa, Monument Valley, and Navajo Mountain represents one of the most remote areas of the entire Four Corners region. Few roads existed here in 1950, isolating the region’s Navajo population from the eastern peripheries of the reservation. In an interview recollecting his ancestors’ Long Walk stories, Navajo Mountain herder George Longsalt of the *Kinlichii’nii* or Red House People Clan spoke about this disconnect, telling his audience that “Here at Navajo Mountain we live our own separate ways. I guess the Navajos from other parts of the Reservation think of us as people who live peacefully and quietly. But that isn’t quite right. We just ignore each other up here.”<sup>92</sup> This remoteness fostered a local culture where many of its adherents did not speak English, even as late as 1950, and did not engage with the more densely populated areas of eastern Navajoland. At first glance, the region’s natural surroundings seem to differ from the more familiar geophysical landscapes of eastern Dinétah, including Canyon de Chelly, the Chuska Mountains, and Shiprock. An astute observer, however, places McCracken Mesa and its inhabitants in an

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San Juan: Setting the Foundation, A.D. 1100 to 1880,” in *A History of San Juan County: In the Palm of Time* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Commission, 1995), 49–72.

<sup>91</sup> *Hatahley v. United States*, 351 U.S. 173 (1956).

<sup>92</sup> George Longsalt, quoted in Broderick H. Johnson, ed., *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period* (Tsaile, Ariz.: Diné College Press, 1973), 168.

ecological, cultural, and historical context that encompasses not only the Four Corners region but also the entire Colorado River watershed. Fed by small tributaries flowing to the San Juan and Colorado rivers, which ultimately meander through Glen and Grand canyons enroute to the Sea of Cortés, the seemingly harsh and unyielding habitat of San Juan County, Utah, embraces a local Navajo culture characterized by years of violence, resistance, and adaptation as well as a fundamental belief in the sacredness of landscape. These experiences, combined with a spirituality rooted in habitat, connect the area's residents to all western Dinétah through a common identity earmarked by both the Long Walk and stock reduction.

Battles between polarized groups with self-interests as varied as San Juan County's environmental backdrop pervade the region's history and its cosmic landscapes. A little more than a century before the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, for example, intertribal warfare between Navajos and Utes and their Comanche allies plagued the area. In addition to this violence, Navajos endured drought and early frost that caused their corn harvest to fail in 1857.<sup>93</sup> Referred to as the "Fearing Time" by older Navajo Mountain residents, the late 1850s represented an era in Navajo history dominated by raids in which Utes and Comanches, encouraged by Anglos, stole Navajo livestock and crops and kidnapped members of their community, selling the captured Diné, typically women and children, as slaves at markets in Rio Arriba, Abiquiu, and Taos, New Mexico. Eighty-nine years old at the time, Navajo Mountain medicine man Robert Longsalt of the *Áshijí* or Salt People Clan remembered in 1973, "That [Chinle and

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<sup>93</sup> Robert S. McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture: The Utah Experience in the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 11.

Canyon de Chelly] was where most battles were fought between the Navajos and the Utes, Apaches, Mexicans and even the Paiutes. All these other Indian tribes were our enemies.” “The Navajos,” Longsalt said, “fled everywhere, wandering all over the place. Lots of our people were killed; in return, we killed a lot of their men.”<sup>94</sup> Likewise, Haskéniinii Begay, the son of Hashkéniinii, recalled that “during this time we lived constantly in fear of four enemies: the Utes, the white soldiers, bands of raiding Mexicans—and hunger. My mother was more afraid of the Utes than all others. They often made slaves of our women.”<sup>95</sup> Ignoring arbitrary lines drawn in the sand delineating different territories, the Diné vengefully raided other tribes—primarily the Pueblos in New Mexico—and non-Indian settlers, including Mexicans and newly arrived Anglos, in retaliation for perceived wrongs enacted against them. As Euroamericans poured into the tumultuous Southwest in the mid-nineteenth century, U.S. officials typically tolerated intertribal raids but did not countenance attacks against white immigrants.<sup>96</sup>

In 1863, after decades of dealing with a seeming Navajo menace, the newly arrived commander of the Department of New Mexico, Brigadier General James Henry Carleton ordered Christopher Houston “Kit” Carson to round-up the Navajos as a precursor to their removal. In January 1864, Carson, with the help of Ute scouts, breached the Navajos’ stronghold at Canyon de Chelly in northeastern Arizona during an extreme cold snap. Here, he launched a scorched-earth campaign that left nothing in its

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<sup>94</sup> Robert Longsalt, quoted in Johnson, *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period*, 169.

<sup>95</sup> Hashkéniinii Begay, quoted in Charles Kelly, “Hoskaninni: A Story of the Desert,” p. 6, manuscript, folder 8, box 11, Charles Kelly Papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>96</sup> Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 192.

wake, including corn fields, peach orchards, hogans, and sheep herds. In addition to this environmental and cultural destruction, Carson had received strict orders from Carleton in September 1863 to relay to dissenting Navajos that they “go to the Bosque Redondo” or the U.S. Army would “pursue and destroy you” and would not “make peace with you on any other terms.” In the same letter, Carleton also told Carson to make sure the Diné understood that, “this war shall be pursued against you if it takes years . . . until you cease to exist or move.”<sup>97</sup> Wreaking havoc on the Diné, Carson’s crusade culminated in the removal of several thousand Navajos to Hwéeldi in eastern New Mexico along the Pecos River near Fort Sumner, some three hundred miles from Dinétah. Although Carson did not lead the Diné on the Long Walk to Hwéeldi, Navajos typically associate him with the series of events that concluded with a grueling four-year internment at the Bosque Redondo, where the People endured disease, malnutrition, enemy slave raids, physical abuse, and an alien environment.

The Long Walk and the Navajos’ imprisonment at the Bosque Redondo remain deeply embedded in Diné cultural memory as an ineffaceable sore that continues to fester through oral traditions. Some of the People, however, never went on the Long Walk. Instead, these small and autonomous familial bands of Navajos, led by Hashkéniinii who lived in the Kayenta–Monument Valley area; Dághaa Sikaad near Kaibito, Arizona; K’aayeelii at the Bears Ears in Utah; Whiskers at Black Mountain near present-day Flagstaff, Arizona; and others resisted their white colonizers and fled to the sun-drenched

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<sup>97</sup> James Henry Carleton to Christopher Carson, 19 September 1863, in United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1880–1901), 1:26:1:728 [hereafter cited as *OR*]. For an online facsimile of the *OR*, see <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/browse.monographs/waro.html>.

rockscape beyond the Little Colorado River. Hiding in various nooks and crannies the canyon country afforded, they migrated north–northeast to Glen Canyon, eventually infiltrating the entire western boundary of the present-day Navajo reservation from Lee’s Ferry, Arizona, to Montezuma Creek. They found refuge and protection in the cliff-girt backlands of Hopi territory, permeated with desolate chasms and blunt mesatops.

Hashkéniinii Begay, five years old when seventeen members of his family fled to Navajo Mountain, remembered the hardships of their escape as they descended the difficult trails from Oljato, Utah, to the lateral canyons that gravitated toward the Colorado River in present-day Glen Canyon. Like other Navajo children, Hashkéniinii Begay began herding sheep the moment he could toddle around camp. When his family absconded Carson’s wrath, Hashkéniinii Begay shepherded their small sheep herd across the rough terrain. Hoping to avoid deadly confrontations with Utes living nearby, Hashkéniinii’s band traveled mostly at night. Hashkéniinii Begay mused, “In the dark I stepped on many cactus thorns and soon my feet were swollen so I could hardly walk,” but “I herded those twenty sheep most of the way from Kayenta to Navajo Mountain.”<sup>98</sup>

Rumors claiming the People taken to Hwéeldi might never return to Dinétah spread among the refugees, while Bosque Redondo prisoners prayed to their gods begging for mercy and a chance to go home. The gods answered the People’s prayers on 28 May 1868, when General William T. Sherman signed a treaty with the Navajos imprisoned at Hwéeldi that established a permanent reservation straddling the New Mexico-Arizona border. This agreement allowed the Diné at the Bosque Redondo to return to the heart and soul of their homeland demarcated by the geomythic peripheries of

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<sup>98</sup> Hashkéniinii Begay, quoted in Charles Kelly, “Hoskaninni,” p. 7.

the four sacred directional mountains—*Tsisnaasjini*’ (Blanca Peak) east in Colorado; *Tsoodzil* (Mount Taylor) south in New Mexico; *Dook’o’oosliid* (San Francisco Peaks) west in Arizona; and *Dibe’ Nitsaa* (Bighorn Sheep Mountain or Hesperus Peak) north in Colorado—and fed by the four sacred rivers, the San Juan, Colorado, Little Colorado, and Rio Grande.

After the Long Walk debacle, expanding sheep herds sent the Diné deeper into Southern Paiute territory along the Colorado and San Juan rivers in search of water resources and agricultural and grazing land. George Longsalt hinted at the intertribalism that abounded in this area as he recounted his family’s stories centered on a time when “both the Navajos and the Paiutes cleared much of the land and made their cornfields [near the Colorado River]. The soil was very wet and fertile, and many members of both tribes used it.”<sup>99</sup> Intertribal relations grew complicated, however, as constituents of individual Native nations living in close proximity to each other asserted their ancestral rights to one land base. Perceived cooperation among indigenous groups quickly turned into competition fueled by Native nationalism and outside interests that capitalized on tribal differences. After he imparted familial knowledge about Navajo-Paiute associations centered on agricultural land near the Colorado River, George Longsalt also reported schisms between the two tribes. “Today,” recalled George, “the Paiutes claim that the land is theirs and that the Navajos were not the first ones [here] . . . the Paiutes are treating us just like the Hopis are doing, claiming that the land is theirs.”<sup>100</sup> Rifts over land and resources not only existed among the indigenous populations dwelling along the

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<sup>99</sup> George Longsalt, quoted in Johnson, *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period*, 168.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

sinuous ravines but also crept into the daily lives of Navajos living near Montezuma Creek. During the 1950s, these folks found themselves embroiled in a ranching dispute, exacerbated by severe drought, with Mormon stockowners and BLM officials over grazing rights on McCracken Mesa.

This foraging fracas traced its roots to the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which, combined with other New Deal programs, including dam construction, livestock reduction, and the Civilian Conservation Corps, propelled Uncle Sam into resource management. The act regulated stock growers' use of federally owned rangelands through grazing districts administered by advisory boards dominated by local Euroamerican ranchers. Within two years, the act withdrew 142 million acres of western lands, preventing their potential sale to private enterprises and reserving them for grazing under federal control through the Department of the Interior's new Grazing Service that later morphed into the Bureau of Land Management when the government merged it with the General Land Office in 1946. The U.S. government intended this conservation- and land-management center of the Department of the Interior, dubbed the "Bureau of Livestock and Mining" by wilderness defender Edward Abbey, to lease grazing rights to ranchers at reasonable rates, while it controlled excessive use of fragile rangelands strained by intensive grazing of domestic animals.<sup>101</sup> In reality, however, the Taylor Grazing Act represented another government scheme to turn habitat into money. Historian Patricia Nelson Limerick argues these permits "became yet another variation on the Western theme of property, . . . forming part of the rancher's assets, salable along

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<sup>101</sup> Edward Abbey, *Hayduke Lives!* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 16.

with his land.”<sup>102</sup> In San Juan County, for example, powerful local livestock owners, in anticipation of the withdrawal of federal lands by the nascent Grazing Service, applied for permits to 3.75 of the county’s 5.1 million acres of public land.<sup>103</sup> This move not only marginalized small white ranchers in the area but dispossessed the Diné from ancestral grazing lands on McCracken Mesa as well.

By the mid-1930s, expanding Navajo livestock herds that totaled nearly one million sheep and goats, or their equivalent in horses and cattle, had overgrazed reservation lands.<sup>104</sup> Unlike wild animals that roam from place to place, domestic livestock, guided by human hands, often fed in one place too long and, in the process, defoliated preferred forbs, shrubs, and grasses and eventually denuded native vegetation. The environmental destruction that followed, coupled with intense drought and high-energy summer storms that gripped the region during the late-nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries, hastened erosion. With little to no rainfall, native plants weakened, setting the stage for rapid erosion compounded by intense summer monsoons that caused flash flooding and scarred the landscape with shallow, dry arroyos still visible today.

The slaughter of indigenous plants by the overgrazing of domestic animals encouraged the invasion and spread of less palatable plants, such as greasewood and

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<sup>102</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1987), 156.

<sup>103</sup> “San Juan Livestock Men Apply for 3,750,000 Acres of Land,” *Monticello (Utah) San Juan Record*, 22 February 1934, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> Marsha Weisiger, “Gendered Injustice: Navajo Livestock Reduction in the New Deal Era,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 38 (winter 2007): 439.

snakeweed, and ultimately resulted in the alteration of entire ecosystems.<sup>105</sup> “The cattle,” Abbey cried in an essay somewhat reminiscent of the situation the Diné faced during the Depression, “have done, and are doing, intolerable damage to our public lands.” Contrary to the romanticized image of cowboys on the open range, Abbey believed a rancher “(with a few honorable exceptions) is a man who strings barbed wire all over the range; drills wells and bulldozes stock ponds; drives off elk and antelope and bighorn sheep; poisons coyotes and prairie dogs; shoots eagles, bears, and cougars on sight; supplants the native grasses with tumbleweed, snakeweed, povertyweed, cowshit, anthills, mud, dust, and flies,” and then “leans back and grins . . . and talks about how much he loves the American West.”<sup>106</sup> Perhaps Abbey should have lamented the dispossession of American Indians from their traditional homelands by cowboys and ranchers, too. The Navajos living near Montezuma Creek in southeastern Utah, for example, spent years resisting their ejection from McCracken Mesa by beef bosses and BLM officials before they gained control over a small portion of the area through a land exchange negotiated between the tribe and the U.S. government for the acquisition of Diné territory in Glen Canyon.

Abbey’s emblazoned description of western stock growers does not entirely correlate with Navajo herders of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. In “Even the Bad Guys Wear White Hats: Cowboys, Ranchers, and the Ruin of the West” (1986), Abbey targeted large ranchers, a group of men he defined as “bigtime farmers of the public lands.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 438; and Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 155.

<sup>106</sup> Edward Abbey, “Even the Bad Guys Wear White Hats: Cowboys, Ranchers, and the Ruin of the West,” *Harper’s* (January 1986): 51–55.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 55.

Whether Abbey lumped Diné herders in with this group of “welfare parasites” remains unclear, especially considering he expressed similar sentiments about Navajos and their overgrazing of livestock in other venues.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, in this mantra, he strips away all Navajo cultural context, including the social status and psychological security large herds afforded individual Diné families and their basic belief in ceremonies that restore order to the natural world and the return of hózhó, but he passionately depicts for readers the ecological destruction potentially caused by domesticated animals under the auspices of careless and arrogant saddle tramps. A sharp criticism of cowboys and ranchers and the environmental ruin they sometimes leave in their wake, Abbey’s quip stirs the emotions of his readers as it vilifies a popular American hero. No matter Abbey’s human subjects, he condemned pasturing large numbers of livestock on western public lands and the subsequent ecological impairment cattle, horses, sheep, and goats left behind, including the elimination of indigenous fauna and a decrease in native vegetation through the depletion of forage and a restructuring of plant communities. In the end he compared western public lands, especially in the Southwest, to the “cowburnt wasteland[s]” of “Mexico or southern Italy or North Africa,” and he considered the eventual ruin crafted by overgrazing as environmentally destructive as strip-mining mesas and mountains, clear-cutting forests, and damming rivers.<sup>109</sup>

The same ecological degradation that Abbey loathed in the mid-1980s plagued the Navajo Reservation and its satellite communities when John Collier became

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 52; and Jack Loeffler, *Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 202.

<sup>109</sup> Abbey, “Even the Bad Guys Wear White Hats,” 54.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the Depression years. The Navajo economy in 1933, a year before the adoption of a stock-reduction program on the reservation, focused almost exclusively on stock raising and agriculture. Linguist Robert W. Young purports that Navajos historically employed a class system centered on livestock. Wealthy members of Diné society owned vast herds while the “middle class” held modest numbers of stock, and the poor, who constituted a significant fraction of the population, worked as herders for large stock growers.<sup>110</sup> The latter group became especially vulnerable amidst social and economic bedlam. In addition to the economic importance of *dibe’* (sheep) to the Diné, sheep also symbolized the “backbone of Navajo society.” Elucidating the origin of Dibe’ Nitsaa’s name, Navajo weaver Roy Kady expounded on the animal’s significance to Diné ethos. “That is a very sacred animal,” Kady explained, “and that’s why our fourth sacred mountain is named Dibe’ Nitsaa. With that we’re strong. The reason why sheep is so important—in a lot of our traditional stories . . . told about all the monsters, it was the sheep, the bighorn sheep, that was the sole survivor of all poverty. Everything that has to do with poverty, the bighorn sheep withstood every test, even with the lightning gods.”<sup>111</sup> Given the importance of livestock, especially sheep, to the centrality of Navajo culture and society, the People could not fathom a proposal to reduce the number of head on reservation lands. In 1936, the Soil Conservation Service and the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), cognizant of the deteriorating health of reservation soil and the need for stock water development in

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<sup>110</sup> Robert W. Young, comp., *The Navajo Yearbook: 1951–1961, A Decade of Progress*, Report no. 8 (Window Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Agency, 1961), 151.

<sup>111</sup> Roy Kady, interview by Jack Loeffler, in Jack Loeffler, *Healing the West: Voices of Culture and Habitat* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2008), 69.

Navajo country, introduced to Diné bikéyah the same regulatory grazing system outlined by the Taylor Grazing Act.

This decision divided the land into eighteen districts based on how well each unit could support one horse, one cow, and four sheep. The tribal government then allotted grazing permits to families for a certain number of livestock on a specific piece of land. Confusion sprouted among the Diné over grazing districts, their carrying capacities, and permits given to individual families. Cultural differences over livestock ownership and the composition of family added to the mystification. While this mandate seemed reasonable to the scientific community who managed rangelands using animal unit months (AUMs), the minimum amount of land necessary to sustain one grazing cow (the equivalent of four sheep) for a month, it severely restricted Diné herders who saw livestock as life's necessity. The susceptibility of the poor and uneducated to understand fully the nature of their environmental issues or the solutions suggested by white scientists to resolve them caused many Diné to remain barely self-sufficient under its laws.

Moreover, the program added to the Navajos' mounting distrust and anger toward the heavy-handed tactics that *Washíindoon* (the federal government) used to accomplish its goals. The People increasingly viewed the U.S. government's agenda with alarm and suspicion and saw its operation as a threat to their survival. Navajo women, in particular, vociferously criticized this environmental injustice and expressed their resentment toward members of the tribal council who committed Navajo herders to sell surplus livestock to

the U.S. government.<sup>112</sup> In a letter to Collier in which he resigned as tribal chairman, Thomas H. Dodge, Henry Chee Dodge's son who had herded sheep as a child but commenced a number of stock-reduction initiatives as chairman, expressed the Navajos' disappointment in New Deal policies. "To them," he wrote, "the entire Navajo program is so complicated and involved that no amount of explanation will begin to make them see any rhyme or reason in it. This utter confusion . . . has had the effect of convincing them that the program was purposely made complicated and involved so that they would not get wise to the plan to rob them of their resources and their livestock."<sup>113</sup>

Coupled with the U.S. government's adoption of a general livestock-reduction program two years earlier in the name of conservation, the establishment of range-management districts quickly transformed into an all-out assault on Navajo livestock and culture. Under Collier's plan, thousands of butchered head, left to rot on the desert floor by their perpetrators, perished while their human herders endured emotional and physical abuse and harassment and lived constantly in fear. In 1939, writer and river-runner Charles Kelly spent a week with eighty-one-year-old Hashkéniinii Begay interviewing the old man and capturing his stories through interpreter Ray Hunt at Hashkéniinii Begay's hogan in Monument Valley. Kelly asked him about Collier's plan and the

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<sup>112</sup> Young, *The Navajo Yearbook*, 153. For a discussion of Diné women's resistance to environmental injustice during the stock reduction era, see Weisiger, "Gendered Injustice," 437–55.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas H. Dodge, letter to John Collier, 7 May 1936, Box 1, Folder 16, Thomas H. Dodge Collection, 1921–1972, ASU.MS.NO:33, University Libraries, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. A copy of this letter can also be found in Peter Iverson, ed., *"For Our Navajo People": Diné Letters, Speeches, and Petitions, 1900–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 175–77.

slaughtering of Diné animals occurring across Navajoland even as the two men spoke. Kelly admitted that he expected a recitation of many grievances; instead Hashkéniinii Begay poignantly expressed this sentiment: “Since earliest times the Navajos have had many enemies. First was the Utes who stole our women; then came the Mexicans, who stole our horses; then came the white soldiers who burned our homes and made us prisoners; then the Mormons, who took our land. We have always had the coyote, who killed our sheep—but now we have John Collier!”<sup>114</sup>

Striking parallels exist between the Long Walk and stock reduction. In both instances, the U.S. government “sneaked right up to [their] feet,” catching the People by surprise.<sup>115</sup> During the Long Walk, Washíndoon sent soldiers to round up the Navajos and destroy their homes, crops, sheep, and culture. Survivors of the Long Walk and their descendents recounted the painful ordeal through ghastly stories told around winter fires in their hogans. During stock reduction, seventy years later, the “troops” consisted of government agents, range riders, and tribal officials sympathetic to Washíndoon’s plans. Cultural memories of stock reduction, much like the Long Walk, remain among the Diné who see the program as a demoralizing yet defining moment in Navajo history, when the People suffered violent acts against them, their families, and their animals; resisted such tyranny; and in turn adapted to a new way of life.

As change became mandatory in the wake of stock reduction, the Diné adopted an economic structure largely built on off-reservation wage labor and resource development

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<sup>114</sup> Hashkéniinii Begay, quoted in Kelly, “Hoskaninni,” p. 19.

<sup>115</sup> Ralph Grey, quoted in Robert S. McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture: The Utah Experience in the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 110.

in the form of extractive industries, including oil and gas, coal, and, with the onset of the atomic age in 1945, uranium. In addition to an altered economic system, battles over stock reduction and an imposing paternalistic administrative authority cultivated a greater sense of Navajo nationalism and a shared identity that emerged from common oppression.<sup>116</sup> A heightened sense of community, Diné defiance against violent colonialism, and the tribe's participation in World War II, both at home and abroad, paved the way for Navajo self-determination in the following decades despite the onset of termination and relocation, Washííndoon's newest Indian policies that sought to assimilate Native populations into mainstream society. Furthermore, new tribal ambitions found solace in Congress's passage of the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act of 1950. A piece of Cold War legislation designed to offset foreign criticism targeting the U.S. government's treatment of its indigenous inhabitants, the new law channeled millions of dollars into tribal budgets for improved roads, schools, soil-conservation and range-improvement initiatives, irrigation projects, health facilities, and other institutions.

This abrupt economic shift does not mean the Diné abandoned long-standing livestock practices altogether. Indeed, sheep, goats, cattle, and horses remained a vital part of the Navajos' societal paradigm and continued to play an important role in their culture and economy. In 1950, for example, Montezuma Creek Navajos, still somewhat isolated and detached from the political hubs of the reservation, maintained a traditional life way centered on homeland and domesticated stock. Descendants of Diné who did not participate in the Long Walk to Hwéeldi, Montezuma Creek Navajos quickly reminded outsiders that their ancestors did not concede to Carson and his cronies but escaped

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<sup>116</sup> Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 145.

instead, using the “secret hiding places” in nearby canyons sculpted by the San Juan and Colorado rivers as hideouts. Their stories echoed oral traditions told by Navajo Mountain residents, insisting their grandparents “had not been captured” and “never signed the treaty of 1868.”<sup>117</sup> From their point-of-view, this historical detail automatically excluded them from any terms and conditions formally dictated in agreements, including the Treaty of 1868, negotiated between the tribe and the U.S. government.

Raising stock, however, required sufficient parcels of land able to support Diné animals as well as Mormon livestock. Divvying up federally owned western lands through grazing districts in a futile attempt to improve public pastures, the Taylor Grazing Act stood as a ethnocentric dominant-use statute that did not acknowledge Native ancestral claims to rangelands. Instead, the act encouraged wildly inflated estimates of available forage for established “landowners engaged in the livestock business” complete with a private-property ranching base.<sup>118</sup> In other words, the Taylor Grazing Act bolstered American assertions to rangelands while it ignored indigenous land-use rights. Combined with a western religion dominated by a faith in one “transcendental deity intent on subsuming the local spirit beings,” this sense of entitlement to the land and its subsequent delineation through unnatural, arbitrary, barbed-wired boundaries resulted in the secularization of landscape and assisted in turning

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas Waving Hand, quoted in “Court in Desert Hears Navajo,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1954.

<sup>118</sup> *Taylor Grazing Act of 1934*, Public Law 482, 73d Cong., 2d sess. (28 June 1934), 1271; and Sally K. Fairfax, “Beyond the Sagebrush Rebellion: The BLM as Neighbor and Manager in the Western States,” in *Western Public Lands: The Management of Natural Resources in a Time of Declining Federalism*, ed. John G. Francis and Richard Ganzel (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984), 83.

habitat into money.<sup>119</sup> A disastrous economic paradigm that disengages people from their natural surroundings, this ideal continues to dominate Euroamericans' sense of Nature and encourages western society to conquer its ecosystems through massive engineering feats such as Glen Canyon Dam. Moreover, and equally important, this belief system conflicts with local indigenous peoples who have "necessarily adapted to the carrying capacities" of their surrounding landscape and "exhibit[ed] models of cultural conduct that coincide with the flow of Nature."<sup>120</sup> This concept, not intended to evoke a romantic image of American Indians as original environmentalists, offers an alternative view of Nature that emphasizes a biotic community in which humans are a part of, not separate from, their ecosystems.<sup>121</sup>

Similar to bands of Diné living near Glen Canyon who practiced cyclical ceremonies celebrating their ties to the landscape before the construction of the dam, Navajo herders living near Montezuma Creek and McCracken Mesa participated in a cyclical grazing pattern that ranged stock during summer months atop forested mountains. In winter, they drove herds to lower elevations with reliable water sources and warmer temperatures. The passage of the Taylor Grazing Act and the subsequent creation of grazing districts not only interrupted this natural rotation but also sought to limit Diné grazing within the confines of the reservation and suspended longtime food-assemblage customs in which "men would pack in deer and elk on horseback, [while

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<sup>119</sup> Quote comes from Jack Loeffler, "Introduction: Conflicting Ideologies, Spiritual Chaos," in *Healing the West: Voices of Culture and Habitat* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2008), 11–12.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

women] gathered wolfberries and wild potatoes and roots for bread.”<sup>122</sup> Local residents, mostly tribal elders, lamented the government’s shortsighted imposition of political borders. Claiming their ancestral rights to this land and mapping their perception of traditional Navajo boundaries through the cardinal directions and various geophysical formations and towns, the elders averred, “this was our range area from Mancos, Col., on the east, to the Bears Ear [*sic*] Pass in Utah on the west, north to where the whites settled the town of Monticello, Utah., and south to the Colorado River country.”<sup>123</sup>

Conflicts over land and resources escalated in the 1930s over Utah Grazing District Six, a subjective section of grazing land that encompasses all San Juan County, Utah, and culminated during the 1950s in the messy and sometimes deadly mix up between Montezuma Creek Navajos and BLM officials. Consisting of approximately three million acres of federally owned lands, this area had served as the locus of serious squabbles between white ranchers and Diné herders since Mormons first homesteaded San Juan County. Hostilities heightened in the early 1930s, when white ranchers did nothing to prevent their animals from trailing toward Navajo rangelands on the northern edges of the reservation. These stock growers had also stolen Indian cattle for years, garnering a sizeable profit from the sales. During this time, they pleaded with Congress as well to open Navajo and Ute lands for Euroamerican livestock grazing, an issue that

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<sup>122</sup> Caroline Naughty-Girl, quoted in “Court in Desert Hears Navajos,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1954.

<sup>123</sup> Caroline Naughty-Girl, Hosteen Tzekizzi, Hosteen Kitsili, and nine other Diné elders, quoted in “Court in Desert Hears Navajos,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1954.

resurfaced twenty years later as San Juan County ranchers searched for solutions to forage problems.<sup>124</sup>

Tensions escalated again in 1950, when severe drought once more gripped the region, causing ranchers to focus increasingly on vegetative health and sufficient forage. Indeed, critical climatic conditions almost always dictated the behavior of local ranchers. The *San Juan Record* carried a grim and biting headline in November, entitled “Navajos’ Sheep Over-run Winter Ranges.” This front-page article focused on the dismal amounts of fodder estimated for domesticated animals that winter and set the stage for harried confrontations between white ranchers and Navajo herders during which Taylor Grazing Act permittees, certificates in hand, intimidated and exerted their privileged, federally mandated power over Diné pastoralists. Moreover, the anonymous author of the piece, obviously sympathetic to Mormon grazing interests, offered nothing but contempt for Montezuma Creek Navajos. Cultural differences over perceived territorial borders served as the catalyst for the discord. Ignoring their status as relatively late newcomers to southeastern Utah, county residents ironically viewed the overflow of Diné sheep and livestock into Utah Grazing District Six as an “invasion of their range lands by Navajos” and an “infiltrat[ion of] the white man’s territory with utter disregard for boundaries of public domain.”<sup>125</sup>

Unfortunately, Montezuma Creek Navajos did not own government-issued affirmations that permitted them to graze on these lands. Instead, the local band of Diné

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<sup>124</sup> Robert S. McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture*, 60–61.

<sup>125</sup> “Navajos’ Sheep Over-run Winter Ranges,” *Monticello (Utah) San Juan Record*, 23 November 1950, p. 1.

turned to oral traditions that confirmed their presence in the area for many generations, alongside and encouraged by the counsel of their lawyer Knox Patterson from Moab, Utah, who advised them to assert their tenure on Utah Grazing District Six pastures based on long-continued use and occupancy of the area.<sup>126</sup> Regarding Mormon ranchers as usurpers of their ancestral homeland, Montezuma Creek Navajos remained diligent in their quest to feed their animals outside the parameters of the Navajo Reservation near McCracken Mesa. Possessing great foresight, the author of “Navajos’ Sheep Over-run Winter Ranges” called for congressional action to resolve the difficult dilemma. He or she could not have known, however, that Congress would eventually rule in favor of the local Navajos, not because of its commitment to Native issues, but due to its doggedness to build Glen Canyon Dam in spite of the construction site’s location, which lay within the geopolitical boundaries of the Navajo Nation.

Montezuma Creek Navajos refused to yield their herding rights to the disputed territory despite a deliberate and increasingly intensive campaign launched by local non-Native stockmen; San Juan County commissioners; and BLM officials, led by Kinnaman. One week after the publication of “Navajos’ Sheep Over-run Winter Ranges,” the *San Juan Record* ran “White Man’s Bungling Causes Indian Trouble,” a searing piece of journalism intended to trigger angry and emotionally charged ripostes from non-Indian ranchers desperate to combat the “trespass[ing]” Navajos, their sizable herds, and the ensuing insufficient forage situation. It depicted white stockmen as the “victims of an ill-

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<sup>126</sup> Navajo Tribal Chairman Paul Jones in Navajo Tribal Council, *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council, January 28–February 16, 1957* (Window Rock, Ariz.: The Council, 1957), 208.

conceived plan hatched in the minds of other white men for reasons of personal gain.”<sup>127</sup>

Totally disregarding Diné oral traditions and their tenacity to herd sheep on ancestral lands, the article also dismissed the Navajos’ claim to the area. “Since the settlement of the county in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and even before that time,” the piece insisted, “there is no evidence or proof that Navajos made their homes, grazed their herds and exercised right of possession of lands north of the San Juan River.”<sup>128</sup> Navajo oral traditions painted a different picture, placing the Diné securely within the confines of plateaus and chasms that characterize the rough and rugged San Juan country.

Descendents of Euroamerican settlers clearly saw Navajos, especially those herders who allowed their sheep to feed on Taylor Grazing Act lands, as interlopers. A local resident from Monticello, referencing the mindset of Hole-in-the-Rock descendants, said succinctly: “if you got here any other way, . . . it just don’t count.”<sup>129</sup> Diné connections to homeland that drew on creation stories and an unremitting residence had little impact on Mormon cattle ranchers who wanted Navajo livestock off their “property.” Ultimately resorting to stock-reduction-style tactics as a means to this end, San Juan County stockmen employed several political and legal mechanisms before turning to violence. In February 1951, for example, Leland W. Redd and William R. Young of the San Juan County Livestock Association met with Utah Democratic Congresswoman, first female member of the House Interior Committee, and termination advocate Reva Beck Bosone; Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado; Secretary of the

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<sup>127</sup> “White Man’s Bungling Causes Indian Trouble,” *Monticello (Utah) San Juan Record*, 30 November 1950, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Quote in Irvine, *Trespass*, 47.

Interior Oscar L. Chapman; Bureau of Land Management director Robert M. Clawson; Chief of the Land Utilization Office Lee Muck; and other Washington officials to discuss how San Juan County ranchers could best protect their grazing rights as dictated by the Taylor Grazing Act.<sup>130</sup>

The meeting occurred after U.S. District Court Judge Hon. Willis W. Ritter opined in *United States v. Hosteen Tse-Kesi*, a case in which the Bureau of Land Management sought to ban Hosteen Sakezzie and Eddie Nockki from Utah Grazing District Six lands, that a verdict against these men would require them to leave their homes, fields, and grazing grounds. The court, Judge Ritter ruled, did not possess the authority to allot the two men and forty other Navajos and their families an alternative place to live. Judge Ritter also claimed the court could not successfully enforce an injunction against local bands of Navajos. Finally, Ritter believed that the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management, not federal courts, needed to resolve range rights issues in Utah Grazing District Six.<sup>131</sup> The plaintiffs appealed Ritter's judgment in August 1951, taking their case to the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, which reversed Ritter's decision and reinstated the case for trial. Almost simultaneously, local stockmen instituted similar proceedings in Utah state courts. Their impatience and unwillingness to await judgment from both lawsuits led San Juan County ranchers and commissioners and BLM range manager Kinnaman to employ violence and intimidation. Federal employees Dee P. Black and Dan Hayes threatened the

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<sup>130</sup> Grace Shumway, "Stockmen Return from Washington after Discussing Indian Trespass Problems with Government Officials," *Monticello (Utah) San Juan Record*, 22 February 1951.

<sup>131</sup> *United States v. Hosteen Tse-Kesi*, 93 F. Supp. 745 (1950).

destruction of livestock and imprisonment of individual Native constituents and seized and chained Navajo women and children, further terrorizing local Diné. Reminiscent of stock reduction, this duress convinced local Navajos to return their sheep to the reservation in spite of claims “to have always lived there year round.”

Cultural differences centered on livestock and landscape between Navajo herders and white ranchers contributed to the grisly chain of events that occurred on McCracken Mesa. Navajos possess a complex belief system dictating their relationship to both domesticated and wild animals. Reminiscent of the value of money, gold, jewels, and other products in western culture, sheep, horses, burros, goats, and cattle symbolize items of wealth among the Diné.<sup>132</sup> The wanton elimination of horses and burros from McCracken Mesa, then, inflicted immeasurable pain on the local indigenous population that echoed the anguish once felt during stock reduction. By contrast, San Juan County commissioners and stockmen and their allies in the BLM field office at Monticello construed Navajo livestock on McCracken Mesa as a destructive nuisance that consumed limited forage resources available in the high desert folds of southeastern Utah. Kinnaman, Black, and their supporters in San Juan County either denied the Navajos’ claims regarding the destruction of their horses and burros or diluted the intensity of their accusations through the exploitation of public mandates and codes already in place. From Kinnaman’s point-of-view, he and his men acted within the confines of the law and in the best interest of LDS settlers living in the area.

The violent acts on McCracken Mesa transpired almost ten years after stock reduction formally ended on the reservation and just a few years before the construction

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<sup>132</sup> McPherson, *Sacred Land, Sacred View*, 61–62.

of Glen Canyon Dam. Unwilling to kowtow to powerful ranchers backed by federal employees, local Navajos sued the U.S. government under the general counsel of the tribe's lawyer Norman Littell and his staff. The case, *Hatahley v. the United States*, climbed its way up the judicial ladder to the U.S. Supreme Court. The atrocities, however, did not end until the United States brokered a deal with the Navajo Tribal Council to trade public lands on McCracken Mesa for tribal lands needed for Glen Canyon Dam and the construction of a town site at Page on the southern bank of the Colorado River. This acre-for-acre land swap represented the first of many potential benefits for the Diné, including jobs, water resources, electricity, roads, and an elevated tourist industry the Navajo Tribal Council hoped their constituents would reap from the dam.

Colloquially known as the "Utah horse case," the atrocities committed on McCracken Mesa, no matter their justification or rationalization, did not go unchallenged. Resisting a juggernaut of powerful positions, Montezuma Creek Navajos eventually sued Kinnaman and his gang. In November 1953, after awarding the plaintiffs one-hundred thousand dollars in damages for their slaughtered livestock and ordering an injunction against the BLM to "halt further depredations of this sort," Judge Ritter promised the People that he would come to their hogans and listen to the elders unable to make the trek to Salt Lake City.<sup>133</sup> The next summer, he followed through on his pledge. As the sun blazed overhead, Judge Ritter lumbered across the nearly roadless desert flanking the ancient Puebloan villages of Hovenweep National Monument east of McCracken Mesa. Headed for an outdoor court hearing to take testimony from Navajo elders wanting to

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<sup>133</sup> "Court in Desert Hears Navajos," *New York Times*, 20 June 1954, p. 45.

express their grievances about the years of violence enacted against them and their livestock, Judge Ritter and his entourage, consisting of court reporters, federal attorneys, and Navajo tribal legal counsel, endured a fluid tremor of heat as they engaged the rugged terrain and the People. According to the *New York Times*, three hundred Navajos from the Montezuma Creek area gathered at the Hatch Trading Post to meet the judge upon his arrival. Trading post owner and operator Ira Hatch labeled the assembly as “the largest ever seen here.”<sup>134</sup> Ritter’s final judgment met its death during the appeal process. During the next four years, *Hatahley v. United States* witnessed many permutations and became a lost vessel afloat a sea of choppy legal waters surrounding the U.S. Supreme court system.

In the meantime, Congress approved the Colorado River Storage Project Act and the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. As government surveyors, Bureau of Reclamation agents, and western congressmen stood atop the walls of Glen Canyon, gazing into the muddy waters of the Colorado River and envisaging the canyon’s ultimate demise, Montezuma Creek Navajos, entangled in a web of ranching legalities on McCracken Mesa, did not realize the solution to all their range problems lay buried in the red sandstone of Glen Canyon. Indeed, the dam perpetually altered the cultural and physical landscapes of both McCracken Mesa and the canyon. Reclamation had its eye fixated on Navajo land it deemed necessary to construct a dam at Glen Canyon. Similarly, Montezuma Creek Navajos hoped the U.S. government would recognize their land-use rights on McCracken Mesa and provide them a means to continue generations-old stock-raising practices. Although the tribal council and Congress did not begin the negotiations

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

for a land exchange until February 1957, the process culminating in the collision of an indigenous mythic structure rooted in spatial philosophy and the technofantasy forces of an industrialized culture, bound by an economic ideology to turn habitat into money, had started to unfurl years before.

### Chapter 3

#### “Cool Clear Water, Where You Can’t Never Tell”: Navajos and the Origins of Glen Canyon Dam

A herd of Navajo sheep zigzagged the serpentine gorge in search of water. Participating in a centuries-old ritual, they nibbled the ancient hanging gardens of columbine and maidenhair fern growing in cracks and seeps along Glen Canyon’s red, gingery upright slabs.<sup>135</sup> The communal flock traversed the canyon wall on makeshift staves constructed by local Navajos living on the Rainbow Plateau, a canyon-shredded elevated plain that rises from the eastern banks of the Colorado River, along the western periphery of San Juan County, Utah, and encompasses Cummings Mesa, Navajo Mountain, and Rainbow Bridge.

The backbone of Diné culture and society, as well as objects of considerable investment and moral responsibility, sheep had once provided material and psychological security for Navajos.<sup>136</sup> “The herd is money,” Left Handed’s father told him. “It gives you clothing and different kinds of food. . . . Everything comes from the sheep.”<sup>137</sup> In

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<sup>135</sup> For the chapter title, see Robert Hunter and Bob Weir, “Greatest Story Ever Told,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist and David Dodd, annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 142.

<sup>136</sup> Gary Witherspoon, “Sheep in Navajo Culture and Social Organization,” *American Anthropologist* 75 (October 1973): 1441.

<sup>137</sup> *Left Handed, Son of Old Man Hat*, ed. Walter Dyk (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 103. Most Native scholars classify *Left Handed, Son of Old Man Hat* as a “colonialism-tainted” work, wrought with problems that distort Native life and cultures, and they warn readers of the pitfalls such projects present in Native American literature. For works by Native intellectuals who directly or indirectly address the as-told-to autobiography phenomenon in American Indian literature, see Edward Velandra, “The As-told-to [Auto]biography: Whose Voice is Speaking,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 20 (autumn 2005): 103–19; Robert A. Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Elizabeth Cook-Lynn,

Navajo country, sheep herds represent a cooperative enterprise composed of individual owners, generally women, who engage in a larger community defined by their animals. Extended families typically combine their sheep into a common flock, herded by members of a single camp or “residence group.”<sup>138</sup> Connecting sheep to motherhood, one Navajo elder explains, “*Dibé wolyé nimá át’é; dibé iiná nilinii át’é*” (“Those called sheep are your mother; sheep are life”).<sup>139</sup>

Dibé also physically connect the People to Diné’tah. Historian Marsha L. Weisiger asserts that sheep pastoralism and transhumance (a cyclical grazing pattern that shifts from a “winter home” to “summer pastures”) buttressed the Navajos’ identity as a semi-nomadic people whose migrations recreated the ceremonial travels of the *Diyin Dine’é*, those Holy People who reveal themselves as “wind, thunder, rain, and sun.”<sup>140</sup> According to Blessingway, the spine of Diné philosophy, the *Diyin Dine’é* had given the People sheep as a gift. Indeed, River Junction Curly, a respected spiritual healer or *hataalii* from Chinle, Arizona, maintained in his version of Blessingway that Sun, Changing Woman, and a third holy person, Mirage Man, created sheep four years before Changing Woman

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“Life and Death in the Mainstream of American Indian Biography,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 11 (autumn 1995): 90–93; Kathryn Shanley, “The Lived Experience: American Indian Literature after Alcatraz,” *Akwe:kon Press* 11, nos. 3–4 (1994): 119–27; Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Tradition* (1986; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); and Deloria, *God is Red*.

<sup>138</sup> Witherspoon, “Sheep in Navajo Culture and Social Organization,” 1443; and Shepardson and Hammond, *The Navajo Mountain Community*, 99–101.

<sup>139</sup> Anonymous Navajo elder, quoted in Witherspoon, “Sheep in Navajo Culture and Social Organization,” 1442.

<sup>140</sup> Marsha L. Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books, ed. William Cronon (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 64, 18.

respired life into the Earth Surface People.<sup>141</sup> Sheep, then, according to River Junction Curly's interpretation of Blessingway, predated the Diné. Navajo tradition contends that from the beginning, dibé and the People have subsisted side-by-side, one entwined with the other.<sup>142</sup> Navajo Tribal Council member Howard Gorman fondly recalled, "We always had sheep."<sup>143</sup>

Employing similar sheep-raising tactics utilized in other Dinétah locales, such as McCracken Mesa, Navajo herders on the Rainbow Plateau practiced transhumance, seasonally moving their sheep from the canyon's rim to its floor. As fall gave way to winter, the herd ambled along the wide sandy bottom of West Canyon, one of the many side chutes of Glen Canyon downstream from Rainbow Bridge, as it followed the dry creek bed lined with sleeping cattails, reeds, horsetails, and scouring rushes that awake during spring and summer. A nearby petroglyph carved into the soft, porous Navajo sandstone illustrated Native life in the Glen prior to the arrival of Euroamericans. The panel depicted bighorn sheep, hunters with bows and arrows, and running antelope, all reminiscent of a time long before Glen Canyon Dam plugged the Colorado River.<sup>144</sup>

Unaware that a pool of dead water had begun to inundate their ancestral watering hole, the sheep in West Canyon chased the remnants of the drainageway's falling stream until they reached the mouth of West Creek at Navajo Bar, a large sandy outcrop

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 64–65.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 65. For an in-depth explanation of sheep and Navajo cultural identity, see Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, 63–78.

<sup>143</sup> Howard Gorman, quoted in Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, 63.

<sup>144</sup> Tad Nichols, *Glen Canyon: Images of a Lost World* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1999), 129.

enveloped by swirling masses of rock that extend to the river's bank. Here, the herd slurped the muddy Colorado despite the rising water that completely drowned their travel-weary hooves. Although the cool water soothed their aching feet, the dibé noticed the mounting river level, higher than the last time they enjoyed a reprieve on the shores of Glen Canyon.

Earlier that year, in March 1963, as winter melted into spring, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had moved into the final phases of construction on Glen Canyon Dam. On 13 March, Project Construction Engineer Lemuel F. "Lem" Wylie, otherwise known as the dam boss, partially sealed the left diversion tunnel when he pulled two levers in the gate chamber, giving birth to Lake Powell and suffocating the Colorado River, *Bits'íis ninéézi* (the River of Never-ending Life), the aquatic lifeline of the American Southwest. One month later, the swelling reservoir shattered the temporary 140-foot earthen dams and crashed against Glen Canyon Dam's 710-foot concrete wall.<sup>145</sup> Ultimately setting the stage for the eventual alteration of entire ecosystems within the river's watershed and abolishing the sheep herd's ancestral stream, Glen Canyon Dam and its reservoir Lake Powell served as important links in a long chain of Colorado River development schemes relying on science and technology to turn habitat into money.

Western lawmakers and those constituents who envisioned a southwestern landscape with large cities fueled by hydroelectric power and small farms irrigated by the Colorado River and its tributaries had doggedly lobbied Congress for the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) since the early 1950s. Although CRSP proponents highlighted

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<sup>145</sup> W. L. Rusho, "Glen Canyon Dam," n.d., p. 2, file 2, Glen Canyon Dam, Colorado Plateau Vertical Files, Special Collections and Archives, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

Native issues, their campaigns proved self-serving and often came at the expense of indigenous peoples, particularly the Navajos. This assertion does not suggest that the Diné and other tribes living on the Colorado Plateau responded as passive pawns with no agency. Rather, tribal leaders typically acted under false pretenses or, sometimes, with limited information. Pulling Navajos deeper into the colonial fold, the reclamation ruse surrounding the CRSP ignored Native ties to landscape, as the story of wandering sheep in West Canyon demonstrates, and Indian peoples' rights to western waterways. In 1908, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court had acknowledged the inherent value of treaties between American Indians and the United States when it reserved water rights for Native communities in its seminal ruling, *Winters v. United States*. The Winters decision designated Indians as senior appropriators of water flowing through or abutting their reservations. In most cases, since the U.S. government established reservations years before white settlers arrived on the horizon and started to divert water for irrigation, the Winters decision gave indigenous peoples prior appropriation to western water.

During the mid-1950s, approximately fifty years after the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its judgment, Upper Colorado River basin citizens and their congressional representatives flouted Navajo claims to the Colorado River, just as their predecessors had done through the Colorado River Compact of 1922 and the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact of 1948. Despite government-issued reservation boundaries; a burgeoning Navajo tribal government, albeit one that increasingly ignored the wishes of its own citizens; and the Navajos' desperate desire for economic development and irrigation projects, U.S. bureaucrats, backed by their constituents, employed coercive tactics to manipulate the Navajo Tribal Council. In this manner, federal officials created a perfect

reclamation storm thundering across Dinétah, a deluge evaporating into a massive water-control project, hailing Glen Canyon Dam as its lynchpin. The CRSP not only altered the physical environment of the entire Colorado River basin, it remolded the region's cultural landscape as well. Paying lip service to the Navajo Tribal Council, U.S. officials and western proponents of the public-works project led Navajo leaders to believe that the CRSP would provide the Diné water for a Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP), employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and economic prosperity.<sup>146</sup> Likewise, Navajo tribal chairman Sam Ahkeah and his council members passionately pleaded with Congress to consider the NIIP as part of the Colorado River Storage Project. They failed to understand, however, the utter destruction Glen Canyon Dam held for Diné herders who used the chasm as a watering hole for their sheep. In reality, most of the federal government's pledges never came to fruition, except those facilities needed for the operation of Glen Canyon Dam, bequeathing to the Navajos a virtually useless dam built on their land, scant benefits heralded by advocates of the technological wonder, and water issues wrought with problems seemingly impossible for outsiders to comprehend.

Still reeling from the effects of stock reduction and the imposition of a wage-based economy ushered in by World War II, Diné policymakers focused on lucrative endeavors and fiscal expansion for all Navajos during the late 1940s and 1950s. Indeed,

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<sup>146</sup> See for example, U.S. representative Stewart L. Udall to Navajo Tribal chairman Paul Jones, 25 May 1955, folder 3, box 8, Stewart L. Udall Papers, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson, [hereafter SLUP].

Navajos refer to the years immediately following World War II as the “starving time.”<sup>147</sup> During this era, three thousand servicemen and ten thousand war workers returned to the reservation. Combined with ten years of stock reduction, the increased population resulted in widespread malnutrition and disease among the Diné.<sup>148</sup> In January 1954, during the second session of the Eighty-third Congress, representatives from the Navajo Tribal Council, including Chairman Ahkeah, Chairman of the Engineering Committee Maxwell Yazzie, and Chairman of the Resources Committee Howard Gorman, stood before members of Congress and explained how the Diné would benefit from the Colorado River Storage Project. “My people have been waiting a great many years for the time to come when we would be able to put to some beneficial use the waters which pass through our lands,” Ahkeah told U.S. representatives. His statement served as a simple reminder that in the Treaty of 1868, the federal government had promised the Diné land for cultivation. Given the semiarid nature of Navajo lands, this pledge implied the federal government would provide the People with irrigation works to promote farming and ranching on the reservation.<sup>149</sup> Ahkeah neglected to mention the Winters decision, but the U.S. Supreme court ruling had also guaranteed Native peoples rights to water, despite its failure to quantify those privileges. The tribal chairman evidently modeled his ideas of a reclaimed desert on Anglo apparitions of water control, declaring

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<sup>147</sup> Kathleen P. Chamberlain, *Under Sacred Ground: A History of Navajo Oil* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2000), 85.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Michael L. Lawson, “The Navajo Indian Irrigation Project: Muddied Past, Clouded Future,” *Indian Historian* 9 (winter 1976): 19.

that Navajos “are like other peoples living in the arid western lands, we have visions of what water placed upon our lands will do.”<sup>150</sup>

Former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, a native Arizonan, views “the original philosophy” of federal reclamation projects as “an aquatic version of the Homestead Act.” “The whole idea,” Babbitt explains, “was to put small people on the land through reclamation.”<sup>151</sup> Edward Abbey viewed reclamation works much differently. Abbey saw the components of the CRSP, especially Glen Canyon Dam, as “the sort of projects which have always meant, today as well as in the past, the subsidizing (through cheap water) of at most a few thousand plantation-style farmers specializing in the production of other tax-payer-supported crops, such as cotton, sugar beets, and beef.”<sup>152</sup> The Navajos adhered more to Babbitt’s doctrine than Abbey’s mantra as their irrigation dreams included a water-delivery system that would transform the People’s desolate, drab, overgrazed reservation into an irrigated Garden of Eden, undulating with lush fields and small, individual Diné farms. At the time, Ahkeah and his contemporaries declared their interest in the CRSP not because of Glen Canyon Dam per se but owing to the construction of Navajo Dam on the San Juan River near Farmington, New Mexico. In theory, Navajo Dam would supply water for the NIIP, a tremendous

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<sup>150</sup> “Statement of Sam Ahkeah, Chairman, Navajo Tribal Council, Shiprock, N. Mex.,” in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and . . . on H.R. 4449, H.R. 4443, and H.R. 4463*, 83d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954), 580.

<sup>151</sup> Bruce Babbitt, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, program 2, six-part radio series, produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>152</sup> Edward Abbey, “Jeep Trails to Power Plants: The Rape of the Canyon Country,” unpublished essay, 29 August 1970, folder 4, box 24, Papers of Edward Abbey, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson.

water-delivery system designed to irrigate eastern Navajo land near Shiprock, New Mexico. Navajo leaders lobbied congressional representatives and senators for an irrigation network as part of Reclamation's basin-wide development plot.

In an era of unprecedented water development in the West, Diné leaders wanted a slice of the reclamation pie topped with easy access to their ancestral rivers and streams. The Navajo Tribal Council vigorously supported the Colorado River Storage Project in an effort to gain the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project even though the legislation slated Glen Canyon Dam as the venture's centerpiece. The CRSP's original blueprints always called for a large hydroelectric dam at Glen Canyon to make money through the generation of electricity and to provide water storage, but the concrete cork transmogrified into the law's primary feature directly after congressional members slashed Echo Park Dam on the Green River in Dinosaur National Monument in northwestern Colorado from the final act. This decision bore the imprint of David R. Brower and the Sierra Club and other conservation groups' campaign to prevent the construction of Echo Park Dam.<sup>153</sup>

On 5 January 1955, the Eighty-fourth Congress, now dominated by Democrats, assembled on Capitol Hill, launching a grueling legislative session consumed by increasingly heated debates surrounding the Colorado River Storage Project. That same month, at the suggestion of Utah senator and staunch termination advocate Arthur V. Watkins, President Eisenhower endorsed the CRSP in his budget message and State of

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<sup>153</sup> For a comprehensive study of the conservationists' fight to save Dinosaur National Monument from Echo Park and Split Mountain dams, see Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Classics (1994; repr., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

the Union Address, and *Time* magazine ran an article in support of the massive reclamation enterprise.<sup>154</sup> Almost simultaneously, Brower began work on *This is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country and Its Magic Rivers* (1955), a book-length publication edited by western writer Wallace E. Stegner. Eloquently written and provocatively illustrated, *This is Dinosaur* linked ideas of wilderness to the preservation of the national park system, weighing Dinosaur National Monument's inherent "possibilities for human rest and recreation and inspiration" against the ecological destruction Echo Park Dam promised as part of the CRSP.<sup>155</sup> The \$1.5 billion reclamation project that included Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams plus thirty participating units passed the Senate on 20 April by a vote of fifty-eight to twenty-three. The primary clash over the particulars of the CRSP, however, dominated the House debate, where western representatives introduced five different bills. All these proposals incorporated Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams but they varied dramatically in the number of participating irrigation projects, such as the NIIP.

While U.S. lawmakers wrangled with CRSP details, Navajo leaders, coaxed by outside interests, prepared for a reclamation fight all their own. On 24 January 1955, as cold catabolic winter winds lashed the landscape, approximately two thousand Diné, from communities all over the reservation, gathered in *Tségháhoodzání* (Window Rock, Arizona), the Navajo Nation's capital, to hold a ceremony expressing their support for the Colorado River Storage Project. This large showing does not necessarily mean the People

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<sup>154</sup> "Natural Resources: Dams v. Dinosaurs," *Time*, 31 January 1955.

<sup>155</sup> Wallace Stegner, ed., *This is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country and Its Magic Rivers* (New York: Knopf, 1955), v. For a discussion on the importance of *This is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country and Its Magic Rivers*, see Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, 256–59.

avored the Colorado River Storage Project, or the construction of a dam at Glen Canyon. Rather, members of the Navajo Tribal Council wanted to highlight the tribe's dissatisfaction with water allocation in Dinéyah. "We are fighting for what is rightfully ours," Chairman Ahkeah declared. "Some elements are trying to stop the Upper Colorado River project. . . . They are taking our water, . . . our life."<sup>156</sup> Juxtaposing Brower's battle to save Dinosaur National Monument against the Navajos' struggle for water, one newspaper reporter covering the event cried, "Navajo Ritual Dance Boosts Echo Park."<sup>157</sup> The dances followed a three-day conference in Gallup, New Mexico, centered on water development for the Navajo Reservation. "It was a strange mixture of the old and the new," *Deseret News* associate editor Ted Cannon reported, "as the Navajo Indians went 'on the warpath' here this week in support of the Colorado River program."<sup>158</sup> Using derogatory imagery reminiscent of nineteenth-century perceptions of Native peoples, area newspapers recounted the performances of Navajo dancers, who staged a re-enactment of the Treaty of 1868 signing and allegedly administered an "Enemy Way ceremony," an important Diné healing ritual and social event.<sup>159</sup> Given that Navajos typically conduct an Enemy Way during the summer, these newspaper accounts may have mistakenly identified the CRSP ceremony. Nonetheless, they arbitrarily dubbed the rite a "war dance" and referred to Diné dancers as "braves" and "squaws" on the "warpath,"

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<sup>156</sup> Sam Ahkeah, quoted in Julius Gordon, "Navajo Do War Dance to Push Water Demand," *Prescott (Ariz.) Evening Courier*, 24 January 1955.

<sup>157</sup> Ted Cannon, "Navajo Ritual Dance Boosts Echo Project," *Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News*, 25 January 1955.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*; and Gordon, "Navajo Do War Dance to Push Water Demand."

targeting those “powers who, in other parts of the Western states, are trying to take away the water from its natural watershed where it can best be used.”<sup>160</sup> Opponents to the CRSP included Southern California power interests who profited in 1955 from the present distribution of Colorado River water, eastern congressmen, and some conservationists. Hesitant to appear as impediments to water development in the West, the latter troupe mostly fought the CRSP’s inclusion of Echo Park Dam, not the project in its entirety. Finally, the ceremony served as the Navajos’ induction into a group of self-proclaimed water vigilantes or Aqualantes, vehement champions of the CRSP.

Also known as the Upper Colorado River Grassroots, Inc., the Aqualantes launched an oratorical and visual campaign tirelessly publicizing the Colorado River Storage Project, lobbying Congress for its passage, and raising money for its cause. Indeed, the Upper Colorado River Grassroots, Inc. staged the entire Navajo ceremony, a “pow-wow” designed to draw national attention to the CRSP and to garner much needed “grass” for its campaign.<sup>161</sup> Members of the Aqualantes simply used Navajo leaders as a vehicle to transport their message of watering the West, not because they cared about the well being of the People or their lifeways but because they needed the imagery of the Navajos’ deplorable living conditions to promote the benefits of reclamation. The Aqualantes advertised the Window Rock ceremony and they invited governors Joseph Bracken Lee of Utah, Milward L. Simpson of Wyoming, John F. Simms of New Mexico, and Edwin C. “Big Ed” Johnson of Colorado, as well as senators and congressmen from

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<sup>160</sup> Maurice McCabe, quoted in “Dance Rite Accents Navajo Water Plea,” *New York Times*, 25 January 1955.

<sup>161</sup> Arizona representative Stewart L. Udall to Upper Colorado River Grass Roots Committee Chairman Calvin K. Snyder, n.d., folder 3, box 12, SLUP.

all the Upper Basin states, including Arizona's rookie representative Stewart L. Udall, to gawk at Diné dancers.<sup>162</sup> Udall declined but he assured Upper Colorado River Grassroots Committee chairman Calvin K. Snyder that "You have the support and sympathy of Arizona in this fight."<sup>163</sup>

The Aqualantes, a four-state citizens' crusade proselytizing water reclamation in the West, consisted of constituents from New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. A farm boy from Kansas coming of age during the Depression, Thomas Felix "Tom" Bolack served as the organization's chairman. Bolack had bought oil leases in the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico at the onset of oil and gas exploration there, eventually selling his investment and making a veritable fortune in black gold. Elected mayor of Farmington, New Mexico, in 1952, Bolack immediately changed the cultural landscape of the small town, adding roads, an airport, and new businesses, presumably all to support the area's burgeoning oil and gas industry. His passion, however, lay in water development and reclamation projects centered on irrigation.<sup>164</sup> Bolack's environmental philosophy combined progressive-era conservation ideologies, grounded in a rational exploitation of natural resources for the common good, with science and technology to manipulate and control Nature's bounty for beneficial consumptive use. Given his wholehearted embrace of water reclamation and irrigation, Bolack threw all his political influence behind the CRSP and led the prominent grassroots organization of white,

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<sup>162</sup> Upper Colorado River Grassroots Committee chairman Calvin K. Snyder to Arizona representative Stewart L. Udall, 20 January 1955, Denver, Colorado, folder 3, box 12, SLUP.

<sup>163</sup> Udall to Snyder, folder 3, box 12, SLUP.

<sup>164</sup> For a brief biography of Thomas Felix "Tom" Bolack, see "A Modern Johnny Appleseed," *Sports Illustrated*, 30 November 1970.

middle-class citizens living in the upper Colorado River basin. Sporting cowboy boots, a string tie, and a Stetson hat, Bolack told members of Congress that Aqualantes participants “come from all walks of life” and include men, women, and children, “rang[ing] in age” and stature, who “are cognizant of the importance of developing the water resources of the upper Colorado River Basin.”<sup>165</sup> Perhaps more realistically, Aqualantes affiliates represented a less diverse cadre of people than the oilman described to congressional representatives since the group’s rank and file consisted mostly of Mormons and white, middle-class westerners. Bolack, who contributed \$25,000 alone to the grassroots group, undoubtedly forgot to mention the Navajos’ enthusiastic support for the Aqualantes and the tribal government’s unrelenting quest for the passage of the CRSP.<sup>166</sup>

The Navajo Tribal Council donated \$10,000 to the Aqualantes in 1955, an unbelievable amount of money considering the tribe’s mounting poverty level during the postwar era. Once the CRSP passed the Senate, Bolack and his colleague, L. Glen Snarr, executive news editor for the Mormon daily *Deseret News*, appeared before the Navajo Tribal Council in an effort to glean more financial support from the tribe. Snarr, Bolack, and the remaining powerhouses of the Upper Colorado River Grassroots, Inc. realized they needed the council’s blessing, their money, and, perhaps most importantly, the

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<sup>165</sup> Statement of Tom Bolack, in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, “Colorado River Storage Project,” *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on H.R. 270, H.R. 2836, H.R. 3383, H.R. 3384 and H.R. 4488*, 84th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955), 491.

<sup>166</sup> For Thomas Felix “Tom” Bolack’s donation to the Aqualantes, see L. Glenn Starr statement to Navajo Tribal Council, in *Minutes of Navajo Tribal Council Meeting, October 3rd–15th, 1955* (Window Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Tribal Council, 1955), 121.

imagery of the Navajos' third-world economic status. On 7 October 1955, Bolack and Snarr approached the council, asking for an additional \$15,000. Members of the council seemed willing to grant their request, but Councilman Gorman suggested taking Bolack and Snarr's appeal a step further. Gorman urged Navajo Nation leaders to initiate a reservation-wide campaign to rally the People around "their own river" and the potential "production of agricultural lands that this river will furnish to the Navajo."<sup>167</sup> Gorman envisioned a massive publicity drive using the nascent reservation radio to "promote the truth" about the CRSP's opposing forces that "do not care about the Navajo people." Despite the overwhelming poverty among Navajos, Gorman believed "if they become aware of the fact that [the opposition is] talking about [the Navajos'] lives; their own river, they will be very happy to contribute" money to the CRSP crusade.<sup>168</sup> Moreover, Navajo leaders knew that another donation to the Aqualantes would ensure the grassroots group's continued support for the NIIP as part of the CRSP. In other words, the People's irrigation dreams rested on the success of the Aqualantes lobbyists and their backing of the Navajo Dam and reservoir.

Snarr, an advertising guru and journalistic mastermind, painted for council members a picture of his group's planned publicity campaign to market the CRSP. "We will tell our story to newspapers, radio, television, magazines . . . [and] publish booklets," Snarr told the Navajo Tribal Council.<sup>169</sup> Possessing an uncanny ability to make the

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<sup>167</sup> Howard Gorman statement to the Navajo Tribal Council, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council Meeting, October 3rd–15th*, 126.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> L. Glen Snarr statement to Navajo Tribal Council, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council Meeting, October 3rd–15th*, 121.

Navajos' pursuit of water their mission as well, Bolack and Snarr upheld the Navajos' need for irrigated farmland as the pinnacle of CRSP possibilities. Aqualantes lobbyists showed congressional members a film, entitled "Birth of the Basin," that highlighted Native pursuits to eke out a living on "barren Navajo lands." Attempting to tug at the heartstrings of senators and representatives more sympathetic to indigenous objectives than environmental policies, the video portrayed a dry and overgrazed landscape, "Where there is no water [and] the Navajo must haul drinking water many miles in a wagon, but still these are members of the largest Indian tribe." In an ensuing scene, the motion picture honed in on an idyllic small, irrigated farm owned by Navajo Tribal councilman Charles Yellowman, proclaiming "Water is the hope of the future giving a means to [Yellowman's] Tribe to fight hunger and become self-supporting."<sup>170</sup> This reference to the nation's latest efforts at renegeing on its obligations to indigenous peoples appeared rather intentional as a means to appease eastern congressmen who opposed the CRSP but supported termination. Again, attaching an Indian face to the Aqualantes's reclamation cause could only strengthen their argument for the CRSP and underscore their larger mission of urging access to cheap water for the Upper Basin's white, middle-class ranchers, farmers, or city-dwellers.

In spite of the Navajos' monetary gifts to the Aqualantes and their desire for the passage of the CRSP, it remains unclear whether they fully recognized Reclamation's plans for part of the tribe's grazing ground in Glen Canyon prior to the federal government's solicitation of Navajo lands for the dam's construction. "Many times things

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<sup>170</sup> Thomas Felix "Tom" Bolack statement to the Navajo Tribal Council, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council Meeting, October 3rd–15th, 1955*, 119.

get under way before we are consulted,” tribal councilwoman Annie Dodge Wauneka conveyed to her colleagues, “and this is the same thing here. We have not been consulted as to what our needs might be in the acquisition of this land until the Bill is introduced in Congress before we know anything about it.”<sup>171</sup> The Bureau of Reclamation, supported by Arizona representative Udall, also sought the People’s land for a reclamation camp on the eastern side of the Colorado River not far from West Canyon. Navajo medicine man Norris Nez insists the U.S. government duped the tribal council “a long time ago,” when “the Navajo people were deceived to build a dam.” According to Nez, “no one told them [Lake Powell] would fill up these sacred areas with water and sediment.”<sup>172</sup> Indeed, congressional records and hearings and Navajo Tribal Council meeting minutes from this time period ostensibly bolster Nez’s claim. In all his testimonies in front of U.S. lawmakers and the Navajo Tribal Council from 1954 to 1955, Ahkeah never mentioned Glen Canyon Dam.

Navajo leaders seemed unaware of the dam and its potential impact on their constituents, especially those people inhabiting the western regions of the reservation who used the canyon as a watering pocket for their sheep. At the very least, members of the tribal council appeared unconcerned with the construction of a large hydroelectric dam in Glen Canyon. Instead, Ahkeah and his colleagues focused on irrigation for 1,500 Indian families living on part of the Navajo Reservation near Shiprock. They emphasized

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<sup>171</sup> Annie Dodge Wauneka statement to Navajo Tribal Council, in Navajo Tribal Council, *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council* (Window Rock, Ariz.: 16–20 July 1956), 23.

<sup>172</sup> Norris Nez, quoted in Annette McGivney, *Resurrection: Glen Canyon and a New Vision of the American West*, photographs by James Kay (Seattle, Wash.: Braided River, with support from the Glen Canyon Institute, 2009), 99.

land as the tribe's greatest natural resource and saw irrigated farms as an economic opportunity that could promote self-determination, education, and infrastructure on the Navajo Reservation.<sup>173</sup> Ahkeah painted a clear reclamation picture for members of the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation. Navajo leaders planned to relocate many of their constituents, "now grazing their sheep over the reservation," to the Shiprock area, a region containing approximately 150,000 acres of irrigable land. Ahkeah's suggestion seemingly ignored Native ties to homeland, but the chairman appeared undeterred, convinced more than ever of the economic benefits irrigation promised. "When the land is irrigated," Ahkeah testified, "it will make about 1,500 farms of a size sufficient to support a [single] Navaho [*sic*] family." This image adhered more to white notions of domesticity centered on a single household than Navajo familial structures embracing extended families and clans. Ahkeah figured that eventually 7,800 Diné, or about one-fifth of the Navajo population, would support themselves by farming small plots of land near Shiprock. "At first, the land should be planted to pasture grasses and forage for raising livestock and a small area used to grow garden produce and row crops," Ahkeah proffered. The chairman admitted the Navajos' ineptitude for irrigating farmland, but he emphasized the tribe's great pastoral history. "The combining of

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<sup>173</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Colorado Storage Project," *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on H.R. 4449, H.R. 4443, and H.R. 4463*, 83d, Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954), 579–92. In spite of significant Navajo publicity and lobbying campaigns for an irrigation project in eastern Navajoland, the U.S. Congress did not authorize the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP) until 1962, when it amended the Colorado River Storage Project to allow the diversion of Colorado River water into the Rio Grande basin. The revised legislation approved both the NIIP and San Juan-Chama Diversion, which pumps water from the San Juan River and its tributaries through a tunnel beneath the Continental Divide to the Rio Grande for the city of Albuquerque. The San Juan-Chama Diversion project reached completion in 2008, while the NIIP remains unfinished.

irrigated pastures with livestock raising,” Ahkeah insisted, “will result in a more rapid adaptation to irrigation practices.” Better habits would accrue additional income and “provide a standard of living . . . comparable to that enjoyed by the white water users within the basin.”<sup>174</sup> Again, Ahkeah failed to mention Glen Canyon Dam. Perhaps the chairman and his council saw the inclusion of an irrigation project for eastern Navajoland as a worthy substitute for the tribe’s loss of land and livestock range on the Rainbow Plateau. Or, perhaps, they realized the Navajos needed to depart from traditional lifestyles and engage in other economic ventures, such as farming, to prevent a tragedy like stock reduction from occurring a second time.

Born at the end of the nineteenth century near Rock Point, Arizona, Ahkeah, like most Navajo children, herded sheep as a kid. He spent his early years “listening to the elders,” and learning many “[life] lessons while looking after the sheep.” Ahkeah left his boyhood home at the age of eight to attend boarding school at Fort Lewis, Colorado. Here, the principal changed the Navajo word, *ashkii*, meaning boy, to Ahkeah and arbitrarily gave him the name Sam. Ahkeah spent nearly eight years at Fort Lewis before contracting tuberculosis as a teenager. The disease forced Ahkeah to abandon his educational pursuits, and he eventually moved to southern Colorado, where he worked in Telluride as a foreman supervising Navajo miners. A tragic accident at the mine reminded Ahkeah of his love affair with raising livestock and convinced him to return to the Navajo Reservation. Back home, he started a small ranching outfit north of Shiprock. When the federal government launched its stock reduction program, Ahkeah and his

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<sup>174</sup> Statement of Sam Ahkeah, in “Colorado River Storage Project,” U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on S. 1555*, 83d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954), 306–07.

sister, the primary tender of their family's sheep herd, had accumulated approximately six hundred head of sheep. Stock reduction, however, nearly annihilated Ahkeah's holdings, reducing the family's enterprise to thirty-nine. His family's experiences during the stock reduction enraged Ahkeah and persuaded him to pursue a career in politics. In 1942, the People elected Ahkeah vice chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council, led by Chee Dodge. Five years later, in 1947, Navajo constituents sent Ahkeah to Window Rock as their new chairman.<sup>175</sup>

Ahkeah's testimony given in front of the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation reflected the shifting attitudes of many Navajos immediately following World War II. Their wartime experiences compelled the People to re-evaluate their living conditions at home and convinced Navajo leaders to foster a "diversified and expanding economy," a system ensuring Navajo youth remained on the reservation instead of a structure forcing them "to live elsewhere."<sup>176</sup> The 1950s, then, represented a key transitional phase in Navajo history. The Navajo Tribal Council outlined its major concerns for the postwar era, including education; health care; political and legal authority, as well as full participation in the American political system; and economic development. While raising sheep remained socially and culturally important, the trauma of stock reduction combined with their experiences during World War II had persuaded many Navajos to pursue alternative outlets for "economic, social, and cultural sustenance."<sup>177</sup> In addition, the eighty-eight million dollars the tribe received from the

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<sup>175</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 205, 207.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act of 1950; the royalties garnered from mineral extraction, especially uranium and coal; and the termination era all converged to strengthen the Navajo Tribal Council's political prowess during the postwar years.<sup>178</sup>

The U.S. government's whimsical mismanagement of Native peoples also encouraged the Diné to rethink their relationship with county, state, and federal agencies who consistently neglected the U.S. government's trust responsibilities to the People. Both Ahkeah and his successor Paul Jones actively pushed for the revitalization of local government through Navajo chapter houses, which they believed would contribute to a viable Navajo political system. Jones's administration also resulted in the development of a court system, an essential component to further Diné self-determination.<sup>179</sup> The newly empowered tribal council of the late 1940s and 1950s, stacked with wartime veterans and led by Ahkeah and then Jones, signaled a new era in tribal leadership. During this time period, the Navajos increasingly gained jurisdiction over their own affairs and demanded control over the world in which they lived.<sup>180</sup> Councilman Ned Hatathli referenced the Navajos' political transformation, when he once mused, "What is the land if you do not have anything to say about it . . . why is it not our privilege to improve the land we fought for?"<sup>181</sup>

In 1950, approximately 73,000 Navajos dwelled within the confines of Diné Bikéyah, a dominion remarkably smaller than their traditional homeland. Defined by the

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<sup>178</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 207, 209.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 213–14.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 188–89.

<sup>181</sup> Ned Hatathli, quoted in Iverson, *Diné*, 189.

Treaty of 1868, the Navajo Reservation, roughly the size of West Virginia, embraces parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The cosmic geography of Navajoland, bound by the four sacred mountains, transcends arbitrary government-issued state boundaries. Rather, it encompasses the prismatic landforms and braided waterways that characterize the topography of Dinétah, where Navajo origin myths demarcate tribal realities. Moreover, the Navajo Nation sits squarely in the center of the whole Colorado River basin.

The Colorado River watershed encompasses 244,000 square miles that envelop northwestern Mexico; parts of California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico; all of Arizona; and numerous indigenous communities, including the San Juan Paiutes, the Utes, the Hualapais, the Havasupais, numerous bands of Apaches, the Tohono O’odhams, the Hopis, and the Navajos. Vernon Masayesva, founder of the Native nonprofit environmental group, Black Mesa Trust, outlines the Hopis’ original motherland:

Now if you fly over the Hopi land, you will see the western boundary. It is a snake. It is a river. . . . called Colorado River. Then towards the south, another river. That is the Little Colorado River. And then it ends up on a mountain range. Chuska Mountains, we call it now. Then a river snakes north [Chinle Wash]. And then it reaches another river, the San Juan. Then the San Juan joins the Big Colorado. Now within this area, Hopis call it ‘the plaza,’ the heart-center of the world, literally.<sup>182</sup>

One of the most legislated, litigated, and debated rivers in the world, the Rio Colorado and its tangled tributaries supply water to twenty-five million people through much of the U.S. West.<sup>183</sup> According to environmental writer Marc Reisner, the river’s

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<sup>182</sup> Vernon Masayesva, quoted in Loeffler, *Healing the West*, 62–63.

<sup>183</sup> Loeffler, *Healing the West*, 101.

system provides more than half the water apportioned to greater Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix.<sup>184</sup> The river's gradient plunges thirteen thousand feet from its headwaters through the contorted canyonlands of southeastern Utah and northern Arizona to the Sea of Cortés, where its mangled body pocked full of dams barely trickles into the sea. Scores of riffling rivulets and sluggish streams supply its primary channel, crisscrossing the landscape like gnarled fingers on an arthritic hand.

Volcanic springs fed by snowmelt on the Aquarius Plateau in south-central Utah precipitously plummet into the Escalante River that tumbles ninety miles through the narrowing slickrock canyon and dumps into the Rio Colorado near Hole-in-the-Rock in Glen Canyon. Almost due east, on the opposite side of the crooked cleft, the San Juan River, whose headwaters originate in the alpine tundra of southwestern Colorado's San Juan Mountains near Silverton, meanders through the Colorado Plateau's red canyon country and meets the Colorado River upstream from Rainbow Bridge National Monument in the heart of Glen Canyon. This river junction functions as a sacred site for Navajos. "Let me say again," Shonto-area singer Ernest Nelson reiterates, "that [Colorado] River on the other side was and is female . . . At the place where they come together, now flooded [by Lake Powell], that River went underneath (or was mounted by) the male [San Juan] River. Before flooding, it used to be that from that point on they were one stream."<sup>185</sup> Floyd Laughter, a member of the *Táchii'nii* or Red-running-into-the-water Clan, adds, "I know this area, and I go there to pray."<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 120.

<sup>185</sup> Ernest Nelson, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 112.

Masayesva explains how the “past, present, and future all feed each other,” a concept he calls “Hopi Science.” Evoking philosophical ideas of infinity, Masayesva uses a figure eight as an interconnected fluid diagram to explicate the Hopi worldview. Clouds that represent the future sit at the eight’s top, while free-flowing rivers and streams at the eight’s center, where the lines intersect, symbolize the present. The ocean, signifying the past, rests at the eight’s bottom.<sup>187</sup> “Time and water are all flowing, all connected,” Masayesva says. “Rivers flow to the sea, the sea evaporates to make the clouds that rain down into the rivers. We are all part of this cycle. It’s what has sustained the Hopi for thousands of years.”<sup>188</sup> Masayesva laments the reservoir-based infrastructure that dominates the Colorado River watershed. “White people have interfered with the cycle by building these big dams,” he cries. “You have cut off the cycle of life.”<sup>189</sup>

Glen Canyon Dam signified the culmination of a decades-long struggle to redirect, divvy-up, and deliver water from the Colorado River to the seven western states in its drainage basin. The dam’s historical roots lie in the passage of the Colorado River Compact of 1922, a piece of carry-over, progressive-era legislation. It demonstrated the legacy of the progressives’ environmental ideas centered on a “Gospel of Efficiency” that

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<sup>186</sup> Floyd Laughter, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 44.

<sup>187</sup> McGivney, *Resurrection*, 96, 97–98.

<sup>188</sup> Vernon Masayesva, quoted in McGivney, *Resurrection*, 96, 97–98.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

promoted a rational and proficient use of all natural resources.<sup>190</sup> Residents of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming had argued fiercely over the river's water since the onset of the twentieth century. After nearly a year of futile negotiations that had "degenerated into a greedy grabfest," Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover and his touchy team of western delegates met during the fall of 1922 outside Santa Fe, New Mexico, at Bishop's Lodge, a remote but posh dude ranch complete with Spanish territorial-style living quarters.<sup>191</sup> The elite white, all male envoy included water-rights lawyer Delphus E. Carpenter from Colorado, Arizona state water commissioner W. S. Norviel, Executive Secretary of the Colorado River Commission Clarence Stetson, Nevada state engineer James G. Scrugham, Utah state engineer R. E. Caldwell, California state engineer and lay minister W. F. McClure, Stephen B. Davis Jr. from New Mexico, and Wyoming state engineer Frank C. Emerson. The nine proponents of the compact, negotiated thirty-four years before the passage of the CRSP and the subsequent construction of Glen Canyon Dam as that law's centerpiece, sealed the fate of the wild, psychotic Colorado River.

Signed on 24 November 1922, at the Palace of the Governors on Santa Fe's historic plaza, the compact arbitrarily severed the Colorado River into the upper and lower basins. Without fully considering the major issues of demand, supply, basin

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<sup>190</sup> For a discussion of progressive era conservationism, see Samuel P. Hayes, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>191</sup> Quote from Daniel McCool, *Native Waters: Contemporary Indian Settlements and the Second Treaty Era* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 2002), 159. Norris Hundley Jr., *Water and the West: The Colorado River and the Politics of Water in the American West* (Berkeley: University of California, 1975), 188.

hydrology, Native claims, or ecological needs, the compact permitted each basin to exploit half the water annually available in the river system. In addition, it required the upper basin states to ensure that 7.5 million-acre feet would reach the lower basin states every year.<sup>192</sup> This mandatory obligation necessitated the construction of dams above Lee's Ferry, Arizona, the dividing point for the upper and lower basins, presently located fifteen miles downstream from Glen Canyon Dam, in order to capture surplus water during wet years for upper basin use of its own share and to meet compact delivery requirements. "The premise," New Mexico writer William deBuys argues, "was to make that river work, and make every drop in it work for the benefit of society."<sup>193</sup>

Reflecting early twentieth century perceptions of American society and its relationship with Native peoples, Hoover's commission placed Indians on the periphery of that society. Colorado River basin states, except Arizona, ratified the Colorado River Compact two years before the United States officially recognized Native peoples as U.S. citizens in 1924. "Agreements were being made," asserts Navajo Nation Water Commission Vice-chairwoman Lena Fowler, "before we even knew how to speak English."<sup>194</sup> Hoover's board also neglected to invite Indian peoples living on the Colorado Plateau or federal bureaucrats from the Office of Indian Affairs to the

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<sup>192</sup> An acre-foot equals the amount of water needed to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot (approximately 326,000 gallons or 1,200 cubic meters). Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*, enlarged and updated ed., (London: Zed Books, 2001), x.

<sup>193</sup> William deBuys, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, program 2, six-part radio series, produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>194</sup> Lena Fowler, quoted in Matt Jenkins, "Seeking the Water Jackpot," *High Country News*, 17 March 2008.

negotiations. No tribal representatives signed the compact, and the ethnocentric document declared Native rights to the river trifling at best. It virtually dismissed indigenous claims to the river's water except for the inclusion of Hoover's "wild Indian article," which read "nothing in this compact shall be construed as affecting the obligations of the United States of America to Indian tribes."<sup>195</sup> The secretary of commerce only added the clause to appease any congressman "who will bob up and say, 'What is going to happen to the poor indian?'"<sup>196</sup> Finally, Hoover's provision successfully punted the basin's gnarly indigenous water issues to some indefinite time in the future.<sup>197</sup>

Twenty-six years later, in 1948, upper basin state water commissioners Charles A. Carson (Arizona), Clifford H. Stone (Colorado), Fred E. Wilson (New Mexico), Edward H. Watson (Utah), and L. C. Bishop (Wyoming) met to divide 7.5 million acre feet of Colorado River water, as the Colorado River Compact of 1922 mandated, among their respective entities. The final version of the act allotted 51.75 percent of the nearly 8 million acre feet to Colorado, 11.25 percent to New Mexico, 23 percent to Utah, 14 percent to Wyoming, and 50,000 acre feet annually to Arizona, owing to the state's small sliver of land that lies in the upper basin.<sup>198</sup> This section of Arizona sits on Navajo land.

Reminiscent of the Colorado River Commission of 1922, the all-white male lineup of 1948 again barred indigenous peoples from the compact's negotiations and

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<sup>195</sup> Herbert Hoover, quoted in Hundley Jr., *Water and the West*, 212. Colorado River Commission, *Colorado River Compact*, 67th Cong., 4th sess., 1922, H. Doc. 605, 11.

<sup>196</sup> Hoover, quoted in Hundley, *Water and the West*, 212.

<sup>197</sup> Jenkins, "Seeking the Water Jackpot."

<sup>198</sup> Upper Colorado River Commission, *Upper Colorado River Basin Compact*, 81st Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1948).

virtually ignored Native claims to Bits'íis ninéézi and its tributaries. The Upper Colorado River Basin Compact included its own “wild Indian article,” which repeated Hoover’s proviso of 1922 almost verbatim.<sup>199</sup> The compact joined a slew of other interstate laws and concessions collectively known as the Law of the River that excluded Native voices.<sup>200</sup> These decrees and regulations forced the upper basin states to ensure the lower basin states would receive their fair share of the Rio Colorado, making it practically impossible for New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to deliver water to California, Arizona, and Nevada without constructing a big dam above Lee’s Ferry. “You have got to recognize,” asserts former Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Floyd E. Dominy, “that the Law of the River puts the Upper Basin in a straitjacket.”<sup>201</sup> According to Dominy, the Bureau of Reclamation had no choice but to build Glen Canyon Dam close to Lee’s Ferry to assure power production and water storage. This type of unit guaranteed some form of human control over an erratic water source. Likewise, Glen

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<sup>199</sup> “Article XIX,” in Upper Colorado River Commission, *Upper Colorado River Basin Compact*, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1948).

<sup>200</sup> In 1948, the Law of the River contained the Colorado River Compact of 1922 (the cornerstone of the interstate laws and regulations), the Boulder Canyon Project Act of 1928, California Seven Party Agreement of 1931, the Mexican Water Treaty of 1944, and, finally, the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact. Today, Law of the River decrees include the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court decision, *California v. Arizona* (1963); The Colorado River Basin Act of 1968; the Criteria for Coordinated Long-Range Operation of Colorado River Reservoirs of 1970; Minute 242 of the U.S.-Mexico International Boundary Water Commission of 1973; and The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, “The Law of the River,” <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g1000/lawofrvr.html>.

<sup>201</sup> Floyd E. Dominy, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, six-part radio series, produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

Canyon Dam afforded the upper basin states a “huge sponge” to “provide that steady flow of water from the good [years] to the bad.”<sup>202</sup>

On 11 April 1956, the Eighty-fourth Congress approved the Colorado River Storage Project; the measure featured Glen Canyon Dam as the act’s sensational star. Public Law 485, better known as the CRSP, also sanctioned the construction of Flaming Gorge Dam, Navajo Dam, and the Curecanti dams plus eleven other participating projects. Despite the Navajo Tribal Council’s wholehearted support for lush farmland, the CRSP failed to include a water-delivery system for the People. Although Congress included Navajo Dam on the San Juan River as part of the CRSP, U.S. lawmakers dropkicked the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project into the future. Ahkeah’s plea for an irrigation system in eastern Navajoland apparently fell on deaf ears. Proponents of the CRSP, however, certainly intended to filch Navajo land for the legislation’s special attraction at Glen Canyon.

During the summer of 1956, Representative Udall introduced House Resolution 11685 to his congressional colleagues. Udall’s declaration served as the culmination of a months-long debate centered on the acquisition of Navajo lands required for the erection of Glen Canyon Dam. Although the bill promised to negotiate a fair price with the Diné, it ultimately asserted that Congress could condemn tribal lands and steal part of the People’s traditional grazing ground through eminent domain, negating any real bargaining power the Diné may have brokered.<sup>203</sup> For its part, the tribal government seemed willing to relinquish this corner of the Navajo Reservation owing to the tribe’s

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> *A Bill to Provide for the Acquisition of Navajo Indian Lands Required in Connection with the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of the Glen Canyon Unit, Colorado River Storage Project*, 84th Cong., 2d sess., H.R. 11685, 8 June 1956.

dire economic situation and need for jobs. In other words, Navajo leaders understood the unspoken tradeoff. In order to construct a federally sponsored town and secure for Navajos prospective employment opportunities associated with the dam, congressional members demanded that tribal lands needed for the dam site be relinquished with no strings attached. Indeed, Arizona senators Barry M. Goldwater and Carl T. Hayden informed the Bureau of Reclamation they had no intentions of introducing Udall's bill to the Senate unless the Navajo Tribal Council could assure them the tribe would not renege on its concurrence to renounce the People's land in Glen Canyon.

In a declaration all its own, the advisory committee of the Navajo Tribal Council petitioned Congress to build the Bureau of Reclamation town in conjunction with Glen Canyon Dam on the reservation. It also advocated for a Navajo labor force at the dam and asked Congress to outlaw any agreements with contractors and subcontractors associated with building the dam that could possibly hinder the employment of Indians. Referencing the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act of 1950 and the terminationist cloud looming over Washington, the petition expressed the desire of Navajo leaders to depart from the colonization of Native peoples through government handouts. Moreover, it suggested a training program be introduced to boost Navajo workers' skills in an effort to increase the People's chances for obtaining government jobs connected with the dam. Hoping to secure work for individual Navajos and jumpstart an economic upsurge on the reservation, tribal chairman Paul Jones, elected in 1955 after defeating Ahkeah, swore that the "tribe will cooperate to maximum with plans to locate town southeast of river." Jones's pledge alluded to an unadulterated transaction between the Diné and the United

States for the acquisition of indigenous land needed for the Glen Canyon Dam site and reclamation town.<sup>204</sup>

Jones, a member of the *Ta'neesahnii* or Tangle or Scattered Tree Branches People Clan and the last Navajo tribal chairman born in the nineteenth century, spent his early childhood herding sheep near Naschitti, New Mexico, and attended boarding school in Tohatchi, the location of a Christian Reformed Mission church, where medical missionary Dr. Lee Huizenga lived. Huizenga developed an interest in Jones and eventually asked the young boy to accompany him and his family to Englewood, New Jersey, where Jones continued his studies. Prior to World War I, when the Dutch Christian Reform church sent Huizenga to China, Jones moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to complete his high school education at Calvin College. The U.S. Army drafted Jones during his stay at Grand Rapids. The twenty-two-year-old joined the Eighth Division fighting in France. Following World War I, Jones returned to the Navajo Reservation, worked for a year at the Tohatchi school, and again moved to Grand Rapids to attend McLaughlin's Business College. In 1933, Jones returned to Diné Bikéyah serving as an interpreter for the Navajo Tribal Council and earning a reputation for his incredible skill with both the Navajo and English languages.<sup>205</sup> More than twenty years

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<sup>204</sup> Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council, *Petition to the Congress of the United States to Place Glen Canyon Dam Town Site on the Southeast Side of the Colorado River and to Authorize a Program to Encourage and Aid Navajo Employment in Construction of the Glen Canyon Dam*, 13 April 1956, folder 2, box 12, SLUP; and Paul Jones to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Walter [sic] Dexheimer, Window Rock, Ariz., 18 April 1956, folder 2, box 12, SLUP. The commissioner's first name was actually Wilbur not Walter.

<sup>205</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 211–13; and Virginia Hoffman and Broderick H. Johnson, "Paul Jones," in *Navajo Biographies* (Rough Rock, Ariz.: Rough Rock Demonstration School, 1970), 256–74.

later, the People ousted Ahkeah and elected Jones as their new tribal chairman. According to historian Peter Iverson, many Navajos viewed Jones, unlike Ahkeah, as “better educated and . . . worldly.” Besides, Ahkeah had broken his promise to “get us back our sheep.”<sup>206</sup> Jones performed two terms as chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council from 1955 to 1963. Indeed, the U.S. government’s attempt to acquire Navajo land for the construction of Glen Canyon Dam and a federal town to house engineers, contractors, and workers consumed much of Jones’s first term.

Further complicating the details of a land deal, Bureau of Reclamation assistant commissioner Edwin G. Nielsen phoned Udall on 2 July 1956, to relay Secretary of the Interior Fred G. Aandahl’s reluctance to fabricate a construction camp on the Navajo Reservation without Congress’s approval of H.R. 11685.<sup>207</sup> The Bureau of Reclamation needed congressional consent to build a government town on the reservation but it also required the Navajos’ approval. Two weeks later, in a telegram wired to Udall, Jones reasserted the council’s commitment to surrender the land. Quoting resolution CJ-44-56 that officially endorsed Udall’s H.R. 11685, Jones told the Arizona representative that Diné leaders approved his bill but would not authorize the acquisition of tribal land for “park, recreational, scenic, or waterfront protective purposes.” In one fell swoop, the council tied proverbial strings to the land deal as it tried to retain tribal access to the shores of Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir. This added clause reflected the council’s belief that the People would prosper from an influx of tourists destined for Lake Powell. The

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<sup>206</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 213.

<sup>207</sup> “Memo: Glen Canyon Townsite—Edwin G. Nielsen’s Report,” n.d., folder 2, box 12, SLUP.

dam's ephemeral pool ironically carries the namesake of continental explorer John Wesley Powell, who advocated decentralized watershed commonwealths governed from within by resident citizens whose intertwined interests would generate the "checks and balances" imperative for wise stewardship of the West's varied watersheds.<sup>208</sup> Jones also reminded Udall of "the great opportunity offered by construction of Glen Canyon Dam for employment of Navajo labor, and for increased economic opportunity on the Navajo Reservation." Jones maintained, "it is desirable that the construction and maintenance town site for the dam be located on the Navajo Reservation."<sup>209</sup>

The location of a federal city near the dam site haunted politicians before and after the passage of the CRSP. As early as 4 April 1956, Udall had written to Arizona commissioner Frank L. Christensen in Flagstaff expressing his conviction that "we have right and logic on our side . . . [to] secure the type of development most beneficial to Arizona."<sup>210</sup> Udall incessantly promoted the south side of the Colorado River, as opposed to its northern flank in Utah, as an ideal venue. The setting rested on the southwestern corner of the Navajo Reservation atop Manson Mesa, a hefty swath of desert plateau that hovers over the riven rock depths in the canyon below. "I believe it entirely logical, too," Udall penned, "that the Navajo Indian Tribe should be one of the chief beneficiaries of

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<sup>208</sup> William deBuys, "Introduction," to *Seeing Things Whole: The Essential John Wesley Powell* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>209</sup> Navajo Tribal Council, *Resolution of the Navajo Tribal Endorsing H.R. 11685, 84th Congress, 2nd Session*, in Norman Littell and Charles J. Alexander, comps. *Navajo Tribal Council Resolutions* (Washington, D.C., 1956); and Paul Jones to Stewart L. Udall, Western Union telegram, Window Rock, Ariz., 16 July 1956, folder 2, box 12, SLUP.

<sup>210</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Frank L. Christensen, 4 April 1956, folder 2, box 12, SLUP.

this project.”<sup>211</sup> The Arizona representative, using similar tactics employed by leaders of the Aqualantes, attached an indigenous icon to a cause primarily intended to profit non-Indians. For his part, Jones apparently realized that Goldwater and Hayden refused to introduce Udall’s bill to the Senate unless the tribe fully relinquished its land. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, although the Bureau of Reclamation needed Navajo land to erect Glen Canyon Dam, the tribal council explicitly stated its desire to maintain access to Lake Powell’s shoreline and, thus, in its own way, repudiated the U.S. government’s attempt at obtaining Diné land with no strings attached.

Hoping to gain pecuniary benefits for all Navajo people during the post–World War II years, the Navajo Tribal Council, now led by Jones, agreed to part with lands essential to the construction of a dam at Glen Canyon. The tribal council’s consensus occurred despite Glen Canyon’s status as a traditional grazing ground and ceremonial community where Navajos watered sheep, goats, horses, and cattle and sought protection and healing as their creation stories explicate. Udall’s bill, however, died in Congress during the late summer session because the tribal council expressed its wish to retain access to Lake Powell’s shores. “I regret this lack of positive action,” Udall composed in a poignant letter to the *Arizona Daily Sun*’s editor Platt Cline, “for—like you—I realize the vast benefits involved for our Indian citizens.”<sup>212</sup> Udall expressed his disappointment for Arizona as well.<sup>213</sup> Navajos also realized the probable impact posed by the failed land deal. Lamenting the exodus of the People seeking off-reservation jobs as part of

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Pratt Cline, 1 August 1956, folder 2, box 12, SLUP.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

relocation, U.S. veteran Jim Begay of Pinon, Arizona, begged Udall to end the federal program owing to the potential jobs Glen Canyon Dam afforded the Diné. “Why open up Navajo field to industries,” Begay posited, “and at the same time send Navajo families away to far away cities?”<sup>214</sup>

While Navajo leaders and congressional representatives squabbled over a land deal, Montezuma Creek Navajos continued to endure immense hardships on McCracken Mesa. To combat these atrocities and to further a land deal beneficial to the People and the federal government, Navajo leaders and Department of the Interior officials, at the suggestion of Councilman Ned Hatahli, eventually coordinated an acre-for-acre land exchange that gave the federal government 53,000 acres in the Glen Canyon region for the construction, operation, and maintenance of Glen Canyon Dam and allotted 53,000 acres of “good range land” on McCracken Mesa to the Diné. Owing to a plethora of oil and gas fields in the area, the Navajos’ general counsel Norman Littell, hired by Ahkeah and the tribal council in 1947, argued for the inclusion of mineral rights, but the U.S. government refused to relinquish this potential wealth and did not grant the lawyer’s request. Instead, the tribe retained mineral rights on Manson Mesa and in Glen Canyon, a doomed region soon to be inundated by Lake Powell. This congressional move served as a clear indication that federal lawmakers maintained their colonialist view toward Navajos.

Although Congress appropriated funds for the construction of Glen Canyon Dam in 1957, Navajo leaders and U.S. bureaucrats did not hammer out the exact details of the land exchange until late summer 1958. On 2 September of that year, Congress approved

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<sup>214</sup> Jim Begay to Stewart Udall, Pinon, Arizona, 29 December 1956, folder 4, box 26, SLUP.

Public Law 85-868, directing the U.S. government to provide for the exchange of lands. The next six years signaled the start of a new age defined by technological change and the ecological alteration of an entire region as Glen Canyon Dam morphed from an embryonic drawing on an engineer's table to a 1,500-foot long bung asphyxiating the untamed Colorado River. As Lake Powell's water level slowly mounted, the sheep in West Canyon lost their watering hole while their Navajo herders lamented the passing of an enduring era.

The years preceding the construction of Glen Canyon Dam coincided with a watershed moment in Navajo history. The administrations of both Ahkeah and Jones represented a surge in the Navajo political system and a commitment to shift the tribe's economic focus from raising sheep to farming to wage labor. Influenced by members of the Aqualantes and their belief in irrigation as the arid Southwest's savior, Ahkeah and his tribal council pleaded with Congress to include a Navajo Indian Irrigation Project as part of the CRSP, while seemingly unaware of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's plans for his people's grazing ground in Glen Canyon. Likewise, Jones, whose tenure as chairman overlapped with the construction phase of Glen Canyon Dam, pushed the Navajo Reservation as the ideal location for a government town essential to the dam's manufacture apparatus. Educated and business savvy, Jones wanted to ensure the Navajo Nation benefitted from this public-works project, and he lobbied for the employment of Navajo people in all aspects of the dam's assembly, including a network of roads crisscrossing sections of the reservation and leading to the dam's construction site and the town of Page, Arizona. Still, whether Ahkeah and Jones fully realized the impact Glen Canyon Dam would have on their western constituents remains unclear. Nevertheless,

they sought the support of U.S. congressional representatives and senators, and their constituents, to further the Navajos' agenda. Finally, Ahkeah and Jones desired a boost in their reservation's economy and urged the People to seek alternate sources of income and to re-evaluate their living conditions and their dependence on sheep.

## Chapter 4

### “I Can't Help You with Your Troubles, If You Won't Help with Mine”: The Great Debate over Navajo Rainbow National Park

Resting after a moderately strenuous morning hike in the heart of Glen Canyon on 29 April 1961, members of a mid-twentieth-century expedition team composed of U.S. congressmen and senators, bureaucrats, conservationist leaders, and Navajo tribal representatives cooled their sweltering, sweaty feet in Bridge Creek at the base of Tsé Nani' áhígíí. Dangling his legs over the nippy water, Utah senator Frank E. Moss, apparently ignorant of the sacred beings amid the canyon walls, combed his hair, while others enjoyed a smoke or engaged in unceremonious chitchat with fellow trekkers.<sup>215</sup> Their canyon-country adventure had begun in Page, Arizona, hours before this midday respite, where Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, the mastermind behind this exploratory operation, reminded them of the mission's purpose: to conduct an on-the-

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<sup>215</sup> For the chapter title, see Robert Hunter, Jerry Garcia, and Phil Lesh, “Cumberland Blues,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist and David Dodd, annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 97. “High Brass Enjoys a Wilderness Wonder,” p. 135, folder 6, box 92, SLUP.

ground survey of the Rainbow Bridge area and assess the issues of protection as dictated in the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956.<sup>216</sup>

Unlike previous explorers in the region who traversed the twisting terrain on horseback or foot, these modern-day swashbucklers flew in roughshod, aboard helicopters on loan from the U.S. Air Force, landing barely a mile from the base of Rainbow Bridge. Clad in work pants, a t-shirt, and hiking boots, Udall emerged from his bubble-canopy chopper at the foot of the rainbow ready for the day's work that lay ahead. Convinced the arbitrary, human-made, 160-square-mile boundary delineating Rainbow Bridge National Monument should be extended to embrace not only Tsé Nani' áhígíí but also *Naatsis'áán* (Navajo Mountain) and the slickrock canyons pouring from its base, Udall faced the extraordinary challenge of persuading his bureaucratic colleagues, conservation comrades, and Indian hosts that this wilderness area deserved salvation as a national park.

Earlier that day, as the sun soaked the canyon landscape around Tsé Nani' áhígíí, Secretary Udall had briefed his motley crew from a nearby hangar at Page on the day's upcoming expedition into the bowels of Forbidding and Bridge canyons that shroud the rock arch. After obligatory introductions of several bigwig participants in the reconnaissance foray, including Senator Moss, Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Floyd E. Dominy, and Navajo Tribal chairman Paul Jones, Udall revealed his belief that Rainbow Bridge symbolized “the crown jewel of the whole Colorado. . . . the most

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<sup>216</sup> *Colorado River Storage Project Act*, Public Law 485, 84th Cong., 2d sess. (11 April 1956).

magnificent piece of sculpture anywhere in the world.”<sup>217</sup> According to a local newspaper, Udall had developed an interest in the canyon country after reading Stanford University professor Wallace E. Stegner’s *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*, first published in 1954, just two years before Congress passed the CRSP.<sup>218</sup> Sketching the canyonscape’s overall topography, Udall prudently reminded the crowd that the disputed land belonged to the Navajos, perhaps the most challenging obstacle to his plan. The secretary no doubt realized he needed the blessings of tribal authorities if he hoped to incorporate this wild place into the U.S. national park system. Udall alluded to future difficulties with the tribe when he told the folks gathered in Page that, “if we are going to do anything at all, we are going to have to do some bargaining with some very tough bargainers, the Navajos.”<sup>219</sup>

Udall’s recognition of the Navajos’ bartering power hinted at the political, cultural, and economic transformation the Diné had experienced during the 1950s. These changes set them on a path toward self-determination, in spite of Congress’s adoption of termination and relocation as its official Indian policy. The Rainbow Bridge land swap and subsequent national park never materialized but its history details the environmental and cultural aspects of a region few Americans had heard of prior to the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. Its story demonstrates the Navajos’ rise in the southwestern political

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<sup>217</sup> “Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall on Rainbow Bridge Inspection Trip, April 29, 1961, Including Pre-Trip Briefing Session Remarks in the Hangar at Paige [*sic*], Arizona, and Evening Discussion Conference after Daylong Inspection Trip,” p. 123, folder 6, box 92, SLUP.

<sup>218</sup> “Udall Plans Glen Canyon Inspection Trip,” *Page (Ariz.) Signal*, 20 April 1961.

<sup>219</sup> “Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall on Rainbow Bridge Inspection Trip,” 126.

arena following World War II. Through “tough” bargaining, the Navajo Tribal Council maintained traditional lands during a time when Native communities all over Indian Country merely struggled to save tribal lands and tribal status. Their determination to retain tribal land holdings stemmed from a desire to capitalize on the region’s burgeoning tourist industry. Navajo leaders hoped tourism would advance the economic interests of the People. The tribal council’s resolve to preserve Diné lands around Rainbow Bridge National Monument catapulted the Navajos into a national public-land-management debate raging among conservationists, government officials, and Native peoples. For almost a decade before the dam gates closed, conservationists, federal bureaucrats, and U.S. lawmakers bickered incessantly over Lake Powell flooding the monument. These disputes lasted well into the 1970s, but the traditional Navajos who use this area for religious and ceremonial purposes still cope with the dam and the reservoir’s ongoing effects.<sup>220</sup>

Rainbow Bridge National Monument first entered the conservation spotlight during congressional hearings for the CRSP in 1954 and early 1955. The CRSP’s original blueprints called for several dams in the upper Colorado River basin, including one at Echo Park in Dinosaur National Monument and another at Glen Canyon, a multifaceted maze of chutes and clefts that straddles the geopolitical border between Arizona and Utah. Engineers designed Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams for hydroelectric power and water storage, not irrigation. The Bureau of Reclamation devised them as cash registers to fund most of the other CRSP projects. Protesting the construction of Echo Park Dam

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<sup>220</sup> Robert Begay, “Doo Dilzin Da: ‘Abuse of the Natural World,’” *American Indian Quarterly* 25 (winter 2005): 21–27.

inside the boundaries of Dinosaur National Monument in northwestern Colorado, members of the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, and the National Parks Association, among others, launched a grueling campaign to halt the dam's construction. Owing to a paucity of environmental laws later used to delay or block development projects like Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams, conservationists in the mid-1950s relied heavily on rhetoric to rouse the public.<sup>221</sup> Employing books, pamphlets, and newspaper ads to relay their message, these groups crafted poetic imagery to electrify their grassroots constituency, arguing that a dam in Dinosaur National Monument would set a precedent for the invasion, and thus destruction, of other areas in the park system.<sup>222</sup> The defense of national parks and monuments also rallied an otherwise fragmented conservation movement. Whether their interests focused on wildlife or wild places, most postwar conservationists supported the preservation of the national park system.

Given its lack of a park status, Glen Canyon seemed a logical choice to counterbalance the loss of water storage and hydroelectric power at Echo Park. Instead of two dams, conservationists favored a "high" dam at Glen Canyon to provide more water storage and greater power production than initially planned for the area. Backed by a large electorate bent on fueling the intermountain West's growing postwar cities and irrigating the region's farms and ranches, Bureau of Reclamation officials fiercely resisted the conservationists' alternate proposal. They insisted too much water would

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<sup>221</sup> Mark T. Harvey, "Defending the Park System: The Controversy over Rainbow Bridge," *New Mexico Historical Review* 73 (January 1998): 46.

<sup>222</sup> "Fight is On to Save Big Dinosaur Area," *New York Times*, 21 December 1953; Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 215; and Harvey, "Defending the Park System," 48.

evaporate from a larger Lake Powell. When Sierra Club executive director David R. Brower and Cornell University physics professor Richard Bradley proved these claims dubious through the revelation of simple miscalculations in reclamation's figures, the bureau changed tunes.<sup>223</sup> Sounding like concerned members of the conservation crowd, the beaver boys claimed instead that a bigger dam at Glen Canyon would result in elevated water levels at Lake Powell, and thus threaten Rainbow Bridge National Monument. In addition, they expressed concern over Glen Canyon's geological structure. On 25 June 1954, Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Wilbur A. Dexheimer disclosed the agency's apprehension, arguing that, "Our proposed [low] dam 580 feet high is the maximum that can be built on that site geologically. Evaporation has nothing to do with it."<sup>224</sup> According to the bureau, the canyon's soft, porous Navajo sandstone walls could not support a "high" dam there. Three days after Dexheimer's statement appeared, Bureau of Reclamation regional director and native Utahn Eugene O. "Ollie" Larson told the Senate subcommittee that Glen Canyon Dam "should be constructed to the maximum height [580 feet] consistent with economy, safety of the structure, and adequate protection of the Rainbow Natural Bridge."<sup>225</sup>

No matter the height of Glen Canyon Dam, conservationists now grappled with a new dilemma. Two separate dams proposed in the CRSP posed potential problems for

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid. For a lengthy discussion of the evaporation controversy, see Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, 181–205.

<sup>224</sup> Wilbur A. Dexheimer, in *Denver [Colo.] Post*, 25 June 1954.

<sup>225</sup> Statement of E. O. Larson, 28 June 1954, in Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Colorado River Storage Project," *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on S. 1555*, 83d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954), 72.

two different areas within the national park system. Conservationists in the postwar American West, however, risked jeopardizing their credibility if they opposed both dams at Echo Park and Glen Canyon, or worse the entire Colorado River Storage Project. According to historian Mark T. Harvey, the bureau successfully trapped conservationists in a subservient web without any legal means to escape.<sup>226</sup> After all, reclamation officials, pressured by upper basin lawmakers who clamored for a dam farther north, had championed Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams as a perfect match to water the Intermountain West. For their part, Brower and other conservation contenders desperately needed the support of upper basin senators Arthur V. Watkins of Utah, Eugene D. Millikin from Colorado, Frank A. Barrett of Wyoming, and Clinton P. Anderson from New Mexico if they hoped to eliminate Echo Park Dam from the CRSP. All these questions about Glen Canyon Dam, its height, its reservoir's evaporation rate, its site structure, and its threat to Rainbow Bridge fomented concern among congressional leaders who increasingly questioned conservationists' motives and their dedication to save only Dinosaur National Monument. "You people," Watkins snapped, "have taken . . . the position that you are against any invasion of a national park or monument." "Is that right," he barked at Brower, who conceded, "that is our general position."<sup>227</sup> Brower admitted, however, that conservation groups would not object to "a Glen Canyon Dam,

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<sup>226</sup> Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, 227.

<sup>227</sup> Statements of Arthur V. Watkins and David R. Brower, 5 March 1955, in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on S. 500*, 84th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955), 643.

low or high, that was part of a sound project that did not threaten Rainbow Bridge National Monument.”<sup>228</sup>

Brower’s confession highlighted postwar conservationists’ shortsighted environmental agenda that championed the preservation of the national park system and frequently ignored Native claims to some of the nation’s most cherished landscapes. Influenced by previous generations of environmental thinkers, such as Scottish-born American naturalist John Muir, mid-twentieth-century conservationists equated wildness with national parks or monuments. Declaring wilderness the nation’s salvation from suffocating cities and a burgeoning population, Cold War conservationists identified national parks as wilderness or utterly untamed, uninhabited landscapes; “islands of hope;” places of refuge. Recalling a recent trip to Yellowstone National Park, Charles Eggert, director of motion pictures for the National Parks Association, confirmed this creed. “During that visit,” he told members of the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation at the CRSP hearings in 1955, “I discovered something that meant more to the soul [than] the eye . . . that thing we call spiritual value . . . which drives one away from the city . . . into the country—and even farther, into the wilderness . . . where one realizes it to its fullest extent.”<sup>229</sup> Eggert’s revelation pointed toward the tendency of conservationists to equate sublime wilderness with national parks and monuments. Shaped by ideas of conquest and nation building and skirted by geopolitical fences that often conflict with the organic flow of Nature, national parks and monuments represented

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Testimony of Charles Eggert, in Senate, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on S. 500*, 696.

socially constructed spaces that repeatedly marginalized Native inhabitants as these areas transformed into cultural icons. Indigenous communities all over Indian Country held cultural and spiritual ties to the landscapes that comprise some of the United States' most sanctified places. Cold War conservationists often ignored the history of these areas by failing to recognize national parks and monuments as "dispossessed" terrain.<sup>230</sup>

Regardless of the sordid details clouding the history of national parks and monuments, Cold War conservationists dedicated their cause to the preservation of the national park system even at the expense of Native peoples who had populated these vast regions for uncounted generations.<sup>231</sup>

As postwar Americans venerated seashores, mountainscapes, or canyonlands as national parks or monuments, these natural places morphed into social icons with meanings and values that "range from the savage to the sacred."<sup>232</sup> Conservationists' efforts to prevent Echo Park from drowning under a human-made reservoir, while they simultaneously supported a dam, low or high, in Glen Canyon espouses this idea.

Dinosaur National Monument's park status automatically elevated its cultural relevance,

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<sup>230</sup> For the best discussion on Indian removal and the creation of national parks, see Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000).

<sup>231</sup> For a discussion on the social construction of wilderness, see William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991); Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); and Liza Nicholas, Elaine M. Bapis, and Thomas J. Harvey, eds. *Imagining the Big Open: Nature, Identity, and Play in the New West* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003).

<sup>232</sup> William Cronon, foreword to *Uncommon Ground*, 20.

placing social value on a natural space. Although Glen Canyon possibly equaled, or even surpassed, Dinosaur's beauty and archaeological magnitude, since it lacked federal protection, it failed to attain any real cultural significance, at least for the vast majority of Americans. No one thought to ask Native peoples how Glen Canyon fit into their worldviews. Indeed, conservationists practically ignored Glen Canyon's fate and its indigenous communities until they realized its reservoir could potentially harm Rainbow Bridge National Monument. Likewise, their insidious campaign to thwart Lake Powell from trespassing on national park lands advocated barrier dams above and below Tsé Naní' áhígíí. Their plan called for the destruction of an entire ecosystem, separating the rock arch from its hinterlands and Navajo Mountain. Brower and his conservation cohort dismissed the cultural, spiritual, and environmental values of Rainbow Bridge and its larger biotic community and, instead, pushed for the preservation of the national park system.

President William H. Taft catapulted Rainbow Bridge onto the national stage during the early twentieth century. In May 1910, he withdrew Tsé Naní' áhígíí, plus 160 square miles around the rock arch, for the creation of Rainbow Bridge National Monument. At the time, Tsé Naní' áhígíí sat on the edge of the San Juan Paiute Reservation or Paiute Strip, approximately five hundred thousand acres in San Juan County, Utah, wedged between the San Juan River and the present-day geopolitical border that separates Arizona from Utah.<sup>233</sup> Prior to Taft's presidential proclamation, the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes, Navajos, and Mormon settlers had contested this

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<sup>233</sup> "Rainbow Bridge National Monument," attached to a letter from National Park Service director Conrad Wirth to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, 24 January 1961, folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

space for years. In 1904, Laura Work, superintendant of the Paiute boarding school at Panguitch, Utah, alerted Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones (1897–1904) to the presence of approximately one hundred Paiutes who lived “formerly at the head of Pahute Canyon.” “But as that was included in the Navaho country and was needed by those Indians,” Work bemoaned, “they drove off the poor Pahutes, who were thus left without a country.”<sup>234</sup> Eighteen months later, she reiterated the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes’ desperate situation and solicited land along the San Juan River for the band’s use and urged the construction of irrigation ditches “so each family can make a home.”<sup>235</sup> Given her experience near Kaibab, Arizona, north of the Colorado River, where Mormon settlers had completely displaced Paiutes, Work feared LDS ranchers would eventually fold the area south of the San Juan River into their cattle domain and, in the process, remove the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes from a reliable water source if the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) dawdled any longer.<sup>236</sup> This time, her request fell on receptive ears. On 20 March 1906, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp (1905–1909) asked Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock (1899–1907) to find “permanent homes” for the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes before “public lands become scarcer and possibly private lands would have to be purchased.”<sup>237</sup> Following

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<sup>234</sup> Laura Work to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones, 1 July 1904, quoted in Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes, 1775–1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 140.

<sup>235</sup> Laura Work to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp, 20 February 1906, quoted in Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 140.

<sup>236</sup> Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 140.

<sup>237</sup> Francis E. Leupp to Ethan A. Hitchcock, 20 March 1906, quoted in Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 140.

Leupp's recommendation, Congress appropriated five thousand dollars to "purchase land and sheep for the San Juan Pah-Ute Indians."<sup>238</sup>

The congressional mandate mirrored the efforts of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century federal bureaucrats and Christian reformers who sought to transform Native peoples into sedentary farmers living on fixed plots of land. The OIA budget in 1906, for example, allocated \$15,500 for the "support and civilization" of Kaibab and San Juan Paiutes. In other words, the agency intended Paiutes to farm. Federal inspectors who evaluated the potential productivity of proposed lands relied on criteria deeply rooted in white values, including agricultural acreage, water for irrigation, and cost.<sup>239</sup> The OIA instructed Farm and Farming Organization inspector Levi Chubbuck to find a suitable site for a San Juan reservation based on these idealized standards. When he arrived at Paiute Canyon, south of the San Juan River, just east of Navajo Mountain, Chubbuck noted the San Juan Paiutes' tenacity. "These Indians are not asking Governmental assistance," Chubbuck penned. Instead, "they claim the territory in which they live as theirs and deny somewhat aggressively the right of whites or other Indians to locate there." "The greatest of their desires," he concluded, "is to be let alone."<sup>240</sup>

Unfortunately, the Paiutes' yearning for autonomy seemed lost amidst the Navajos' budding population explosion. The treaty between the United States and the

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<sup>238</sup> Public Law 59-258, *U.S. Statutes at Large* (1906), 376.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 325; and Martha C. Knack, "Interethnic Competition at Kaibab during the Early Twentieth Century," *Ethnohistory* 40 (spring 1993): 217.

<sup>240</sup> Levi Chubbuck to Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock, 31 December 1906, quoted in Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 141.

Diné in 1868 had set aside approximately 3.5 million acres for the Navajo Reservation astride the present-day boundary between Arizona and New Mexico. Although it covered only a fraction of their original homeland, the reservation promoted continuity among Navajos, allowing them to retain a portion of Dinétah during an era when the U.S. government haphazardly removed many Native peoples from traditional territories to wholly unfamiliar places.<sup>241</sup> Compared to other indigenous communities, the Navajos fared relatively well. After the Bosque Redondo debacle and the People's return to Dinétah, their population mushroomed and their livestock holdings increased with governmental aid. Moreover, the Diné added land to their initial reservation on five separate occasions between 1878 and 1886.<sup>242</sup> Owing to the region's high desert terrain and poor farming conditions, federal officials placed little economic value on sections of land deeded to Navajos. Ironically, the government's shortsighted assessment of land on the Colorado Plateau, combined with the area's isolation, largely contributed to the Navajos' remarkable demographic growth.<sup>243</sup>

A small band of Navajos and a few Paiute followers, all led by Hashkéniinii, originally migrated to the Paiute Strip during the People's incarceration at the Bosque Redondo in the mid-1860s. Forty years later, when Chubbuck scouted the area for a San Juan Paiute reservation, the Diné vastly outnumbered the small band of San Juan Paiutes living among Navajo Mountain's shadows. "The Navajos have gained a strong foothold

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<sup>241</sup> Peter Iverson, *Navajo Nation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1981), 10.

<sup>242</sup> Iverson, *Navajo Nation*, 16. See also J. Lee Correll and Alfred Dehiya, *Anatomy of the Navajo Reservation: How It Grew* (Window Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Times Publishing Company, 1972).

<sup>243</sup> Iverson, *Navajo Nation*, 11.

in that region,” Chubbuck recorded in 1906, “and soon the whites will be in there in such force that the few Paiutes will be crowded out and scattered.”<sup>244</sup> Owing to this imminent threat, Chubbuck ignored the San Juan Paiutes’ demand for independence and urged, instead, the establishment of a reservation “for Indian use, specifying particularly the San Juan Paiutes, and including other Paiute Indians of Southern Utah who have not been provided for otherwise.”<sup>245</sup> Chubbuck’s paternalistic posturing resulted in the eventual withdrawal of public land between the Colorado and San Juan rivers in October 1907 for the creation of the San Juan Reservation, colloquially known as the Paiute Strip, home to Rainbow Bridge.

Mining and oil interests petitioned government officials to abandon the reservation almost immediately after its establishment, giving credibility to Chubbuck’s concern. These lobbyists achieved some success in June 1909, when Secretary of the Interior Richard A. Ballinger allowed permitted prospectors to enter the strip. Ballinger insisted, however, that mining should not interfere with Indian rights. Despite the entrance of westerners seeking to tap the region’s resources, Navajos seemed the real agents of oppression. Aided by federal bureaucrats who encouraged sheep-raising, the Diné continued to expand their herds farther west, completely colonizing the Paiute Strip by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In some ways, the Diné co-opted San Juan Paiute territory, attaching cultural meanings to various landforms, including Rainbow Bridge, and marginalizing the people already living there. For generations prior

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<sup>244</sup> Levi Chubbuck to Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock, 31 December 1906, quoted in Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 141.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

to Navajos moving into the region, the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes, traditional hunters and gatherers, had seasonally planted small fields of corn, beans, and squash in Paiute Canyon.<sup>246</sup> Alluding to a cross-cultural exchange common in Indian Country, Southern Paiute Mabel Dry recalled, “they get those squash and corn seeds from those Hopis.”<sup>247</sup> Although many members of the San Juan band of Southern Paiutes learned to speak Navajo while maintaining their own distinct language and willingly integrated various aspects of the People’s material culture into their society, they managed to retain distinct social structures and some level of autonomy.

Government officials merely compounded the Navajos’ dominance over the San Juan Paiutes by refusing to differentiate between the two tribes. Indeed, when Ballinger recommended that Taft create Rainbow Bridge National Monument under the auspices of the Antiquities Act of 1906, he mistakenly located Tsé Nani’ áhígíí within the confines of the “Navajo Indian Reservation” and incorrectly classified the rock arch’s environs as “unappropriated and otherwise valueless public land.”<sup>248</sup> Federal officials had originally stockpiled this region for San Juan Paiutes, not Navajos. The Paiute Strip, a historical marble cake of land transfers blending public domain and Indian reserves, eventually wound its way into Diné hands, but not until 1 March 1933, when Congress permanently

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<sup>246</sup> Robert C. Euler, *Southern Paiute Ethnohistory*, Anthropological Papers, no. 78 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, April 1966), 18.

<sup>247</sup> Mabel Dry, interview by Kay Fowler, 19 July 1967, Kaibab, Arizona, Item 106, p. 22, Doris Duke Indian Oral History Project, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>248</sup> Richard A. Ballinger to William H. Taft, 27 May 1910, Washington, D.C., attached to a letter from National Park Service director Conrad Wirth to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, 24 January 1961, Washington, D.C., folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

added it to the Navajo Reservation.<sup>249</sup> Ballinger's appraisal of Tsé Nani' áhígíí's surroundings hinted at Americans' propensity to look at land as a two-dimensional commodity rather than a complex community teeming with life. By attaching stories to Rainbow Bridge, Native peoples inhabiting the area had embraced the rock arch's larger biotic community, giving Tsé Nani' áhígíí cultural and religious consequence. Value.

Taft elevated Rainbow Bridge's significance among Americans when he designated the rock arch a national monument through the Antiquities Act of 1906. This legislation gave U.S. presidents considerable power in the form of unilateral executive action resulting in the preservation of places possessing archaeological, natural, historical, or scientific curiosity. Concern over threatened archaeological sites in the Southwest fueled the need for a statute that would protect these areas from looters or pot-hunters. "The most important piece of preservation legislation ever enacted by the [U.S.] government," the Antiquities Act proved incredibly flexible and allowed U.S. presidents to move swiftly when creating national monuments.<sup>250</sup> Cashing in on the act's intended vagueness, Taft cited scientific reasons for establishing Rainbow Bridge National Monument. He claimed Tsé Nani' áhígíí served as an "example of eccentric stream erosion." "It appears," Taft wrote in his presidential proclamation, "that the public interest would be promoted by reserving this bridge as a National Monument."<sup>251</sup> Taft's edict set the stage for the grueling campaign launched by conservation groups in the late

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<sup>249</sup> "An Act to Permanently Set Aside Certain Lands in Utah as an Addition to the Navajo Indian Reservation, and for Other Purposes," *U.S. Statutes at Large* (1933), 1418–19.

<sup>250</sup> Hal K. Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), xi.

<sup>251</sup> President William H. Taft, Proclamation, 30 May 1910, attached to a letter from National Park Service director Conrad Wirth to Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, 30 May 1910, Washington, D.C., folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

1950s and early 1960s that centered on saving Rainbow Bridge National Monument from inundation and ultimately convinced Udall that the area deserved deliverance by expanding its boundaries to create a national park.

Indeed, Udall had mulled over the prospects of a new park ever since he had first visited the area in August 1960. As a congressman from Arizona, Udall ran the Glen with his wife Ermalee (Lee for short) Webb Udall; their two oldest boys, Tom and Scott; and expeditionary photographer and river runner Edward Tattnall “Tad” Nichols, who served as their river guide. Udall and Pennsylvania representative John P. Saylor, who ultimately reneged on the river approach to Rainbow Bridge and, instead, flew in on a helicopter, hoped to determine the best course of action for preventing Lake Powell from entering the monument. That river-running trip, like many others Nichols led through the Glen, started at Hite, Utah, a small mining-turned-ferrying community snuggled between Trachyte Creek and White Canyon on the western banks of the Colorado River in Glen Canyon. The town lay just downstream from the practically defunct Hite Marina currently located on the northern tip of Lake Powell. “To get to the river,” Nichols recalled, “we’d drive from Blanding, Utah, down to the bottom of White Canyon and then to Hite. . . . The road followed the river about a mile before coming to the ferry, . . . where the water was relatively quiet and slow moving.”<sup>252</sup> Named after gold prospector Cass Hite who heard about shiny speckles embedded in the soggy scarlet sand from local Navajos in 1883, the town of Hite had presented a relatively easy spot to cross the river

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<sup>252</sup> Nichols, *Glen Canyon*, 15.

before Lake Powell submerged it under water. During the late nineteenth century, in fact, placer miners in the area had dubbed it Dandy Crossing.<sup>253</sup>

In 1932, prospector, Navajo trader, and developer Arthur L. “Arth” Chaffin built a wickedly jagged road through North Wash from Hanksville, Utah, to Hite. Chaffin had recently returned to Glen Canyon after a four-year stint as commissioner of Wayne County, Utah. His desire to escape “city” life lured him to his childhood home in the Glen. Here, at Hite, Chaffin erected a small house, a toolshed, a machine shop, a corral, and an irrigation system for his twenty-acre pasture and garden.<sup>254</sup> Chaffin envisioned his home as an oasis and a place of refuge for weary travelers, including those adventurous souls determined to run the Colorado River, who rested and refueled before launching their journey through Glen Canyon. The state of Utah, seduced by the rising automobile tourist industry and desperate to connect Capitol Reef and Natural Bridges national monuments, agreed in the mid-1940s to improve Chaffin’s original route on one condition: he had to construct and operate a ferry at Hite capable of transporting cars and their passengers across the Colorado River. A functioning ferry at this river junction thus created a primitive thoroughfare through southeastern Utah from Hanksville to Blanding, a small community located seventy-five miles south of Moab.

Chaffin and his wife Della Taylor Hickman maintained the Hite ferry until the mid-1950s when their river retreat became increasingly crowded with prospective uranium miners and their families, who moved to the area during the atomic frenzy

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<sup>253</sup> Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 48–49.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

immediately following World War II.<sup>255</sup> The uranium boom, combined with the looming construction of Glen Canyon Dam, resulted in too many people milling around their once quiet water refuge, making the ferry business almost unbearable. Arth and Della sold their ferrying operation in 1956, the same year Congress passed the CRSP. One year later, the Utah state government took control of it, and, in 1959, hired local resident Woody Edgell to manage the transport vessel. Edgell became Hite's mayor and administrator of the village's only tavern and tent motel one year prior to Udall's first trip through Glen Canyon on a motorboat destined for Rainbow Bridge.

Launching a three-day river adventure, Nichols and Udall, with Lee and two of their six children in tow, left Hite on 6 August 1960 in search of the rock arch. They floated more than a hundred miles downstream to the mouth of Forbidden Canyon, where they camped on the river bank near the entrance to Rainbow Bridge National Monument. On 9 August, Udall and his family hiked six miles upstream through Forbidden and Bridge canyons to the base of Tsé Nani' ahígíí. Here, the Arizona representative met up with Saylor. Just under six feet, weighing 180 pounds, Udall, hardworking and energetic, scrambled up the stone bridge to get a better view of Tsé Nani' ahígíí and its hinterlands. He spent "more than three hours" exploring the immediate vicinity of the rock arch.<sup>256</sup>

Born to Arizona Supreme Court justice Levi Stewart Udall and Anna Louise Lee Udall on 31 January 1920 in St. Johns, Arizona, Stewart Udall grew up on his family's

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<sup>255</sup> For a brief history of the uranium boom in this area, see Jana Mellis, "White Canyon: The Uranium Years," *Blue Mountain Shadows*, winter 1995/1996, pp. 62–78. This article is extrapolated from Jana E. Mellis, "White Canyon, Utah: A Place and Its People" (master's thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1989).

<sup>256</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, folder 10, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

farm. Public lands and Native communities, primarily Navajos and White Mountain Apaches, surrounded the Udall place. His polygamist grandfather David King Udall, a Mormon bishop, had moved to St. Johns in 1880, intending to turn the Hispanic village into a bastion for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Udall's early childhood experiences clearly influenced his ideals as a conservationist. One of six children reared in a devout Mormon middle-class family, he came of age in a close-knit, rural, western community that shaped his "character and convictions."<sup>257</sup> Udall simply loved the land. He tended the family garden; spent a lot of time hiking, fishing, camping, and mountain climbing; and learned to play basketball on a court in his backyard, a physical outlet that served the restless nature of Udall's youth.<sup>258</sup> In 1937, seventeen-year-old Udall left St. Johns to attend Eastern Arizona Junior College; he transferred to the University of Arizona a year later. In 1940, Udall volunteered for a two-year evangelical mission with the Mormon Church. Proselytizing the tenets of the Mormon faith among people from various backgrounds and religious persuasions in Pennsylvania and upstate New York proved a veritable turning point for the twenty year old. Although he remained in the church, he rejected many of its strict precepts.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Thomas G. Smith, "John Kennedy, Stewart Udall, and New Frontier Conservation," *The Pacific Historical Review* 64 (August 1995), 335; and "Stewart Udall, Troubled Optimist," *Santa Fe (N.Mex.) Reporter*, 27 January 2010, [http://www.sfreporter.com/stories/the\\_west\\_of\\_us/5318/2/](http://www.sfreporter.com/stories/the_west_of_us/5318/2/).

<sup>258</sup> Smith, "John Kennedy, Stewart Udall, and New Frontier Conservation," 335; and Robert Manning, "Secretary of Things in General," *Saturday Evening Post*, 20 May 1961, p. 80.

<sup>259</sup> Manning, "Secretary of Things in General," 80.

After serving in combat as a B-24 tail gunner in the Fifteenth Army Air Force during the Italian campaign of World War II, Udall graduated from the University of Arizona Law School in 1948. Increasingly interested in public service, a Udall family value, he practiced law in Tucson with his younger brother Morris K. “Mo” Udall before citizens there elected Stewart to the U.S. Congress in November 1954. “I was taught,” Udall admitted, “that a person may aspire to nothing higher than to be a public servant.”<sup>260</sup> He labored for six years as a Democratic congressman from Arizona’s District 2, an electorate that encompassed the entire state (except Phoenix) as well as various Indian tribes including a significant section of the Navajo Nation. Indeed, when Udall attended his first Navajo Tribal Council meeting in October 1956, just before the midterm elections in November, chairman Jones introduced him as a “champion for the Indian Tribes” and recommended that his delegation vote for the congressman.<sup>261</sup>

The arid West of his youth dictated Udall’s early campaigns as a representative. Udall admired the conservation records of U.S. presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he took his reclamation cues from his Mormon faith and New Deal policies that championed dam-building as the savior for arid western lands. A member of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs during the “great debate on reclamation,” Udall emphatically supported the construction of Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams. Suspicious of easterners who sought to discredit the entire program, Udall condemned the “rising tide of antireclamation sentiment . . . threaten[ing] western

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<sup>260</sup> Stewart L. Udall, quoted in Manning, “Secretary of Things in General,” 80.

<sup>261</sup> Paul Jones in Navajo Tribal Council, *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council* (Window Rock, Ariz.: 22 October–2 November 1956), 194, 197.

development.”<sup>262</sup> “The West’s continued growth is closely linked to the future of reclamation,” he clamored.<sup>263</sup> Indeed, Udall remained an advocate for reclamation throughout much of his career. From 1963 to 1968, Udall vehemently pursued a federally funded central Arizona project designed to transport water from the Colorado River, impounded behind Parker Dam on the Arizona-California border, to Phoenix and Tucson. His undying loyalty to water development catapulted Udall into the epicenter of arguments among conservationists, Native communities, and government officials over the most effective means to protect Rainbow Bridge from Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir.

Among the landmark changes of the 1960s, the decade represented a key shift in the American psyche toward environmental issues. Historian Adam Rome argues that several sixties’ movements, including the renewal of liberalism, a mounting grassroots discontent among middle-class women, and the expanding counterculture composed of youths disillusioned with the nation’s cultural and political institutions, contributed in key ways to the rise of environmentalism.<sup>264</sup> During the early sixties, leftist intellectuals Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Vance Packard, and John Kenneth Galbraith pointed out the increasing gap between private wealth and public poverty. They lamented the escalation of affluence among individual Americans during the 1950s, while public institutions, such as education, law enforcement, and national parks, continued to deteriorate.<sup>265</sup> In

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<sup>262</sup> Stewart L. Udall, “The Great Debate on Reclamation,” 84th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 101, part 3 (15 March–1 April 1955), 4111.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*,” 4111.

<sup>264</sup> Adam Rome, “‘Give Earth a Chance’: The Environmental Movement and the Sixties,” *The Journal of American History* 90 (September 2003): 527.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 528.

addition, John F. Kennedy's election to the White House in November 1960 ushered in a presidency more committed to environmental reform than any other executive branch since FDR. Although Kennedy did not actively participate in the conservation conflicts of the 1950s, he had openly criticized the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for its zealousness toward building dams and opposed both Echo Park and Glen Canyon dams.<sup>266</sup>

Schlesinger and Galbraith's musings, along with public officials committed to the cause, catapulted the toxic effects of environmental degradation onto the national agenda.<sup>267</sup>

In December 1960, U.S. president-elect Kennedy nominated Udall as Secretary of the Department of the Interior. During his eight-year stint as interior's head, Udall helped write several pieces of far-reaching legislation, including the Wilderness Act of 1964, which institutionalized the idea of wilderness, granted unprecedented protection of wild country, and shielded millions of acres from logging, mining, and other types of development. Although he remained an adherent of New Deal policies promoting water development, Udall's tenure as secretary reflected the Arizonan's knack for esthetic conservation. As the population of the United States surged during the postwar years and western cities swelled at unprecedented rates, Udall pleaded for Americans to protect the last remaining vestiges of wild country. "As [western] culture develops, wilderness is the last resource to acquire value," Udall declared, suggesting that "the United States set an

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<sup>266</sup> Smith, "John Kennedy, Stewart Udall, and New Frontier Conservation," 332, 333.

<sup>267</sup> Rome, "'Give Earth a Chance,'" 530. Throughout the decade, middle-class women started local campaigns across the country to stop pollution, save open spaces, and protect wildlife. The hippies, whose roots could be traced to the beat generation of the 1950s, defined the environmental movement during the latter part of the sixties, touting a back-to-the-land mantra that called for the nation to unearth a less environmentally destructive way of life. Rome, "'Give Earth a Chance,'" 535, 543, 544.

example of how to plan the best relationship of human beings to their environment” and “give solemn attention to the matter of developing the optimum [hu]man-land ratio.”<sup>268</sup> Equating wilderness with freedom, Udall delivered on his pledge to create more open space through numerous additions to the national park system, including Canyonlands National Park in southeastern Utah, North Cascades National Park in Washington, and Redwood National Park in California, as well as countless national monuments, national seashores, recreation areas, and wildlife refuges.<sup>269</sup>

During an era defined by a widening rift between private prosperity and public privation, Udall viewed the nation’s relationship with its indigenous inhabitants as seriously flawed, a national issue threatening the country’s rapport with its international neighbors. “This is a . . . testing ground,” Udall claimed. “If we cannot solve our Indian problems, how can we expect people to believe we can solve the problems of Algeria, the Congo or the other underdeveloped areas?”<sup>270</sup> Udall’s commitment to the preservation of the nation’s natural resources and wildest places remained his primary focus, but he tirelessly highlighted Native pursuits. Throughout the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, for example, he pleaded for Navajo jobs at the dam site and in nearby Page, Arizona.

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<sup>268</sup> “Udall Paints Dark Scene for Future,” *Billings (Mont.) Gazette*, 10 March 1963; and “Udall Claims Wilderness Most Expendable Resource,” *Boise Idaho Sunday Statesman*, 10 March 1963.

<sup>269</sup> Barry Massey, “Stewart Udall, 1920–2010: Guardian of Nation’s Wild Places,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 21 March 2010, <http://www.santafenewmexican.com/Local%20News/Stewart-Udall--1920-2010-Guardian-of-nation-s-wild-places>; and Ray Ring, “Death of an Era: The Mixed Legacy of Stewart Udall,” *High Country News*, 12 April 2010, <http://www.hcn.org/issues/42.6/death-of-an-era>.

<sup>270</sup> Stewart L. Udall, quoted in Manning, “Secretary of Things in General,” 81.

Udall's fight to upgrade Rainbow Bridge from a national monument to a national park combined his desire for economic development among Indian peoples and his passion for wilderness preservation. Moreover, Udall's quest for a new national park carved out of southeastern Utah's red canyon country found its roots in his dealings with the Navajo Nation as the tribe's congressional representative during the mid- and late 1950s. Calling the Diné "pretty shrewd land traders," the secretary believed the Navajo Tribal Council would seriously consider surrendering part of the Navajos' land base around Tsé Nani' áhígíí if given economically sound ground, such as valuable sites along Lake Powell, in return.<sup>271</sup>

Udall developed an interest in the problems of protecting Rainbow Bridge in 1957 when his friend Tad Nichols approached him after a river trip through the Glen expressing his concern over the barrier dams proposed by the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service. Nichols thought the protective works might mar the natural landscape "more than the disfiguring action" of Lake Powell. Almost simultaneously, *Desert Magazine's* editor Randall Henderson posited that the cure could possibly be worse than the disease.<sup>272</sup> Nichols's and Henderson's unease stemmed from a national debate that had arisen during the mid-1950s between conservationists and federal

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<sup>271</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs chairman Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, folder 10, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; and "Conference on Rainbow Bridge National Monument," *Official Report of Proceedings before the Department of the Interior*, vol. 1, 30 January 1961, pp. 8, 11, folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

<sup>272</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Northern Arizona Society of Science and Art director Edward B. Danson, 9 November 1959, n.p. folder 4, box 72, SLUP; E[dward]. T[atnall]. Nichols, "Memorandum Prepared by E. T. Nichols, Tucson, Arizona," n.d., folder 2, box 27, SLUP; and *Desert Magazine*, January 1957.

bureaucrats over the construction of dams above and below the rock arch to prevent water from entering the monument.

The Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956 ordered the secretary of the interior “to take adequate protective measures to preclude impairment of Rainbow Bridge National Monument.”<sup>273</sup> At the time, opponents worried that Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir would undermine the abutments of Rainbow Bridge by wearing away its support structure and causing the rock arch to collapse. According to Udall and Dominy, Congress had not considered how Glen Canyon Dam and its reservoir would affect Rainbow Bridge when it enacted the CRSP. During the hearings before the House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation in April 1955, however, Bureau of Reclamation regional director Larson leaked the bureau’s plan for the construction of a barrier dam below the rock arch as a preventive measure designed to keep Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir from entering Rainbow Bridge National Monument.<sup>274</sup> Given Larson’s testimony, Congress must have been partially aware that Glen Canyon Dam could potentially endanger Rainbow Bridge. Scientific studies, conducted several years after Congress passed the CRSP, ultimately demonstrated that Lake Powell posed no serious threat to Tsé Nani’ áhígíí’s geologic makeup. “Intermittent wetting would only duplicate already existing conditions,” Wallace R. Hanson of the U.S. Geological Survey concluded. “The erosive effect of possible wave action in the narrow inner channel would

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<sup>273</sup> *Colorado River Storage Project Act*, Public Law 485, 84th Cong., 2d sess. (11 April 1956).

<sup>274</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation on H.R. 270, H.R. 2836, H.R. 3383, H.R. 3384, and H.R. 4488*, 84th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955), 305–09.

assuredly be negligible.”<sup>275</sup> Everyone agreed, however, that the dam would push water into the monument.

Engineers estimated that Lake Powell would only be full 10 percent of the time because of anticipated lake levels for Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir. At high water, the lake would cross the monument’s boundary, become confined within Bridge Canyon’s narrow estuary, pass under Tsé Nani’ áhígíí, and almost reach the monument’s south boundary located between the rock arch and Navajo Mountain. Although conservationists feared the constant flux of water flowing in and out of Bridge Canyon would leave an unsightly “bathtub ring” on the canyon’s walls and deposit “silt, sediment, and quicksand” on the canyon’s floor, they viewed the reservoir’s leakage into the monument as a direct violation of the law and, more important, a betrayal of the national park system. “The entire system of national parks and monuments is at stake here,” *National Wildlands News* western editor Joe F. Carithers wrote. Relying on rhetoric to elicit anger among its subscribers, the conservation rag insisted “that it would be dangerous to permit the promoters of big dams to get a toe in the door by allowing Glen Canyon reservoir to inundate Rainbow Bridge National Monument.”<sup>276</sup> *National Parks Magazine* editor Bruce M. Kilgore cried, “The flooding of part of Rainbow Bridge National Monument would be a tragic precedent, one which park supporters cannot allow to happen.”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Wallace R. Hanson, quoted in “Conference on Rainbow Bridge National Monument,” *Official Report of Proceedings before the Department of the Interior*, vol. 1, 30 January 1961, p. 8, folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

<sup>276</sup> “The Rainbow Bridge Dilemma,” *National Wildlands News*, n.d., folder 4, box 72, SLUP.

<sup>277</sup> “The Rainbow Bridge Debate,” *National Parks Magazine*, October-December 1958, p. 158.

Ironically, in a strange twist of quasi-alliances, the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, and the National Parks Association, among others, as well as the Navajo Tribal Council, morphed into default advocates for Reclamation's tactics aimed at saving the rock arch. When the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. National Park Service first scouted the area around Rainbow Bridge searching for techniques to tackle Lake Powell's potential ecological destruction, they conducted land surveys that required the cooperation of the Navajo Tribal Council. The agencies needed the tribal government's consent to assess land surrounding Rainbow Bridge since it fell within the confines of the Navajo Reservation. Seemingly willing to oblige Reclamation's request, tribal chairman Jones wrote to Larson on 1 August 1958, that the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council agreed to permit Reclamation the necessary rights of way needed for "a tunnel and diversion dam."<sup>278</sup> Jones and the tribal council first learned that the CRSP required protection of Rainbow Bridge National Monument in March of that year, when the advisory committee had considered a draft of the proposed legislation to exchange 53,000 acres of Navajo lands needed for Glen Canyon Dam and the town of Page for equal ground around McCracken Mesa. The pending bill also asked the tribe to relinquish an additional 100 acres as part of the land exchange but the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council refused to grant the request because they did not consider it "in the best interests of the Navajo Tribe." Members of the advisory committee wanted to

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<sup>278</sup> Paul Jones to E. O. Larson, 1 August 1958, Window Rock, Arizona, folder 25, box 1, Rainbow Bridge National Monument Collection, Special Collections and Archives Department, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff; and "Proposed Resolution of the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council," 14 March 1958, folder 25, box 1, Rainbow Bridge National Monument Collection, Special Collections and Archives Department, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

conduct a survey of their own in order to consider carefully the proposed addendum “in the light of other National Park Service establishments within and around the Reservation.”<sup>279</sup> Put simply, the Navajo Tribal Council “felt under siege . . . by the National Park Service.”<sup>280</sup> Owing to the size of Diné Bikéyah and its satellite communities, Navajo lands fell within three National Park Service regional offices (Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Western) and sixteen park units, including Rainbow Bridge and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Still, the tribal council granted Reclamation rights of way and easements for the construction and maintenance of barrier dams and diversion tunnels to protect Rainbow Bridge National Monument from inundation. Navajo leaders again showed their support for Glen Canyon Dam and the CRSP, missing an opportunity to delay the dam’s construction, or even halt its erection. Members of the tribal council hoped their cooperation would eventually secure an irrigation system for eastern Navajoland and economic prosperity for their constituents.

For their part, the Sierra Club and its conservation cohort fervently supported the National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation’s plan for the manufacture of a high (180 feet) earth-fill dam, located downstream from the entrance to Rainbow Bridge National Monument, as a means to keep Lake Powell from reaching the monument’s boundary. The governmental agencies had initially considered three possible sites for the downstream dam, each one a little nearer the monument’s doorway. Although the conservation crowd split over which downstream dam would best prevent water from trespassing into the national monument, most of its followers favored site C, situated

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<sup>279</sup> “Proposed Resolution of the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council.”

<sup>280</sup> Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 186–87.

closer to the confluence of Forbidden and Bridge canyons and out of sight from tourists. “Site ‘C’ is so far superior,” Brower wrote to National Parks Association executive director Anthony W. Smith, “that I wish you would join the rest of us in supporting it.”<sup>281</sup> Indeed, Brower realized conservationists needed to present a united front for Congress to consider releasing construction funds.

The National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation also proposed a smaller (80 feet) earth-fill dam, upstream from the monument, to catch runoff and debris emanating from Navajo Mountain. Rising 10,000 feet above sea level, the laccolith’s steep slopes sent torrents of muddy water and flood dross from spring snowmelt and summer thunderstorms through Bridge Canyon each year; this debris would inevitably collect at the base of the upstream dam. To combat this problem, the federal agencies called for a pumping station and a one-mile tunnel, drilled through the canyon’s walls, to divert the unwanted material into Aztec Creek, a natural stream flowing from Navajo Mountain, through Forbidden Canyon, and into the Colorado River. Eventually, the excess water would dump into the human-made reservoir. This intricate protective-works program necessitated “the usual network of roads and trails, earth moving, and general ‘face-lifting’ over the whole immediate area.”<sup>282</sup> Admitting conservationists’ lack of concern for the destruction of Tsé Nani áhígíí’s complex biotic community, an article in

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<sup>281</sup> Sierra Club executive director David R. Brower to National Parks Association executive director Anthony W. Smith, 16 June 1960, San Francisco, California, folder 9, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>282</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs chairman Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, folder 10, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

the *National Wildlands News* synthesized the situation for its readers: “these dams would cause a great deal of disruption [to] the wild canyon, [but] not within the small monument itself.”<sup>283</sup> The possibility of high head gates, pumping stations, diversion tunnels, and multiple access roads appeared to threaten Rainbow Bridge’s unique and awe-inspiring backdrop more than the blemishes Lake Powell promised. Conservationists panicked. The precedent they fought to avoid at Dinosaur National Monument in the mid-1950s would occur later at Rainbow Bridge.

Although confused, battle-weary, and increasingly disjointed, conservationists continued their push for the construction of barrier dams above and below the rock arch. River-runners, including Nichols; Henderson; and Georgie White, the first woman to run the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon as a commercial enterprise, viewed Glen Canyon Dam as a grim reality but they absolutely loathed the potential destruction of Rainbow Bridge’s larger ecosystem if Reclamation constructed its proposed barrier dams. Actress, singer-songwriter, and avid Colorado River junkie Katie Lee pleaded for “the *practical* solution.” “*Lower the dam—save the Bridge,*” she begged President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s secretary of the interior Fred A. Seaton. “Stay out of our National Monument! LOWER THE DAM!”<sup>284</sup> Unfortunately, Katie’s call fell on deaf ears. Promoting government propaganda that praised Lake Powell as the “crown jewel” of the whole Colorado River system, Seaton replied, “When the construction of Glen Canyon Dam is completed, a vast lake . . . will open a much greater area of the Colorado River

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<sup>283</sup> “The Rainbow Bridge Dilemma,” *National Wildlands News*, n.d. folder 4, box 72, SLUP.

<sup>284</sup> Katie Lee to Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton, n.d., excerpt in Katie Lee, *Glen Canyon Betrayed: A Sensuous Elegy* (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Fretwater Press, 2006), 235.

country for the pleasures of boatmen like *yourself* . . . [it] *will not . . . destroy the scenic beauty of this majestic wilderness.*”<sup>285</sup> Meanwhile, Congress refused to appropriate the twenty-five million dollars needed to build the protective works. Although Reclamation asked Congress in 1960, and again in 1961, to appropriate funds for the protective dams, members of the House and Senate never motioned to move forward. Seizing the opportunity afforded him by a fractured conservationist community, Utah senator Moss submitted a bill in 1960 asking his colleagues to amend the Colorado River Storage Project Act and remove the clause that guaranteed the monument’s protection. More concerned with capital than conservation policies, Moss contended that the expenditures “represent a nonsensical and indefensible waste of the taxpayers’ money.”<sup>286</sup> Despite some support for the measure, Moss’s resolution eventually died in the Senate.

When Udall became the nation’s new secretary of the Interior in January 1961, he inherited the Rainbow Bridge dilemma. Ten days after Congress approved his nomination, Udall arranged a meeting with National Park Service director Conrad L. Wirth and Reclamation commissioner Dominy. The new activist secretary intended to develop an alternative approach for saving Rainbow Bridge National Monument, a daring move to escape the impasse holding sound conservation policies hostage. During this conference, Udall reflected on his first visit to Rainbow Bridge in August 1960, when he still represented Arizona’s district 2 in Congress. That trip convinced the Arizonan that the rock arch “is unquestionably the most awe-inspiring work of natural sculpture

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<sup>285</sup> Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton to Katie Lee, n.d., excerpt in Lee, *Glen Canyon Betrayed*, 235.

<sup>286</sup> Frank E. Moss, “Rainbow Bridge National Monument,” *Congressional Record*, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 4841.

anywhere in the United States. . . . [with] a rugged beauty comparable only to that of the Grand Canyon itself.”<sup>287</sup> Although Udall had dismissed the arguments pronouncing the protective works as too expensive, he claimed congressional honor and sound conservation principles took precedence over cost. Congress must “resolve this issue by a conscious choice,” he wrote to Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs chairman Wayne N. Aspinall, a native of Colorado. As a congressman and a member of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Udall had concluded that Rainbow Bridge’s natural setting embraced a much larger area than the artificial monument. “In the long run,” Udall penned, “[Rainbow Bridge] will be ‘conserved’ only if it remains secluded in this fantastic area of canyons and cliffs.” The proposed barrier dams and diversion tunnels, complete with bulldozers, jeep trails, and dynamite explosives, would “detach the arch itself from its environment.” He viewed “the intrusion of the lake as the lesser of evils” and desired a broad extension of the monument’s boundaries to include Rainbow Bridge’s biotic community.<sup>288</sup>

“Congressman Udall could propose,” historians Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek contend, but “Secretary of the Interior Udall could act.”<sup>289</sup> During his meeting with Wirth and Dominy on 30 January 1961, Udall suggested a land exchange with the

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<sup>287</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, folder 10, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>288</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, folder 10, carton 14, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>289</sup> Keller and Turek, *National Parks & American Indians*, 196.

Navajos for the creation of a new wilderness park.<sup>290</sup> The area Udall had in mind encompassed the 640 square miles that stretch from Navajo Creek east of Antelope Point to either Chu or Desha Canyon north of Navajo Mountain. The land, however, belonged to the Diné. “This is a factor which I wish our conservation friends would take into account,” the secretary snapped. “Congress does not attempt any longer to deal willy-nilly with Indian lands,” Udall grumbled. Perhaps the secretary had forgotten the damaging effects of termination and the largest loss of land and resources Native peoples had endured since the Dawes Act of 1887. Udall’s lack of understanding enabled him to accept the premise that Navajo leaders would engage in an exchange of lands benefitting the tribe. “The Navajo Indian[s] . . . have indicated to me that they are willing,” Udall disclosed to Wirth and Dominy, “they are not only willing, but they invite consideration, they invite a proposal” for a land exchange.<sup>291</sup> Udall dismissed the notion that, although the Navajos escaped termination’s detrimental effects virtually unscathed, the tribe nevertheless recognized the policy’s potential outcome and emerged from the 1950s slightly skeptical of U.S. bureaucrats. Dominy and Wirth expressed their own ideas for protecting the rock arch, but they agreed with Udall’s overall plan to transform Rainbow Bridge National Monument into a premier wilderness park.

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<sup>290</sup> “Udall Proposes a Compromise in Dispute over Rainbow Bridge,” *New York Times*, 8 February 1961; “Udall Urges U.S. Park at Remote Site,” *Tucson (Ariz.) Post*, 8 February 1961; and “Udall Offers Compromise Plan for Rainbow Bridge,” *Tucson (Ariz.) Citizen*, 9 February 1961.

<sup>291</sup> Stewart L. Udall, “Conference on Rainbow Bridge National Monument,” *Official Report of Proceedings before the Department of the Interior*, vol. 1, 30 January 1961, pp. 8, 11, folder 3, box 160, SLUP.

On 28 March 1961, a press release from the secretary's office at the Department of the Interior headlined: "Udall to Head Rainbow Bridge Inspection Team." Announcing the secretary's upcoming "on-the-ground survey" of the wildlands surrounding Tsé Nani' áhígíí, the news bulletin cited an earlier reconnaissance study led by National Park Service employees and Navajo Tribal Council members praising the "erosion spectaculars . . . unbounded in number . . . with buttes, high mesas, and scattered topographical features." That exploratory team, spearheaded by National Park Service regional director Thomas J. Allen, recommended three different areas as possible boundaries for the primitive park.<sup>292</sup> The first proposal incorporated the largest amount of land and embraced Navajo Mountain; the second suggestion contained a smaller acreage and included the foothills of Naatsis' áán but not the laccolith itself; and the final pitch encompassed the least amount of land but embraced Cummings Mesa. Udall asked participants in his follow-up mission to consider which of these options would best serve both the Navajo Nation and the United States. He reminded the inspection team that the proposed national park would serve as an alternative to the protective dams. In addition to exploring the rock arch's environs, members of Udall's team would have an opportunity to view the site for barrier dam C, the structure most conservationists sought. After brief introductions of important dignitaries and a general sketch of the terrain, Udall and his motley crew boarded helicopters on loan from the U.S. Air Force at a hangar in Page and headed toward Tsé Nani' áhígíí. For some, including Wirth, this trip represented their first visit to southeastern Utah's red canyon country, as well as their

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<sup>292</sup> "Udall to Head Rainbow Bridge Inspection Team," 28 March 1961, folder 6, box 92, SLUP.

primary introduction to Glen Canyon. Here, they spent the day exploring the hotly debated area that housed the rock arch.

At day's end, Udall and his conservation comrades, bureaucratic colleagues, and Navajo hosts, tired and beat, reconvened at the hangar in Page to discuss the possibility of a new national park. Udall's wilderness vision included hiking trails but no roads.<sup>293</sup> "Rainbow is not a park for sedentary America," Udall claimed, but "a prize to be really won only by hardy Americans willing to undertake a long hike."<sup>294</sup> Despite needed improvements to access roads, such as present-day U.S. Highway 160, Udall insisted upon maintaining a park for "those people who want to hike or like to ride a horse or want to go on a pack trip."<sup>295</sup> He stressed his ideas for a primitive park, one free from industrialized tourism, and he envisioned Navajos as the park's logical concessionaires. The secretary acknowledged the Navajo Nation's nascent park management program that later developed into the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department and praised their skills in park supervision. Udall employed beautiful rhetoric when expressing his plans for local Navajos, yet none of the Diné who lived in the area, including resident herders and nearby religious leaders, participated in either the reconnaissance foray or follow-up discussion. And invited Navajo representatives, such as chairman Jones and the head of

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<sup>293</sup> "Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall on Rainbow Bridge Inspection Trip, April 29, 1961, Including Pre-Trip Briefing Session Remarks in the Hangar at Paige [*sic*], Arizona, and Evening Discussion Conference after Daylong Inspection Trip," p. 137, folder 6, box 92, SLUP.

<sup>294</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Wayne N. Aspinall, 27 August 1960, Sierra Club Executive Director Papers, BANC MSS 2002/230c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>295</sup> "Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall on Rainbow Bridge Inspection Trip," p. 139.

the Navajo Nation's parks department Sam Day III, contributed little to the group's conversation that evening. Udall appeared to recognize the importance of Navajo input, but he mainly focused on convincing his audience that this area deserved salvation as a national park. Udall's lip service to Native participation reflected Interior's lackluster embrace of Indian self-determination during the early 1960s. Although the secretary championed Indian sovereignty and self-determination in his speeches and public appearances, Udall's actions underscored his reluctance to accept this new paradigm and his resolve to remain in charge.<sup>296</sup>

Brower seemed persuaded. He underscored the Colorado River watershed's unique features and appeared excited over the possibility of a park in the vicinity. This excursion quite possibly served as a veritable watershed in Brower's wilderness philosophy. Indeed, he acknowledged Navajo Mountain as a key topographical feature that helped carve the region's rugged terrain, although he had once championed its asphyxiation by constructing an upstream dam to catch the laccolith's run-off. Brower urged Navajos to cooperate, expressing his wish for the area's inhabitants to remain in their homes because their presence "would be one of the greatest pleasures of a trip to this country." Brower viewed Navajos not only as a part of wilderness but as props for a promising tourist industry as well.<sup>297</sup> Overall, Udall's inspection team agreed on the establishment of a Navajo Rainbow National Park, complete with "healing work" to restore the area's natural habitat after Lake Powell entered the scene. Owing to Lake

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<sup>296</sup> See Margaret Connell-Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, 3d ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 156–57.

<sup>297</sup> "Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall on Rainbow Bridge Inspection Trip," p. 141.

Powell's 1,800 miles of shoreline, members of Udall's expedition squad envisioned the new national park as one component in a larger complex that would encompass the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, as well as Cataract Canyon and the Needles, both part of present-day Canyonlands National Park. The Navajo participants at the meeting, however, remained silent.

Despite a dearth of input from Navajo leaders at Page in April, tribal chairman Jones knew exactly what he wanted to expedite a land exchange beneficial to both parties. On 14 July 1961, Jones wrote to Udall urging the release of funds to survey and construct a direct southeastern route starting at Page that would connect the small government town to modern-day U.S. Highway 160 near Betatakin National Monument, located next to Tonalea, Arizona. Jones believed a road joining Page and U.S. Highway 160 would help the Diné develop the tribe's shoreline along Lake Powell between Antelope and Navajo canyons. He also anticipated the thoroughfare would draw tourists from Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the Navajos' new tribal park at Monument Valley. In case Navajo concerns proved insufficient, to seal his argument, Jones pointed out the ways in which a bypass would benefit Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as the U.S. National Park Service. In addition to this new road, Jones expressed his desire for a speedy return of approximately 1,200 acres of land at Antelope Canyon near Page and the Glen Canyon dam site. Jones cited an interest in developing wilderness areas and creating full-time and seasonal jobs associated with a

burgeoning tourist industry on the Navajo Reservation. “The Navajo Tribe is aware of the great potentials it has in recreational development on the Reservation,” Jones scribed.<sup>298</sup>

Udall, however, held an entirely different idea for a land exchange, one he deemed advantageous to both the Navajo Nation and the United States. On 5 April 1961, twenty-four days prior to the arrival of Udall and his inspection team landing at the foot of Rainbow Bridge, Bureau of Land Management director Karl S. Landstrom suggested that “the pending Church Rock–Two Wells land proposal offers an opportunity to exchange lands from the national reserve in Western New Mexico for lands necessary for Rainbow Bridge National Park.”<sup>299</sup> Although fully aware of a potential Church Rock–Two Wells land deal, Udall never mentioned it at the meeting in Page, apparently tucking Landstrom’s proposition away for future reference. When he finally wrote to Jones in December 1961, following a conference with the Navajo Tribal Council the previous November, Udall told the tribal chairman he considered the Church Rock–Two Wells area prime trading stock. Owing to the region’s abundant coal and uranium resources, the inclusion of mineral rights would perhaps sweeten the deal. In return, the secretary sought 274,000 acres around the rock arch following the eastern edge of Desha Creek, as well as an additional 20,000 acres encompassing Hawkeye Natural Bridge and the Dumplings. Virtually ignoring Jones’s July letter, the secretary failed to mention any potential route connecting Page and Betatakin National Monument. Udall stated his department’s willingness to grant the Diné full access and concession rights to Antelope

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<sup>298</sup> Navajo Tribal chairman Paul Jones to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, 14 July 1961, Window Rock, Arizona, folder 4, box 160, SLUP.

<sup>299</sup> Karl S. Landstrom to Stewart L. Udall, 5 April 1961, Washington, D.C., folder 4, box 160, SLUP.

Canyon but never said he would consider returning to the tribe the 1,200 acres of land Jones requested. He also expressed his belief that the park service should give the Navajos an “exclusive and perpetual contract” ceding all public concessions at the new park to the tribe. “I am most hopeful that this land exchange can be consummated,” Udall wrote, “as I believe it is in the national interest . . . and . . . will serve the long term economic interests of the Navajo people,” as well.<sup>300</sup>

Absolutely livid, Jones replied weeks later, warning Udall “the suggestions contained in [your] letter give me cause for deep concern.”<sup>301</sup> He listed water, cheap power, and transportation as the basic components for long-term sustainable economic development among the People. “Until we are assured of our rightful share of the waters of the Colorado and its tributaries,” Jones scribbled, “there will not be any substantial improvement in the economic stability of the Navajo[s].” In addition to water rights, Jones expressed his desire for more power from Glen Canyon Dam’s hydroelectric transmitters to fuel western Navajoland. Retracting his earlier position on the development of recreational facilities, Jones informed Udall that tourist attractions, while certainly desirable, would not afford his constituents jobs. Jones also noted that Udall’s proposed acreage would eventually deprive the tribe 177.6 miles of prime real estate along Lake Powell’s shoreline.

Taking Udall’s “trading stock” into account, Jones admitted, too, that while he did not know how many Navajos actually lived in the area Udall sought, he could not

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<sup>300</sup> Stewart L. Udall to Paul Jones, 1 December 1961, Washington, D.C., folder 4, box 160, SLUP.

<sup>301</sup> Paul Jones to Stewart L. Udall, 18 December 1961, Window Rock, Ariz., folder 4, box 160, SLUP.

justify ceding a large portion of the reservation to the federal government for the creation of a new national park. “Actually, Stew, I am profoundly shocked,” Jones scribbled, “that you would propose . . . the Church Rock-Two Wells area.” Jones reminded the secretary that Congress originally wanted to transfer these same lands located in western New Mexico to the Navajos in 1931, but conflict over the area ensued among the federal government; the city of Gallup, New Mexico; the Zunis; and the Navajos, delaying the transaction for almost thirty years. Jones realized regardless of the outcome at Rainbow Bridge, the tribe would never consider the Church Rock–Two Wells area a fair trade owing to longtime controversy over the region.<sup>302</sup> Jones claimed, too, that the U.S. National Park Service had already promised the Navajos concessions at Antelope Canyon in exchange for land to extend Betatakin National Monument. Finally, while the tribe remained interested in concessions at Navajo Dam, they desperately needed water from its reservoir for industrial and municipal purposes. “Before I could ask my Council to submit a counterproposal,” Jones asserted, “I would need to know what lands are available for exchange; their status; whether they are contiguous to the Reservation; whether they could be transferred to us in trust status; what our ultimate water rights will be, and . . . more specific commitment of [electric] power than we presently have from the Bureau [of Reclamation].”<sup>303</sup> Jones demanded infrastructure, not more tourists, even though the tribal council held its own blueprints for tourism development in the region. Jones undoubtedly remembered that when the Navajo Tribal Council ceded land for the construction of Page, they prohibited the federal government from seizing shorelines “for

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

park, recreational, scenic, or waterfront protective purposes.” This clause provided the chairman partial means to shut down negotiations. Although Jones realized Udall’s proposed land exchange would not solve the tribe’s water shortage, the reservation’s remoteness, or the Navajos’ dearth of hogans plugged into the region’s power grid, the chairman recognized the potential economic benefits tourism promised to his constituents and resolved to keep the tribe’s valuable real estate intact.

Udall’s plan for a premier wilderness park featuring the rock arch as its centerpiece failed because Navajo leaders demanded the tribe control its land base, not federal agencies stacked with bureaucrats who maintained entrenched paternalistic attitudes toward Native peoples. The federal Indian policies of termination and relocation had already signaled the dawn of yet another painful era during which the U.S. government could wantonly ignore treaty promises, despoil Native land, steal natural resources, and undercut Indian jobs and economic growth. Moreover, the caliginous clouds of termination loomed over and threatened the unique trust relationship between tribes and the U.S. government throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s.

Beginning in 1953, Congress passed a series of house resolutions and public laws centered on American Indians that recklessly undermined tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. Calling on Congress to end the status of Native peoples as “wards of the United States” as “rapidly as possible,” House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 108 represented the cornerstone of mid-twentieth-century termination tactics. Advocates of termination cloaked their disastrous plans to liquidate tribal land bases and negate treaty obligations

in feel-good idioms, claiming equal rights and full citizenship.<sup>304</sup> Republican senator Watkins of Utah clamored in 1957 for an “Indian freedom program, . . . following in the footsteps of the Emancipation Proclamation of ninety-four years ago” in which “I see the following words emblazoned in letters of fire above the heads of the Indians—THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE FREE!”<sup>305</sup> Indoctrinated into a patriotic society characterized by an influx of new wealth and power, proponents of termination and relocation wholeheartedly believed that Indians wanted to be integrated into the American mainstream.<sup>306</sup>

By 1960, however, Native peoples had fostered an incontrovertible anxiety about the federal government’s latest intentions.<sup>307</sup> This angst energized a new generation of Native activists and tribal officials determined to regain control of their own destinies.<sup>308</sup> In addition to a renewed empowerment among Indian leaders, President Kennedy and Interior secretary Udall allegedly moved away from termination to self-determination, but, as the story of Navajo Rainbow National Park aptly demonstrates, government

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<sup>304</sup> Daniel Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 11.

<sup>305</sup> Arthur V. Watkins, “Termination of Federal Supervision: The Removal of Restrictions over Indian Property and Person,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 311 (May 1957): 55. For a history of termination and relocation, see Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1986).

<sup>306</sup> For termination’s reflection of Cold War rhetoric, see Paul C. Rosier, “‘They are Ancestral Homelands’: Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War America, 1945–1961,” *Journal of American History*, 92 (March 2006): 1301.

<sup>307</sup> Margaret Connell Szasz, “Philleo Nash, 1961–66,” in *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824–1977*, ed. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 311.

<sup>308</sup> For a current discussion of Native activism during this era, see Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*.

officials, even those bureaucrats who extolled progressive ideologies, often clung to outdated approaches and entrenched attitudes about Indians. Udall's actions during talks to expedite the creation of a new national park encasing the rock arch pointed toward the difficulty of altering fixed mindsets. Despite rhetoric claiming indigenous peoples as sovereign nations ready to govern themselves, Udall unabashedly overlooked Jones's ideas for an equitable land exchange. Nevertheless, Jones completely undermined Udall's position when the chairman refused to discuss a land deal he viewed as unfair and detrimental to his people's economic advancement. With the stroke of a pen, Jones signaled the rise of the Navajo Nation in the southwestern political arena and its embrace of Indian self-determination.

## Chapter 5

### “Paradise Waits on the Crest of a Wave”: Navajos and Industrial Tourism

A winter wind brushed their faces as the bridge spectators climbed out of their vehicles, stiff after a 135-mile journey from Flagstaff, Arizona, to Page.<sup>309</sup> Following U.S. Route 89 on a cold, blistery February morning in 1959, tourists, Flagstaff locals, and federal officials left the small mountain town, destined for the dedication ceremony marking the commencement of Glen Canyon Bridge. Outside Flagstaff, they passed San Francisco Mountain, Humphreys Peak, and Sunset Crater and Wupatki national monuments, traversing part of the San Francisco Volcanic Field, an area of relatively young volcanoes along the southern boundary of the Colorado Plateau. The geographic feature houses unique forest life zones ranging from Piñon and Juniper trees at lower elevations to Ponderosa, Fir, and Bristlecone pines at higher altitudes. Once beyond the volcanic field, they descended into the Painted Desert and entered the Navajo Reservation just north of Gray Mountain before crossing the Little Colorado River at Cameron. After a quick pit stop at the Cameron Trading Post that brothers Hubert Richardson and C. D. Richardson had established early in the twentieth century as a place for Navajos and Hopis to barter wool, blankets, and livestock in exchange for dry goods, the day-trippers drove deeper into the Colorado Plateau, trucking past Marble Canyon and the Echo Cliffs. Instead of turning left toward Jacob Lake and the north rim of the Grand Canyon, the bridge spectators veered right at Bitter Springs, following a newly

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<sup>309</sup> For chapter title, see Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter, “Help On the Way,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist, ed. and annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 244

completed section of U.S. Route 89 that ascended the Kaibab Plateau and pointed toward Glen Canyon and the nascent reclamation town at Page.

As the folks from Flagstaff traveled north toward Glen Canyon, Mormon ranchers trekked east from Kanab, Utah, venturing across the red rock canyon country to join the revelry at Glen Canyon Bridge. The *Southern Utah News*, Kanab's hometown weekly newspaper, regularly reported the latest happenings at Glen Canyon Dam and urged stockmen and their families to witness the viaduct's grand opening.<sup>310</sup> By August 1956, the dam's construction had turned Kanab into a virtual dumping ground for engineers and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation personnel charged with erecting the massive concrete plug. Attending the bridge dedication ceremony provided Kanab locals an opportunity to curb their curiosity about the dam. As they drove the recently completed segment of U.S. Route 89, stretching from Kanab to Page, Mormon ranchers and their families passed the Cockscomb, a large swath of steeply inclined, candy-striped layers of rock that break a relatively flat sequence of sedimentary slab. Utahns then sideswiped the Vermillion Cliffs, a series of sandstone formations and high cliffs interwoven with rugged canyons and water washes, before they crossed the Paria River, a tributary of the Colorado that enters the river's main stem at Lee's Ferry. Ranchers and their families neared Wahweap Creek before traversing the geopolitical border that separates Utah from Arizona. Here, they finally caught a glimpse of Glen Canyon Bridge.

Navajo families gathered at the viaduct, too. Earlier that day, they had scrambled down nearby Manson Mesa to gaze at the steel spectacle. Diné men, women, and children

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<sup>310</sup> "First Major Project to be Dedicated Friday on Glen Canyon Project," *Kanab Southern Utah News*, 19 February 1959.

sat high on the hillside to witness the celebration.<sup>311</sup> Some of them had certainly labored at the bridge, and perhaps, they already knew that the Flagstaff and Kanab chambers of commerce, sponsors of the dedication ceremony, had asked Navajo Tribal Council chairman Paul Jones to speak at the event.<sup>312</sup> For Navajos living in the area, Glen Canyon Bridge symbolized a cultural and economic renaissance that swept across the Navajo Nation following World War II. During this era, the Navajo Tribal Council pushed for education, self-determination, and economic development, and their plans included extractive industries, infrastructure improvements, employment opportunities, tribal schools and colleges, and a tourism industry to lure vacationers to Navajoland. The People all over the reservation profited from this upsurge, albeit unevenly. The Diné living in towns and villages along Glen Canyon's eastern rim benefited the most from Glen Canyon Dam. The reclamation project and its promising tourist boom meant jobs, "real jobs," for Navajos. In addition to raising small herds of sheep, horses, and cattle, Navajos worked as wage laborers at the dam site, as well as the bridge, and helped construct a network of highways that eventually connected the reservation's eastern centers of power to its remote western communities. They also found employment in Page, serving as waiters and waitresses at local restaurants, acting as dam tour guides, and toiling as hotel and motel staff.

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<sup>311</sup> "Dedication Ceremony for Glen Canyon Bridge, February 20, 1959," color slide, call no. NAU.PH.96.24.47.146, William G. Bass Collection, Colorado Plateau Digital Archives, Special Collections, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

<sup>312</sup> "Address by Paul Jones, Chairman, Navajo Tribal Council, at the Dedication of the Glen Canyon Bridge," 20 February 1959, Page, Arizona, Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce Collection, Colorado Plateau Digital Archives, Special Collections, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

Glen Canyon Bridge boosters touted the viaduct as the “world’s highest steel-way highway” bridge, “a tribute to American ingenuity” anchored to sheer rock walls 700 feet above the Colorado River, stretching 1,271 feet from one side of Glen Canyon to the other.<sup>313</sup> Designed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; jointly financed by the state of Arizona, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, as well as Reclamation; and built by Kiewit-Judson Pacific Murphy, the overpass forged the final link in a new highway that connected this isolated section of Arizona to southeastern Utah and provided access to both sides of the river for Glen Canyon Dam’s construction needs. In an increasingly mobile postwar society, the bridge also offered travelers following U.S. Route 89, which today stretches from Nogales, Arizona, to the U.S.-Canada border in Montana, a direct path between Flagstaff and Kanab, bypassing Lee’s Ferry, Jacob Lake, and the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Prior to the completion of Glen Canyon Bridge, motorists traveling the canyon country primarily used Navajo Bridge at Lee’s Ferry to cross the Colorado River from Arizona into Utah. The construction of Glen Canyon Dam, however, necessitated a direct route from Flagstaff to Page and Page to Kanab, one that would circumvent the Grand Canyon. Combined with the pavement of access roads on either side of the canyon, Glen Canyon Bridge ended centuries of isolation and near inaccessibility in a single engineering feat and afforded Reclamation’s beaver boys a way to transport dam supplies from Flagstaff and Kanab to Page.

The day’s events began at one o’clock in the afternoon on 20 February 1959. Half an hour after the ceremony’s invocation, Chairman Jones climbed atop the flatbed trailer

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<sup>313</sup> Jack Goodman, “New Bridge Spans Canyon of the Colorado,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1959; and “Bridge Is Open across the Colorado,” *New York Times*, 21 February 1959.

that Glen Canyon Dam contractor Merritt-Chapman and Scott had provided as a makeshift podium for the festivities. In his short fifteen-minute speech, delivered in front of the sizable crowd now congregated at the bridge's center, Jones not only outlined for his audience the benefits Glen Canyon Dam promised to his Diné constituents but reminded spectators of the Navajos' crucial role in the passage of the Colorado River Storage Project Act and the construction of the law's primary feature at Glen Canyon.<sup>314</sup> "Less than two years ago this area was one of the most desolate parts of the reservation," Jones declared. "It is almost beyond belief to witness the great change that has taken place here with the founding of a city and a colossal reclamation project," a venture "the Navajo Tribe has been deeply involved [with since] its inception."<sup>315</sup> Although he highlighted the contributions of Navajo labor during the construction of the bridge and spoke of Navajo workers at Glen Canyon Dam, Jones focused on the burgeoning postwar tourist industry soon to explode on the Colorado Plateau and its economic promise to the Navajo Nation. "The bridge which we dedicate today and its access highways," Jones intoned, "will bring thousands of visitors to . . . the man-made lake." The chairman told bridge spectators that he could visualize "tourist accommodations, boating, and other recreation facilities . . . as enterprises which will provide employment for my people and recreation for all America."<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> "Address by Paul Jones, Chairman, Navajo Tribal Council, at the Dedication of the Glen Canyon Bridge," 20 February 1959, Page, Arizona, Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce Collection, Colorado Plateau Digital Archives, Special Collections, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 2.

Similar to community leaders and civic boosters across the postindustrial West, the Navajo Tribal Council viewed tourism as a means to economic prosperity. This illusion, what some might dub a “devil’s bargain,” promised monetary growth, while it delivered irrevocable environmental and cultural changes that altered the identity of western peoples and their landscapes.<sup>317</sup> The tribal council, for example, created plans for the development of its valuable shoreline along Lake Powell in spite of protests by local constituents from Navajo Mountain, Shonto, and Inscription House who eventually sued the U.S. government over the oppressive number of tourists invading and desecrating ceremonial sites in Glen Canyon, especially those locales around Rainbow Bridge and Navajo Mountain. The rift between the Navajos’ governing body and the tribe’s individual communities derails common misperceptions of Native peoples as a unified society. Instead, it points to a clan-based identity shared among the Diné as well as subtle differences in these bands’ varying belief systems. Traditionally, Navajos had practiced their own system of government centered on local bands that consisted of ten to forty families. In the largest assembly, called a *naach’id* or regional gathering, twenty-four headmen (twelve war leaders and twelve peace leaders) convened to deal with local

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<sup>317</sup> For a brief introduction to tourism in the American West, see Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957); Hal K. Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); and David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, eds., *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, published for the Center of the American West, University of Colorado at Boulder, 2001). Although not western centered, see also Valene L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977).

issues and intertribal affairs.<sup>318</sup> Some fragmentary anthropological evidence suggests that the Diné closely tied their political process to their ceremonial life, and the naach'id worked to cure illnesses, bring rain, and restore the soil's fertility.<sup>319</sup> Certainly, the friction between local inhabitants and tribal officials over tourism development indicated some continuity of traditional political practices among the Diné. At the very least, the differences of opinion recognized the enduring power of autonomous bands on the reservation and their deep relationship to homeland. In his speech, Jones acknowledged Navajo Mountain as "one of the most sacred land marks on the reservation." At the same time, he and the tribal council viewed the Colorado Plateau's burgeoning tourist industry, with Lake Powell at its center, as a unique opportunity for Navajos to thrive economically.<sup>320</sup> Despite the ensuing damage to the environment and the injurious effects of tourism on Diné culture, Jones and his successors desperately wanted Navajo constituents to benefit from touring Americans.

In his oration, Jones championed the commodification of Nature and industrial tourism, what Edward Abbey described as "a big business" that "shuffles . . . masses of

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<sup>318</sup> Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Chairmen, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition," *Wicazo Sa Review* 21 (spring 2006): 11.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid. For additional studies on the Navajo political system, see Aubrey Williams Jr., *Navajo Political Process* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970); Richard Van Valkenburgh, "Navajo Common Law I," in *Museum Notes* 9, no. 1 (Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1936); "Navajo Naat'aani," *Kiva* 13, no. 2 (1948): 14–23; David M. Brugge, "Documentary References to a Navajo Naachi'id in 1840," *Ethnohistory* 10, (spring 1963): 186–88; *Navajo Nation Government* (Window Rock, Ariz.: Office of Navajo Government Development, 1998); and David E. Wilkins, *The Navajo Political Experience* (Tsaile, Ariz.: Diné College Press, 1999).

<sup>320</sup> "Address by Paul Jones, Chairman, Navajo Tribal Council, at the Dedication of the Glen Canyon Bridge."

motorists into and out of an area . . . officially certified as Scenery.”<sup>321</sup> Similarly, in the summer of 1961, *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter Don Howard, proselytizing his faith in western tourism, predicted that, “the West is in for its greatest boom.” “This time,” however, “it’s not the lure of gold, free land, oil or uranium. It’s a concerted quest for the most valuable of our natural resources: recreation.”<sup>322</sup> Howard’s prophecy mirrored Jones’s vision of thousands of tourists descending on the red rock canyon country of southeast Utah and northeast Arizona. Much to Abbey’s chagrin, Howard’s and Jones’s ideas on the benefits of tourism possessed some merit.

The 1950s witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of Americans who engaged in touring activities. The middle class traveled more extensively during the postwar years than they had at anytime prior to the Great Depression and World War II. A renewed sense of prosperity immediately following the war fueled their decisions to move away from cities into suburbs, a shift that required a large segment of the U.S. population to purchase automobiles for their commute between home and work. According to geographer John A. Jakle, the number of individual cars registered in the United States more than doubled between 1930 and 1960.<sup>323</sup> In addition, middle-class Americans now enjoyed shorter workweeks and paid vacations, allowing them time to

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<sup>321</sup> Edward Abbey, “From Jeep Trails to Power Plants.” For a critique of industrial tourism’s impact on western landscapes especially in the Southwest and the Colorado Plateau, see Edward Abbey, “Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks,” in *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (New York: Touchstone, 1968), 39–59.

<sup>322</sup> Don Howard, “Thar’s Tourist Gold in Them Thar Hills,” *Salt Lake City (Utah) Tribune*, 25 June 1961.

<sup>323</sup> John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 121.

travel. In 1949, for example, the U.S. Department of Commerce reported that 62 percent of all Americans spent their vacations traveling.<sup>324</sup>

The U.S. West proved a popular destination, continuing a tourist tradition that began in the early 1800s. During the first half of the nineteenth century, American explorers William Clark, Meriwether Lewis, Zebulon Pike, and John C. Frémont, who all led federally sponsored expeditions to probe the region, represented the first whites to “tour” the West. Through their lively travel reports, these men “cast the West as an exotic place ‘out there,’” dramatizing its “strangeness, novelty, unpredictability, and general wildness.”<sup>325</sup> Yet, while portraying the West as “dangerous and threatening,” even “very interesting,” none of these men traversed empty or “virgin” terrain.<sup>326</sup> Gaining notoriety among the traveling elite, the Trans-Mississippi West witnessed a tourism boom with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the gradual expansion of luxury travel by palace and Pullman cars. The onset of the automotive age in the 1920s, however, helped democratize the industry, opening the West to mass travel and exploitation.<sup>327</sup> The advent of automobile camps, a national fad that peaked during the twenties, as well as the construction of motels, gas stations, roadside restaurants, and strip malls transformed the nation’s landscapes into enticing scenes that supported automotive

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<sup>324</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, *Survey of Current Business, 1949*, quoted in Jakle, *The Tourist*, 186.

<sup>325</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West,” in *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, ed. Valerie J. Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19. Limerick’s essay also appears in Wrobel and Long, *Seeing and Being Seen*, 39–58.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen,” 22.

travel.<sup>328</sup> As mid-twentieth-century vacationers increasingly journeyed through the West to the region's national parks and monuments, out-of-the-way scenic places that ensured quality time with their young families, federal, state, and tribal governments ardently promoted the West.

Through incessant boosterism that touted the Southwest's natural beauty, the construction of roads, and the establishment of national as well as state and tribal parks, governmental agencies lured more and more tourists to the canyon country of southeast Utah and northeast Arizona.<sup>329</sup> In 1964, the Navajo Nation, for example, created the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department (NPRD), a tribal program modeled on the U.S. National Park Service and charged with managing the reservation's parks, monuments, and recreation areas and marketing the tribe's tourist attractions.<sup>330</sup> The uranium boom of the 1950s had opened up endless roads on the Colorado Plateau, an area that forester and early wilderness advocate Robert "Bob" Marshall once categorized as roadless, save for a few Mormon stock trails. Owing to a lack of suitable roads, Marshall determined that

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<sup>328</sup> J. B. Jackson, "The Stranger's Path," *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson*, ed. Ervin H. Zube (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 92–106. See also Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen," 22.

<sup>329</sup> For a discussion on the role of western states in promoting tourism, see Susan Sessions Rugh, "Branding Utah: Industrial Tourism in the Postwar American West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (winter 2006): 445–72.

<sup>330</sup> The Navajo Tribal Council actually created a Tribal Parks Commission in 1957. Charged with operating the tribal park system, the commission promoted potential tourist spots on the reservation. Monument Valley Tribal Park served as the Navajo Nation's first outdoor park and opened near Gouldings, Arizona, in 1960. During its first year, Monument Valley attracted 22,114 visitors who paid approximately four thousand dollars in admittance fees and nearly eight thousand dollars for locally made arts and crafts. Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Yearbook: 1951–1961, A Decade of Progress*, no. 8 (Window Rock, Ariz.: Navajo Agency, 1961), 196.

wilderness equaled places devoid of automobiles.<sup>331</sup> These primitive routes then paved the way for improved roads that could support mechanized transportation. As late as 1952, highway maps still printed a gaping hole, practically devoid of paved roads, for the Four Corners, a remote region, “unraped” and strange, “a true wilderness” according to Abbey.<sup>332</sup> By 1959, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had spent \$13 million dollars alone on roads for the Glen Canyon project, an unprecedented expense reflecting Glen Canyon’s status as the first major reclamation project built without the service of a railroad. Rather, cargo trucks rambled along these newly constructed roads, delivering a constant flow of supplies from both Flagstaff and Kanab.<sup>333</sup> Although improvement to the area’s infrastructure resolved immediate concerns about the dam’s construction needs, it also proved an essential endeavor to satisfy regional boosters who envisioned tourism as a viable economic enterprise for the Colorado Plateau. As one historian put it, “the last frontier for jeeps would have to give way to a new frontier for station wagons.”<sup>334</sup>

Despite the Navajo Tribal Council’s optimistic outlook on the benefits tourism seemed to promise, Abbey fervently decried its effects on southwestern landscapes. Tourism, he lamented, “is always and everywhere a dubious, fraudulent, distasteful and in the long run, degrading business, enriching a few, doing the rest more harm than

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<sup>331</sup> Robert Marshall and Althea Dobbins, “Largest Roadless Areas in the United States,” *The Living Wilderness* 2 (November 1936): 11–13.

<sup>332</sup> Abbey, “From Jeep Trails to Power Plants,” 1.

<sup>333</sup> Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 34.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

good.”<sup>335</sup> He condemned the industry as one phase in the “rape of the canyon country.”<sup>336</sup> Although engineers had completed the bridge four years prior to Lake Powell’s birth in 1963, government officials immediately speculated on the Colorado Plateau’s scenic magnetism, even without the drawing power of the reservoir. Two weeks after the bridge dedication, Utah senator Wallace F. Bennett announced congressional plans to spend \$16.5 million developing recreation facilities at Glen Canyon.<sup>337</sup> Most of the schemes focused on the construction of access roads; hiking and jeep trails; and strategically placed marinas, a few of them complete with boat launches, docks, fueling stations, motels or motor lodges, campsites, shade trees, and picnic areas.<sup>338</sup>

As congressional leaders committed federal monies to extend recreational facilities on the Colorado Plateau, Stewart L. Udall outlined his ideas for tourism in the Four Corners region during his early tenure as Secretary of the Interior. Udall proposed one million acres of land be incorporated into a “golden circle,” an imaginary boundary that encompassed “the greatest concentration of scenic wonders to be found in the country, if not the world.”<sup>339</sup> Udall envisioned a make-believe loop linking the Four

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<sup>335</sup> Edward Abbey, *Abbey’s Road* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), 86.

<sup>336</sup> Abbey, “From Jeep Trails to Power Plants.”

<sup>337</sup> “\$16.5 Million to be Spent on Glen Recreation,” *Kanab Southern Utah News*, 5 March 1959.

<sup>338</sup> William M. Blair, “West in Dispute On Canyonlands: Withdrawal of Area for a Park Stirs Controversy,” *New York Times*, 27 July 1963.

<sup>339</sup> Stewart L. Udall, quoted by Frank E. Moss, in “Proposed Canyonlands National Park in Utah,” S. 2387, 87th Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Record* 108 (2 February 1962): 1455. See also Arthur R. Gómez, “Public Lands and Public Sentiment: A Comparative Look at National Parks,” in *Land in the American West: Private Claims and the Common*

Corners of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah into a single, unified scenic expanse, a virtual empire of endless outdoor recreation.<sup>340</sup> His concept embraced established parks and monuments within all four states, such as Utah's Zion and Bryce national parks as well as Arches, Capitol Reef, and Natural Bridges national monuments; Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park; the Navajo Nation's Monument Valley near Kayenta, Arizona; and Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park. The circle enveloped areas still under negotiation, too, including Udall's proposed Navajo Rainbow National Park at Rainbow Bridge on the Navajo Reservation, Canyonlands National Park located at the confluence of the Colorado and Green rivers upstream from Glen Canyon, and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Lake Powell sat at the center of Udall's circle. In short, this picturesque noose completely encased western Navajoland, threatening to strangle local populations with scores of tourists. Seeking to advance the tribe's economic agenda, Chairman Jones and the tribal council surely realized the project's potential, if it ever came to pass. The secretary fully expected this "golden circle" to transform southeastern Utah and the Four Corners, an area arguably unmatched in natural beauty and cultural heritage, into a "region unsurpassed in tourist visitations."<sup>341</sup>

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*Good*, ed. William G. Robbins and James C. Foster (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 150.

<sup>340</sup> Gómez, "Public Lands and Public Sentiment," 150.

<sup>341</sup> Stewart L. Udall, quoted in Gómez, "Public Lands and Public Sentiment," 151.

Similarly, Utah senator Frank E. Moss, a self-proclaimed conservationist, insisted that southern Utah realize its “manifest destiny” as a “tourist mecca.”<sup>342</sup> Moss touted the southern section of his home state as “unsullied and unspoiled,” yet he envisioned a web of modern highways, bisecting the region’s galaxy of hydra-headed canyons, to connect one park to another. On 8 August 1961, Moss introduced Senate bill 2387 that called for the creation of Canyonlands National Park, a key feature in Udall’s golden circle. “This canyon country of Utah,” where labyrinthine gorges entrench the Colorado and Green rivers before their waters slide into the echoing depths of Cataract Canyon, “unqualifiedly merits preservation as a national park,” the U.S. Department of the Interior reported.<sup>343</sup> Moss believed that preserving southern Utah’s canyon country would help fulfill the country’s endemic need for space and play and communion, as the nation experienced an unprecedented population explosion. “As our population grows, as we become more and more a nation of city dwellers, as we drive more automobiles longer distances,” Moss pleaded with his colleagues, “the more we will need and use remote and restful places.”<sup>344</sup> Eager to develop Utah’s scenic resources, Moss directly addressed President Kennedy. “Mr. President,” he argued, “now is the time to set aside the park

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<sup>342</sup> Frank E. Moss, quoted in Thomas G. Smith, “The Canyonlands National Park Controversy, 1961–1964,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 59 (summer 1991): 233. See also Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 32.

<sup>343</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior report, quoted by Frank Moss, in “Proposed Canyonlands National Park in Utah,” S. 2387, 87th Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Record* 108 (2 February 1962): 1456.

<sup>344</sup> Frank E. Moss, “Canyonlands National Park,” S. 2387, 87th Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Record* 108 (28 March 1962): 5257; and Moss, in “Proposed Canyonlands National Park in Utah,” 2 February 1962, p. 1456.

areas we know America will need.”<sup>345</sup> Likewise, the West depended on its public lands for material prosperity.

The best ways to realize the region’s environmental capital, however, remained open for debate. Senator Bennett railed against Udall’s national park “empire” that championed recreation as the area’s primary use. Bennett and Utah governor George Dewey Clyde demanded the canyon lands embrace a multiple-use mission, one that allowed mineral exploration, cattle grazing, and hunting. Bennett and Clyde’s vision for a canyon lands national park also included reclamation projects.<sup>346</sup> Indeed, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had considered the Junction Power Dam (JPD) on the Colorado River just below its confluence with the Green. If approved, JPD would have impounded both rivers beyond the park’s northern boundary, creating an ocean of dead water between Glen Canyon Dam and Cataract Canyon.<sup>347</sup> Interestingly, neither Moss nor Bennett and Clyde mentioned Native peoples living in the area except to bolster their arguments. Moss simply peddled “Anazazi” ruins as “invaluable archeological discoveries” in an effort to woo congressmen more concerned with preserving historical artifacts than conserving scenic spaces.<sup>348</sup> Bennett and Clyde cited the Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa land exchange of 1958 in their dirge about southeastern Utah’s loss of grazing acreage.

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<sup>345</sup> Moss, “Canyonlands National Park,” 1456.

<sup>346</sup> Wallace F. Bennett, “Administration Canyon Lands, National Park Bill—Empire Building at Utah’s Expense,” S. 2616, 87th Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Record* 108 (7 February 1962): 1961–65.

<sup>347</sup> U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Acting Commissioner to Utah senator Wallace F. Bennett, 29 September 1961, in “Administration Canyon Lands National Park Bill—Empire Building at Utah’s Expense,” 1965.

<sup>348</sup> Moss, “Canyonlands National Park,” 28 March 1962, p. 5258.

“Proposals for a new national park,” Governor Clyde cried, “will be opposed to the last ditch,” if they threaten “southern Utah’s . . . white cattlemen.”<sup>349</sup> Despite these differences of opinion among federal and state officials, the canyon lands transmogrified into a national park in 1964, the same year Congress passed the Wilderness Act and the Navajo Nation created its own parks and recreation department.

The combined flow of the Colorado and Green rivers plunges forty-six miles through Cataract Canyon, a challenging stretch of whitewater that beckons hundreds of river runners every summer. “Mile for mile,” Cataract spawns more rapids than the Grand Canyon, before its explosive water slams into Lake Powell’s dead zone. Beginning in 1963, the reservoir slowly pushed its way upstream, eventually inundating the “bottom-end cataracts.”<sup>350</sup> With water storage complete, reclamation then bequeathed responsibility for the reservoir to the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area under the auspices of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS).<sup>351</sup> This transfer of power gave the NPS control over a vast expanse of canyon country that now stretched from Lee’s Ferry to Canyonlands National Park.

More importantly, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area’s eastern boundary directly abutted the Navajo Reservation’s western border. This shared line of demarcation provided Navajos valuable land along Lake Powell’s shoreline, a situation that promised economic prosperity for tribal members engaged in the tourism trade. An agreement from

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<sup>349</sup> “Utah’s Governor Opposed to Park: Says Udall’s Plan Threatens State Cattle Industry,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1961.

<sup>350</sup> Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 33.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

the 1930s, signed among the Navajo Tribal Council, the NPS, and the Office of Indian Affairs (renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1947), guaranteed “talented young Navajos” work in parks and monuments on or near the reservation.<sup>352</sup> This pact demanded that the park service give preference to qualified Navajos when the federal agency assigned personnel to areas within its jurisdiction. One Navajo scholar admits, however, that landing “‘coveted’ employment, including government positions, . . . is just not happening for Native people,” owing to multifaceted reasons, such as education, required experience, and a willingness among indigenous populations to leave their communities.<sup>353</sup> Whether Chairman Jones knew about the covenant when he spoke at the bridge dedication remains unclear, but he and other members of the Navajo Tribal Council certainly intended for their constituents to benefit from the Four Corners’ budding tourism industry.

In July 1956, four months after President Eisenhower signed the Colorado River Storage Project Act, Chairman Jones told the tribal council that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had asked the Navajos for rights-of-way to 600 feet of shore line “all the way around [Glen Canyon Dam’s reservoir] . . . as far as where the water backs up the canyon.”<sup>354</sup> At full capacity, Lake Powell extends 186 miles along the Colorado River

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<sup>352</sup> “Agreement Entered into by the National Park Service, Office of Indian Affairs, and the Navajo Tribal Council, Affecting All Areas of Scenic, Scientific, or Historic Value within the Outside Boundaries of the Navajo Reservation,” n.d., folder 14, box 6, Thomas H. Dodge Collection, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, Tempe, Arizona.

<sup>353</sup> Rena Martin, “Native Connection to Place: Policies and Play,” *American Indian Quarterly* 25 (winter 2001): 38.

<sup>354</sup> Statement of Paul Jones, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, Navajo Tribal Council (Window Rock, Ariz.: 16–20 July 1956), 14.

channel from the dam site to Hite, Utah. The reservoir also creeps 71 miles along the San Juan River from its confluence with the Colorado to Paiute Canyon. Given the lake's massive size and the reservoir's close proximity to the boundaries of the Navajo Reservation, the tribe could potentially lose all access to the crooked canyons individual Diné families had used for generations. Jones expressed some concern for "our Navajo farmers" who "plant corn . . . in the area," but councilman Paul A. Begay from Inscription House reminded his colleagues that the Navajos most affected "were never moved off their land."<sup>355</sup> Begay, of course, meant those Diné who had not surrendered to Kit Carson during the Long Walk. "We have original rights to that land," Begay asserted, "I do not know if anyone can tell us . . . they can do as they please with our property, our lands."<sup>356</sup>

Before the Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa land exchange came to fruition in September 1958, federal officials intended to filch Navajo terrain for the colossal reclamation project at Glen Canyon. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Wilbur A. Dexheimer, who had no doubt dealt with Native concerns when he worked on Shasta Dam in northern California during the early 1940s, essentially manhandled the Navajos into an impossible situation. The Navajo Tribal Council desperately wanted the reclamation town placed on the Navajo Reservation. Dexheimer, however, "flatly stated" that unless the tribe relinquished control of its lands needed "in connection with the

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.; and Statement of Paul A. Begay, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 23.

construction, operation and maintenance of the Glen Canyon unit,” he planned to locate the reclamation town across the Colorado River in Utah.

Adding fuel to the dam fire, the commissioner apparently told then Arizona representative Udall that he considered “the Navajo Tribe . . . hard to deal with.”<sup>357</sup> Offended by Dexheimer’s statement, Councilman Howard Gorman confessed that he did not believe “Reclamation has ever come away from Window Rock without . . . the satisfaction [of] . . . acquir[ing] what they came to Window Rock for,” and “we resent” the bureau’s attitude “very much as a Council body.”<sup>358</sup> If the Navajos refused to renounce tribal lands along the Colorado and San Juan rivers, then reclamation would deny them an opportunity for jobs and new business enterprises, such as filling stations, garages, and restaurants and motels to accommodate tourists. Concerned that the Secretary of the Interior would take Diné property at will, Councilwoman Annie Dodge Wauneka admitted that she did “not believe, from my standpoint, I can approve the manner of acquiring this land.” “[T]he Tribe,” she argued, “should retain all controls to the shore line and have something to say about the townsite and [the] recreational area of this dam.”<sup>359</sup> Maxwell Yazzie from Tuba City echoed Wauneka’s sentiments. “Are we going to be deprived of that large area . . . when we are so land hungry,” he asked. “The range in that area could be opened to the stockmen in that area when the water backs up

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<sup>357</sup> Statement of Laurence Davis, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 16–20 July 1956, p. 25.

<sup>358</sup> Statement of Howard Gorman, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 16–20 July 1956, p. 27.

<sup>359</sup> Statement of Annie Wauneka, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 16–20 July 1956, p. 23.

into these canyons. It would mean better stock . . . due to water at hand. If we give up 600 feet of shore line, the water would be there and we would not be allowed to use it.”<sup>360</sup>

In its internal debate over whether to grant the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation 600 feet of shoreline along Lake Powell, as well as land for a town site, the Navajo Tribal Council displayed a sense of home rule years prior to the U.S. government’s adoption of an agenda giving indigenous peoples meaningful power to govern their nations and preserve their tribal cultures. Clearly, council members realized the immense economic value of waterfront property, but ideas of self-determination and a profound connection to place weave together the testimonies of Begay, Wauneka, and Yazzie. Councilwoman Wauneka, for example, demanded Navajos retain control over their shoreline, their land, while Begay spoke of his constituents’ deep relationship to homeland. Yazzie also expressed his concerns about the reservoir’s impact on locals who had raised stock in the area for generations. Councilman Edward Manson from Coppermine, Arizona, just south of Page, told members of the Navajo Tribal Council that the Diné who lived closest to the dam site “are very much opposed to any program which would invite non-Navajos into that area, the white man or anybody else.” Manson, whose namesake graces Manson Mesa, a large swath of desert plateau that hosts the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation town at Page, argued that local Navajos bristled at “any action that anyone might take to allow foreigners to come into their midst.”<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Statement of Maxwell Yazzie, 16 July 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 16–20 July 1956, p. 28.

<sup>361</sup> Statement of Edward Manson, 2 November 1956, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, Navajo Tribal Council (Window Rock, Ariz.: 22 October–2 November 1956), 408.

Jones and a majority of the council ignored Manson's plea, pushing Reclamation to place its town on the Navajo Reservation. After several months of political jockeying among senators and congressmen from Arizona and Utah, Reclamation decided to locate its town on the east side of the Colorado River owing to the site's close proximity to the dam. The bureau also cited the setting's aesthetic appeal. The view from Manson Mesa, looking west across Glen Canyon to the Kaiparowits Plateau, proved more picturesque than gazing east from Utah "at blue sky and not much scenery." In late January 1957, Jones approached the tribal council with a new resolution authorizing the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to occupy and use the Glen Canyon area on the reservation, with an understanding that these lands would be exchanged for equal acreage of prime grazing ground in southeastern Utah. Asking non-Navajos to leave the council chambers, Jones explained to his Diné associates that this land deal must be kept top secret until the parties involved worked out all the details, which did not ultimately occur until 2 September 1958, when Congress passed the Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act.<sup>362</sup> Chairman Jones then handed the discussion over to tribal attorney Van Valkenburgh, who outlined for tribal council members the proposed land exchange boundaries. In his testimony, Valkenburgh told tribal officials that Chairman Jones "reserved for you the rights to the water and to the recreation facilities and your rights to those have been protected."<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Statement of Paul Jones, 28 January 1957, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, Navajo Tribal Council (Window Rock, Ariz.: 28 January–16 February 1957), 5, 6. See also Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act, Pub. L. No. 85-868, 72 Stat. pp. 1686–90 (2 September 1958).

<sup>363</sup> Statement of Van Valkenburgh, 28 January 1957, in *Minutes of the Navajo Tribal Council*, 28 January–16 February 1957, p. 7.

Valkenburgh's statement proved only partially accurate. The Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act of 1958 granted Navajos the right to determine whether the National Park Service could develop public recreational facilities along Lake Powell's shoreline above 3,720 feet.<sup>364</sup> According to a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation project report for Glen Canyon Dam, the Navajo Tribal Council and the Bureau of Indian Affairs initially worked with other federal agencies to preplan tourist accommodations associated with the lake. In addition, the tribe established a park commission that sought to develop all recreation possibilities on the reservation.<sup>365</sup> This six-person board served as a forerunner to the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department created in 1964, just one year after reclamation shut Glen Canyon Dam's main gate. Finally, as early as June 1959, fishery management specialists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented Navajos and BIA bureaucrats preliminary recommendations for sport fisheries near the reservoir.<sup>366</sup> Despite the displacement of several hundred Navajos from their ancestral homeland in and around Glen Canyon and requests by tribal leaders representing these Navajos to leave their lands alone, Jones and most members of the Navajo Tribal Council insisted on developing recreational facilities around Lake Powell in an effort to lure more and more "foreigners" to western Navajoland.

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<sup>364</sup> *Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act*, Pub. L. No. 85-868, 72 Stat. pp. 1688, 1689 (2 September 1958).

<sup>365</sup> U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, *Glen Canyon Unit, Colorado River Storage Project: Status Report*, June 1959, box 289, "Project Reports, 1910–1995," 8N5-115-95-083, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation, RG 115, Rocky Mountain Region, National Archives and Records Administration, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

Tired of this rift between the council and its constituents, the People elected forty-four-year-old Raymond Nakai as their chairman in 1963. Born in Lukachukai, Arizona, on 12 October 1918, Nakai performed two terms as chairman from 1963 to 1971. Nakai had served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and participated in the Guadalcanal, Attu, Makin, and Tarawa campaigns in the Pacific Theater. After the war, Nakai labored at the Navajo Ordnance Depot in Bellemont, Arizona, until his election as chairman.<sup>367</sup> Residents from western Diné Bikéyah knew Nakai well, owing to his daily radio program on station KCLS in Flagstaff. Nakai drew on his experience as a public speaker and radio broadcaster to reach Diné denizens all over the reservation. Displaying great oratorical skill, Nakai relied heavily on nationalistic rhetoric laced with Christian ideals to galvanize Navajo citizens at his inaugural address in Window Rock, Arizona, on 13 April 1963. “The goal toward which I propose to lead the Navajo people,” Nakai bellowed into the microphone, “is the goal of all true Americans, . . . a time when the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of men—a government which respects the equal dignity of every human being as a child of the same Heavenly Father, a government in which all citizens have the same rights before the law, but more than that, rights which the law cannot take away.”<sup>368</sup>

Nakai, who had herded sheep as a child and later attended boarding school at Fort Wingate and Shiprock, New Mexico, empowered Navajo citizens by advocating tribal

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<sup>367</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 230.

<sup>368</sup> “Inaugural Address of Raymond Nakai, Chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council,” 13 April 1963, Window Rock, Arizona, p. 1, Raymond Nakai Collection, Colorado Plateau Digital Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

sovereignty, individual rights, and religious freedom. “I will seek advice from non-Indian consultants, but not take orders from them . . . I will engage economists to give economic advice, engineers to give engineering advice, and lawyers to give legal advice,” Nakai assured his listeners. “For political advice,” however, “I will go to the Navajo people.”<sup>369</sup> Although a member of the Catholic Church, Nakai defended the use of peyote among members of the Native American Church. He promoted Navajo self-determination in higher education. Indeed, his efforts resulted in the creation of the Navajo Community College (1969), present-day Diné College, which now boasts two thousand students and supports satellite campuses all across the reservation. Nakai’s priorities included greater access to and achievement in education, a reduction in the high unemployment rate plaguing the reservation, further development of the Navajo economy, and improved relations with the U.S. government and surrounding states. Nakai hoped his administration would usher in a new era on the Navajo Reservation, an age in which the People embraced Navajo nationalism and tribal unity and federal and state authorities acknowledged Indian sovereignty. “Let us have no more jurisdictional quarrels,” he pleaded with neighboring states. “The problem is not to fortify frontiers, but to work together on the problems that affect us all. Our poverty cannot make you rich, our prosperity cannot make you poor. Your misfortune will not help us. From this day out, let it be said the Indian wars are over, forever.”<sup>370</sup> According to historian Peter Iverson, Nakai served as the “first modern Navajo political leader” and “redefined the power and

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

meaning of the chairman's office."<sup>371</sup> Nakai's appeal for cooperation and his assertion of Navajo self-determination did not resonate, however, with federal agencies.

Tensions between the Navajo Nation and the U.S. National Park Service escalated during Nakai's first term in office. Although in the midst of negotiating a land swap that guaranteed the park service access to Aztec Creek's shoreline in exchange for Navajo rights at Echo Camp, a small encampment between the rock arch and Navajo Mountain, the NPS installed a small floating dock at the mouth of Aztec Creek, one mile downstream from Rainbow Bridge, in August 1965. The park service's actions infuriated Navajo leaders. Citing the Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act, Navajo officials claimed the dock was illegal. The park service argued that the water level at the mouth of Aztec Creek lay below the law's elevation requirements.<sup>372</sup> In an effort to demonstrate its political prowess and exhibit its rights as a sovereign entity, the Navajo Nation, led by Nakai, issued a business permit to Harold Drake, a revered Navajo leader from Navajo Mountain who started the Navajo Mountain Pioneer Days in 1964 to honor Chief Hashkéniinii and his relatives' escape from Carson's soldiers during the Long Walk. This license granted Drake permission to develop concessions at Echo Camp and invited Navajos and non-Navajo tourists to Drake's nascent celebration. In addition, the tribe also solicited Standard Oil Company in an effort to expand Navajo concessions at Padre Point, a cape of swirling rock and sandy beaches that juts into Lake Powell just south of Kane Creek. This stunt incensed the park service. The agency argued that

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<sup>371</sup> Iverson, *Diné*, 228.

<sup>372</sup> David Kent Sproul, "The Modern Monument: Managing Rainbow Bridge, 1955–1993," in *A Bridge between Cultures: An Administrative History of Rainbow Bridge National Monument*, Cultural Resources Selections, no. 18 (Denver, Colo.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Intermountain Region, 2001).

according to the Glen Canyon–McCracken Mesa Land Exchange Act, only the NPS possessed rights to Padre Point, since it sat well below the 3,720-foot line of demarcation.<sup>373</sup>

In January 1966, representatives from the Navajo Nation met with BIA and park service delegates at the nation’s tribal headquarters in Window Rock. Most of the issues listed on the conference agenda centered on park service plans to develop recreational facilities near Rainbow Bridge. Given that the NPS had not asked the tribe permission to construct its floating dock at Aztec Creek, Navajo envoys Frank Carson, Bill Lovell, Edward Plummer, Sam Day III, and Roger Davis accused the park service of trespass, a serious allegation that derailed any sensible solutions. In addition, Navajo leaders demanded greater access to Lake Powell’s south shore. At the meeting, Carson, the director of the tribe’s nascent parks and recreation department, asked U.S. park service personnel to provide information on boating regulations, concessioner rates, and types of various concessions, since Carson wholeheartedly believed the Navajos still possessed a colossal commercial opportunity at Lake Powell.

In May 1967, the Navajo Nation presented a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to the National Park Service that granted easements to the Navajo Nation in order for the tribe to construct its own floating structures along Lake Powell’s south shore. The MOA also proposed that the People receive exclusive concession rights along any shoreline that abutted the reservation. In addition, the memo’s authors had deleted language requiring the Navajo Nation to obtain permission from the NPS before it constructed roads or facilities associated with the lake. As a mollifying nod, the tribe

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

approved the park service's floating dock at Aztec Creek.<sup>374</sup> The NPS rejected the proposal.

Negotiations aimed at producing some sort of Memorandum of Agreement outlining recreational boundaries between the tribe and the National Park Service extended into the fall of 1968. In October, Navajo Parks and Recreation Department Director Day called another meeting with tribal officials, park service personnel, BIA representatives, and Reclamation bureaucrats. Although the conference produced an MOA that all parties agreed on, Nakai rejected it prior to members of the Navajo Tribal Council perusing the document. The chairman declared the agreement unsatisfactory and not sufficiently favorable to the Navajo Nation. Taking a dogmatic stance, Nakai assessed the MOA as being unworthy of the council's consideration.<sup>375</sup> Nakai also insisted that the park service grant control of all operations at Aztec Creek to the Diné. Plus, he demanded the federal agency guarantee the south shore the same amount of funds it allotted for recreational facilities on Lake Powell's north shore. National Park Service regional director Frank F. Kowski informed Nakai that Navajo management of Aztec creek remained non-negotiable. If they did not agree on an MOA soon, he added, the park service would simply move its facilities to another location, ending all discussions on an agreement. Nakai then admitted to Kowski that the tribe risked the possibility of being "broke in six years." This reality had intensified the council's desire to produce a

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<sup>374</sup> Sproul, "The Modern Monument."

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

Memorandum of Agreement and solidified its commitment to tourist revenues an MOA ensured.<sup>376</sup>

The Navajo Nation and the park service finalized a Memorandum of Agreement on 11 September 1970. The park service agreed to help develop and manage any and all Navajo recreational facilities at Lake Powell, as well as tourist amenities located on Diné land. The MOA explicitly barred Rainbow Bridge and its public services from Navajo control, but the tribe retained its ability to develop tourist accommodations above 3,720 feet. The MOA required park service approval for all other recreational facilities along Lake Powell in order to certify the amenities corresponded with overarching blueprints for the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. In addition, the Navajo Nation needed NPS permission to construct public services below the 3,720-foot line of demarcation. Finally, based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the U.S. National Park Service acquiesced first-hire preference to enrolled tribal members who applied for work at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Apparently NPS officials did not recall that the covenant from the 1930s had already guaranteed Diné employment at park service facilities on the reservation. The NPS also agreed to “encourage and assist members of the Tribe to qualify for positions” that required skilled labor, including training courses in interpretation, conservation, fire protection, search and rescue, and historical programs.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Sproul, “The Modern Monument.”

<sup>377</sup> “Memorandum of Agreement among the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Navajo Tribe of Indians, Relating to the Use and Development of the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Adjacent Tribal Lands,” 11 September 1970, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, Federal Record Center, Rocky Mountain Region, National Archives and Record Administration, Denver, Colorado [hereafter FRC, Denver]. See also Sproul, “The Modern Monument.”

As the Navajo Tribal Council and the U.S. National Park Service hammered out development details, more and more “foreigners” flocked to Lake Powell, which its boosters dubbed the “Crown Jewel of the Colorado” and its critics tagged “Lake Foul.” Visitation reached sixty-five thousand by the mid-1970s, and Rainbow Bridge, or Tsé Nani’áhígíí, proved a popular destination. During the late sixties, river rat, entrepreneur, and tour guide Art Greene, who owned Canyon Tours, the original concessionaire at Wahweap Marina, introduced all-day trips to Rainbow Bridge aboard his watercraft christened and copyrighted “Tseh Na-Ni-Ah-Goatin” (The Trail to the Rock that Goes Over).<sup>378</sup> Tourists recorded their initial reactions to the rock arch in the park service’s register. Some expressed absolute amazement. “A dream finally realized” and “Nearer My God to Thee!” they scribbled. Clearly ignorant of the sacred relationship between the region’s indigenous inhabitants and the geologic wonder, others whined, “You need a drinking fountain”; “Need trash cans!”; “Need steps to climb over it”; “Put a Tarzan swing in the middle”; “Lower the Beer prices.”<sup>379</sup>

Saddened and frustrated by the influx of tourists, Floyd Laughter from Navajo Mountain conveyed his discontent to ethnographer Karl W. Luckert. “[T]hey walk on and trample our holy places,” he grumbled. “They bring and throw their trash even on this side of Rock-arch. You see, in the beginning, when the area was created and set aside, it was not for the purpose of disposing cans, bottles, and other trash. Rather, it was set apart

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<sup>378</sup> Art Greene, request for copyright, 25 August 1949, Marble Canyon, Arizona, The Greene Family Collection, Special Collections, Arizona State University Library, Tempe, [http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/new\\_horizons.htm](http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/new_horizons.htm).

<sup>379</sup> Rainbow Bridge register, quoted in Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 167.

for the placing of prayers, offerings, and cornpollen.”<sup>380</sup> Lamar Bedonie, who lived south of Monument Valley near El Capitan, witnessed “white people with cameras, making lots of noise and drinking around the Bridge.” He lamented, “[Rainbow Bridge] is not holy anymore, and so we do not have rain now. . . . We have given this water a different name, and it is used for other purposes than drinking. The Rainbow is broken. Our way of life, our way of thinking, our religion is broken.”<sup>381</sup> Abbey, who worked as a ranger at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area for a summer during the late sixties, also bemoaned the effects of industrialized tourism on Tsé Nani’ áhígíí. “You state that forty thousand people saw Rainbow Bridge last year whereas only a ‘handful’ saw it before the inundation of Glen Canyon, when it was necessary to walk 6 ½ miles up from the river,” he wrote to Utah senator Moss. “You regard this as a clear-cut improvement in the nature of things. That is a form of quantitative logic, all too sadly typical of the growth-is-progress syndrome, . . . Why, Senator Moss, why, I ask you, do you believe that ‘more’ is the same as ‘better’?”<sup>382</sup>

No doubt Nakai Dítl’oi, Lamar Bedonie, Teddy Holiday, Betty Holiday, Jessie Yazzie Black, John Goodman, Begay Bitsinnie, and Joe Manygoats, as well as the Shonto, Navajo Mountain, and Inscription House chapters of the Navajo Nation, all

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<sup>380</sup> Floyd Laughter, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 57.

<sup>381</sup> Lamar Bedonie, response to defendants’ interrogatories, 5 April 1976, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 176, FRC, Denver; and Lamar Bedonie, interview by Karl W. Luckert, in *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*, 148.

<sup>382</sup> Edward Abbey to Utah senator Frank E. Moss, 26 March 1973, in “Cactus Chronicles: Long-lost Letters from the Buzzard in the Dead Tree,” *Orion Magazine*, July–August 2006.

plaintiffs who sued the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. National Park Service, and the U.S. Department of the Interior in an attempt to limit the water level of Lake Powell and prevent the flooding of burial grounds, sacred springs, and Holy People near Rainbow Bridge, agreed with Laughter and Abbey. On 3 September 1974, Bedonie and his neighbors filed suit. *Badoni* [sic] v. *Higginson* cited a violation of the plaintiffs' religious freedom, guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, by touring Anglos who "desecrat[ed] the sacred nature of the Rainbow Bridge with noise and litter, and defacement of the Bridge itself." Channeling the pleas of Edward Manson and Paul Begay to leave Navajo lands alone, they accused the defendants of infringing on their Fifth Amendment rights by "taking [the] Plaintiffs' property without due process of law." Bedonie and his allies, represented by lawyers Eric R. Swanson and Richard W. Hughes of the Diné Beina Nahiilna Be Agha'diit'ahii or DNA-People's Legal Services, also charged the defendants with violating the Colorado River Storage Project Act (1956), which guaranteed protection of Rainbow Bridge, and the National Environmental Policy Act (1970), in an attempt to prohibit the operation of Glen Canyon Dam until the federal government completed an Environmental Impact Statement for the region.<sup>383</sup> At the very least, the Navajo claimants fancied a restriction on the number of tourists visiting the rock arch. The defendants, represented by U.S. attorney C. Nelson Day and U.S. Department of Justice trial attorney Andrew F. Walch and backed by Colorado and Utah as well as the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Colorado River Water

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<sup>383</sup> "Complaint for Relief in the Nature of Mandamus and for Injunctive and Declaratory Relief," attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, pp. 6-9, FRC, Denver. For a personal account of the DNA-People's Legal Services, see Lucy Moore, *Into the Canyon: Seven Years in Navajo Country* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2004).

Conservation District, and the Southwestern Water Conservation District, simply argued that the plaintiffs lacked any real standing to sue since an injunction would “impinge on the overriding public interest” in the full operation of Glen Canyon Dam.<sup>384</sup> In other words, the religious freedom of a few Navajos could not possibly equal the recreational, agricultural, and energy concerns of the growing metropolitan West.

Unfortunately, Diné claimants never stood a chance. Lacking any understanding of the plaintiffs’ worldview and their religious practices, the defendants asked their Navajo adversaries bogus questions that generated a one-dimensional case destined to fail. The federal government’s white attorneys wanted their Native challengers to quantify in monetary terms their religion’s worth. “The value of my religion to me and to the Navajo people,” Begay Bitsinnie testified, “is far greater than white men can imagine.” “We cannot put a price tag on it,” he admitted, “but we know it is of greater value.”<sup>385</sup> No doubt coached by Swanson and Hughes, the remaining plaintiffs submitted similar answers to the same line of interrogation. The defendants also inquired whether each of the plaintiffs served as a Navajo medicine man, an obvious community leader that somehow elevated the claimant’s reliability. Displaying complete ignorance and disdain for a culture other than their own, the federal lawyers demanded, too, that Navajo plaintiffs possess some sort of property interest in Rainbow Bridge. They asked each claimant how many religious rituals he or she had attended within the monument’s

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<sup>384</sup> Defendants’ answer, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 16, FRC, Denver.

<sup>385</sup> Begay Bitsinnie, response to defendants’ interrogatories, 5 April 1976, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 93, FRC, Denver.

boundaries since 1965.<sup>386</sup> Given that Navajos only used the rock arch and its hinterlands when they participated in specific ceremonies, such as *Ye'ii bícheii* (Night Way), *Béeshee* (Flint Way), *Nózhóójí*, and *Chíshijí* (an Apache Way used by Navajos for curing purposes), some plaintiffs had not visited Tsé Nani' áhígíí in several years, maybe never. Their prayers, however, “included ones for rain, good health and life, for the safe return of Navajos fighting in the [Vietnam] war.”<sup>387</sup> Nonetheless, they openly embraced the area’s religious importance and clearly resented “foreigners” intruding on their homeland.

“Why does the white man claim everything,” eighty-seven-year-old Nakai Ditl’oi cried. “This is not his land. . . . We [the Navajos] must still retain control over this area to save ourselves.”<sup>388</sup> All the claimants expressed similar sentiments, testifying that their ancestors did not acquiesce to federal authorities during the Long Walk and never relinquished control over their lands.<sup>389</sup> At least since the U.S. Army’s invasion of Navajoland during the mid-nineteenth century, and perhaps before, the People had viewed this area as sacred, as a region that offered protection, healing, rain. Life.

The U.S. District Court in Utah, under the jurisdiction of Judge Aldon J. Anderson, ruled against the Navajo plaintiffs three years after they filed suit. Anderson

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<sup>386</sup> Interrogatories propounded by the defendants, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, pp. 92–207, FRC, Denver.

<sup>387</sup> Jimmy Goodman, response to defendants’ interrogatories, 5 April 1976, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 186, FRC, Denver.

<sup>388</sup> Nakai Ditl’oi, response to defendants’ interrogatories, 5 April 1976, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 148, FRC, Denver.

<sup>389</sup> See plaintiffs’ responses to defendants’ interrogatories, 5 April 1976, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, pp. 92–207, FRC, Denver.

claimed the People possessed no real (read monetary) stake at Rainbow Bridge National Monument. Besides, “the interests of the defendants,” Anderson wrote, “would clearly outweigh the interests of the plaintiffs.”<sup>390</sup> Anderson employed the same reasoning presented by federal lawyers Day and Walch: the metropolitan West’s needs obviously trumped the religious rituals of a few Navajos. The West depended on Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell to flush its entire “plumbing system.”<sup>391</sup>

The Navajo plaintiffs rejected Anderson’s ruling. Refusing to succumb to U.S. colonial forces, the claimants presented their case to the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver on 11 July 1978, one month prior to the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). Although AIRFA plainly stated that the United States would preserve and protect the traditional practices and religious freedom of Native peoples, the court of appeals never referenced the law. Instead, the court upheld Anderson’s judgment in its decision released in November 1980. Judges Robert H. McWilliams, Jean S. Breitenstein, and James K. Logan disagreed with Anderson’s ruling that property interest served as the determining factor. Rather, McWilliams, Breitenstein, and Logan stated that any action infringing on a religious practice violates the First Amendment unless the federal government ascertains a rival interest of “sufficient magnitude.” Indeed, the CRSP and its sensational star at Glen Canyon, “a crucial part of a multi-state water storage and power generation project,” satisfied the law’s

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<sup>390</sup> *Badoni v. Higginson*, 455 F. Supp. (1977), 645.

<sup>391</sup> Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 169.

requirements.<sup>392</sup> Citing the separation of church and state, McWilliams, Breitenstein, and Logan also judged that while the U.S. government must regulate tourists in order to preserve the physical integrity of Rainbow Bridge National Monument, “we do not believe plaintiffs have a constitutional right to have tourists visiting the Bridge act in a ‘respectful and appreciative manner.’” Otherwise, the arbitrary lines demarcating the 160-acre monument would morph into a “government-managed religious shrine.”<sup>393</sup> Ultimately, the Navajo claimants received nothing as the reservoir inundated sacred sites and tourists flooded Tsé Nani’ áhígíí. By 1988, 238,307 visitors had flocked to Rainbow Bridge.<sup>394</sup>

Despite the plaintiffs’ six-year fight in court, the Navajo Nation moved forward with its plans to develop recreational facilities on Lake Powell’s south shore, relying on the Memorandum of Agreement finalized in 1970. Indeed, Nakai’s plea for tribal unity in his inaugural address seemed lost amidst the Navajo Nation’s quest for economic revitalization centered on tourism. In addition to a marina near Paiute Creek on the San Juan-arm of the reservoir and a Lake Powell Tribal Park, Navajo officials intended to establish tourist accommodations at Antelope Point, the same location Jones asked Udall to return to the tribe during the early 1960s, when they debated a Navajo Rainbow

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<sup>392</sup> Opinion of the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeal, 3 November 1980, attached to court records for *Badoni v. Higginson*, C74-275, p. 6, 8, FRC, Denver; and *Badoni v. Higginson*, *Federal Reporter* 638, 2d series (1980), 172–81. See also Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, 169.

<sup>393</sup> Opinion of the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeal, 3 November 1980, p. 13.

<sup>394</sup> U.S. National Park Service, “Monthly Use Reports,” folder 2177-0, box 2, NRG-115-05-076, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation, Record Group 115, Rocky Mountain Region National Archives, Denver, Colorado.

National Park.<sup>395</sup> Their plans included a main lodge; guest rooms; a recreation center complete with ping-pong tables, tennis courts, riding stables, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and a bowling alley; a gift shop filled with “Navajo (or Indian) art, handicrafts, fashions, and souvenirs”; and a marina. In addition, they envisaged sightseeing tours, dance classes, and camp-outs for children in “authentic” Navajo hogans, as well as lectures and demonstrations on weaving, silver-smithing, desert survival, and Navajo history and philosophy.<sup>396</sup>

Although the Navajo Nation did not ultimately develop Antelope Point until several years ago, the tribe’s plan epitomized its mission to lure more and more “foreigners” to the region. Ever since that winter day in 1959, when Chairman Jones stood atop the podium at Glen Canyon Bridge and revealed his belief in tourism as a viable economic enterprise for his people, Navajo leaders unremittingly advanced their sightseeing agenda. In their quest to develop public amenities at Padre Point, Rainbow Bridge, Echo Camp, and Antelope Point, politicians at Window Rock frequently conflicted with their constituents who lived adjacent to the reservoir. In his testimony, Diti’oi recalled telling a tribal representative that “the level of the lake must not reach the Bridge and White people should not be allowed in the area.” Tribal leaders ignored Diti’oi’s plea, as well as similar requests by the old man’s neighbors. Instead, they

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<sup>395</sup> Marjorie Reyna to Wayne E. Cook, 23 February 1978, Window Rock, Arizona, folder 8705-0, box 2, NRG-115-05-040, Record Group 115, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation, Rocky Mountain Region National Archives, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>396</sup> Chervenak, Keane, and Company, “A Work Plan for a Successful Navajo Nation Resort Operation at Antelope Point,” January 1978, folder 8705-0, box 2, NRG-115-05-040, Record Group 115, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation, Rocky Mountain Region National Archives, Denver, Colorado.

promoted the scenic beauty of western Navajoland and encouraged touring Americans to vacation on Lake Powell.

In some ways, the tribal council's efforts facilitated Navajo self-determination and tribal sovereignty. The desire of Navajo leaders to realize industrial tourism's economic benefits, however, catapulted the tribe into a "devil's bargain," a deal that unequivocally altered the lives and landscapes of those Navajos who had populated Glen Canyon and its hinterlands since the Long Walk. Although a few tribal council members, such as Begay and Manson, voiced local concerns, most Navajo representatives clashed with their constituents who typically opposed tourism development among the reservation's western communities. Extremely saddened and angered by the influx of tourists to Tsé Nani' áhígíí, Diné singers and medicinemen, with little or no support from their nation's leaders, sued the federal government and, in turn, derailed any appeal for tribal unity or Navajo nationalism. The actions of local Navajos inhabiting Glen Canyon's crooked coulees sent tribal representatives a potent message laced with ideals reflecting the People's traditional form of government, which had long recognized the power of autonomous bands and their deep relationship to homeland.

## Chapter 6

### “Don’t You Let that Deal Go Down”: Navajo Water Rights, Black Mesa, and the Big Build-up of the American Southwest

On Saturday, 17 April 1971, a small group of protesters gathered on Black Mesa, the heart center of both the Navajo and Hopi nations. That morning, chaos and confusion stymied planned demonstrations by Navajos, Hopis, and environmental and student activists. According to *Dine Baa-Hani*, an alternative Navajo newspaper headquartered at Crownpoint, New Mexico, Navajo police and Peabody Coal officials had stolen roadside signs directing dissenters to the protest’s original rallying point.<sup>397</sup> By two o’clock in the afternoon, however, participants had reconvened. This time, they formed a fifteen-car convoy led by two motorcycles carrying white flags inscribed “Mother Earth.” To prevent demonstrators from entering the company’s warehouse district and central office, Peabody Coal constructed a practically defunct roadblock manned by workmen, Navajo police, and two pick-up trucks.<sup>398</sup> Protesters infiltrated the blockade, forcing Peabody to abandon its efforts. Company officials then shut down Peabody’s warehouse complex and main offices before the close of business.

Despite forty-mile-per-hour spring winds and obnoxious workers “sneer[ing] and [throwing] fingers at Indian people,” demonstrators met at company headquarters, where they conducted prayers and delivered speeches in opposition to Peabody’s strip-mining operations on Black Mesa. Eighty-three-year-old Asa Bazhonooodah, a Navajo elder and

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<sup>397</sup> For chapter title origin, see Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter, “Deal,” in *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*, ed. Alan Trist and David Dodd, annot. David Dodd (New York: Free Press, 2005), 155. “Dine-Hopis Protest,” *Crownpoint (N.Mex.) Dine Baa-Hani*, 22 April 1971, p. 10.

<sup>398</sup> “Diné-Hopis Protest.”

herder who had lived on Black Mesa all her life, told the crowd, “This is not legal.” “We the people of Black Mesa have not surrendered. . . . We have fought Kit Carson and weren’t marched to Fort Sumner. This is us, the Navaho [*sic*]. We will never surrender!”<sup>399</sup> Hopi traditionalist David Monongye took the stage after she spoke. In spite of Peabody employees heckling him, old man Monongye prayed and offered corn pollen. Hopi interpreter Thomas Banyaca, born in 1909 to the Coyote Clan, then proclaimed, “We shall unite and fight . . . not through war, machines, money, business, or violence shall we fight, but through Spiritual Power, will we fight.”<sup>400</sup> The small assembly cheered then challenged Peabody officials “to say their piece.” When Peabody’s upper echelon refused, demonstrators piled into their cars and headed home.

Black Mesa’s rufous plateau gently rises 8,110 feet from the Little Colorado River lifting northeast to its northern rim at Kayenta, Arizona. A distinct elevated landmass spanning four thousand square miles, Black Mesa sits squarely in the center of the Colorado Plateau. It encompasses parts of the Navajo Reservation as well as Hopiland’s First, Second, and Third Mesa, each home to villages built around sacred springs fed by the Navajo Aquifer.<sup>401</sup> Once a Pleistocene lake, Black Mesa now resembles a human hand tracing the contours of this ancient body of water. “Where the fingernails are,” Bazhonoodah’s grandson Key Shelton claims, “that’s the Hopi

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<sup>399</sup> Asa Bazhonoodah, quoted in “Dine-Hopis Protest,” 10.

<sup>400</sup> “Dine-Hopis Protest,” 11; and Thomas Banyaca, quoted in “Dine-Hopis Protest,” 11.

<sup>401</sup> Tamisha Grimes, “The Hopi and the Black Mesa: An Argument for Protection of Sacred Water Sites,” (master’s thesis, University of Kansas, 2008), 5.

mesas.”<sup>402</sup> For thousands of years, the lake embraced vibrant forests and plant life before decaying into a bog that, over time, hardened to twenty-one billion tons of high-grade, low-sulphur coal, the female mountain’s lungs according to Diné mythology and one of the largest coal deposits in the United States.<sup>403</sup> Situating Black Mesa within the Diné worldview and connecting one landform to another, Shelton recites his grandmother’s geomythic mapping of the natural ziggurat:

Navajo Mountain is the head of ‘she’ mountain, and Big Mountain, the most prominent on Black Mesa, is the liver to that female mountain, . . . The head of the male mountain is at Ganado, where the rock sits and there is a stand of trees that look as though they are tied together. Then, on the road to Page is a tall, narrow rock—that rock is a child, and where the road turns in a long, narrow curve, it is Mother Earth’s arm holding her grandchild. The waterways connect the mountains. They run in a circle, clockwise from east to west . . . all these rivers form the boundaries of our sacred universe. The rivers are intertwined with each other, and like a young couple they flow—laughing and twisting and turning—linking the mountains into a communication system that is the Navajo Way.<sup>404</sup>

In the mid-1960s, when Peabody Coal obtained mining leases from the both the Navajo and Hopi tribal councils, Black Mesa’s dry washes shimmered with shiny stratum of bituminous coal. Although the company claimed that shale and rock covered most of the deposits “up to 120 feet deep,” seams three to eighteen inches thick reached

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<sup>402</sup> Key Shelton, quoted in T. C. McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth: Encounters with Nature in Ancient and Contemporary Thought* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 412.

<sup>403</sup> Judith Nies, “The Black Mesa Syndrome: Indian Lands, Black Gold,” *Orion Magazine*, Summer 2000, [http://arts.envirolink.org/arts\\_and\\_activism/JudithNies.html](http://arts.envirolink.org/arts_and_activism/JudithNies.html); and Shelton, in McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth*, 412.

<sup>404</sup> Shelton, in McLuhan, *The Way of the Earth*, 412.

the surface, allowing Peabody to employ both surface- and strip-mining techniques in its quest for the raw material.<sup>405</sup> Peabody's relentless razing of Black Mesa in search of coal severely eroded the region's soil, reducing its fertility; it polluted the area's rivers and streams; it scarred the surrounding landscape; it destroyed native plants and animals; and it resulted in the forced removal of thousands of Navajos from their traditional homeland. Enormous draglines and bulldozers raped and pillaged the land, terrorizing its Native inhabitants whose families had lived there for generations. Indeed, aural historian Jack Loeffler, cofounder of the Black Mesa Defense Fund, witnessed Peabody Coal bulldoze an elderly Navajo woman's hogan. "The woman's world of a lifetime," he writes, "disappeared before her weeping eyes in a cloud of dust, and then she was homeless."<sup>406</sup>

Navajos and Hopis alike expressed their despondency over Peabody's destruction of their homeland. "Now there is a big stripmine where coal comes out of the Earth," John Lansa told other Hopi traditionalists gathered in Hotevilla, Arizona. "This makes upheaval on the land. They cut across our sacred shrines . . . Peabody is . . . destroying

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<sup>405</sup> Peabody Coal Company, *Mining Black Mesa*, November 1970, in "Problems of Electrical Power Production in the Southwest," U.S. Senate, *Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs*, 92d Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1971), 1628. Strip mining serves as a type of surface mining during which the operator scalps or removes the surface vegetation (i.e., trees, bushes, and grasses and forbes); bulldozers or scrapers and loaders remove the top soil; and dynamite blasts the exposed overburden to reach coal seams, which are then fractured by blasts and loaded in trucks or onto conveyor belts. Finally, in theory, the operator redistributes the topsoil and seeds or revegetates the area. Mark Squillace, *The Strip Mining Handbook: A Coalfield Citizens' Guide to Using the Law to Fight Back Against the Ravages of Strip Mining and Underground Mining* (Washington, D.C.: Environmental Policy Institute and Friends of the Earth, 1990), 19.

<sup>406</sup> Jack Loeffler, "Tragedy in Indian Country," in *Headed Upstream: Interviews with Iconoclasts* (Tucson, Ariz.: Harbinger House, 1989), 90. For slightly altered version of this story, see Jack Loeffler, *Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 105.

the sacred mountain. What they take away from our land is being turned into power to create even more evil things.”<sup>407</sup> Recalling a recent trip to gather medicine, Bazhonoodah also lamented the effects of coal mining on Black Mesa. “I have gone three times to look for herbs,” the old woman told members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs at a public hearing in Page. “I couldn’t recognize the place where we find them. . . . I couldn’t find my way around the mountain because it was so distorted.”<sup>408</sup> Paul A. Begay, a twenty-year veteran of the Navajo Tribal Council who championed the value of homeland, remembered his grandfather Dághii Sanii (Old Mustache) “tell[ing] me that below one foot of top soil lie important minerals that promote growth of all vegetation. . . . And Black Mesa has in it all the valued possessions[:] turquoise, sheep, horses, cattle, and all that is important to our lives.” Peabody Coal “has moved in, started digging into the earth’s depths, and is destroying our Navajo religious values and wealth.” “[T]he strip mining,” Begay concluded, “just must be stopped.”<sup>409</sup>

In the mid-sixties, the Diné still lived in isolated family groups in hogans scattered along the backside of *Dziljiin*, or Black Mountain, also known as Black Mesa, where they herded sheep, goats, and horses. Likewise, traditional Hopis inhabited the escarpment’s southern promontories, raising corn, beans, and squash just as their ancestors had done for generations. The Navajos and Hopis’ protests against Peabody

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<sup>407</sup> John Lansa, quoted in “The Time of Great Purification: As Spoken by Hopi Elders to Jack Loeffler,” *Myths and Technofantasies: The First Publication of the Black Mesa Defense Fund*, n.d., p. 11.

<sup>408</sup> Statement of Asa Bazhonoodah, in “Problems of Electrical Power Production in the Southwest,” 1551.

<sup>409</sup> Statement of Paul A. Begay, in “Problems of Electrical Power Production in the Southwest,” 1658.

Coal Company, the nation's largest producer of coal with mining operations in ten states and, at the time, a subsidiary of the Kennecott Copper Corporation, echoed sentiments of Red Power, intertribalism, and indigenous sovereignty. More important, their outcry exemplified a rising intolerance of colonial powers, which sometimes included their own tribal governments, among traditional Navajos and Hopis. These colonial forces historically sought to destroy Native communities by suppressing their cultures, pillaging their land, and stealing their water. Indigenous peoples have always resisted outside interests, but during the late sixties and early seventies, Native communities all over Indian Country embraced a new doctrine of Red Power, one that emphasized treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, religious freedom, self-determination, and intertribalism, all laced with sentiments of decolonization. "People . . . from across the sea have come and mercilessly slaughtered our people," Bazhoonodah told the audience. "You have won the war," she cried. "Go hame [*sic*] back across the sea. . . . We cannot exist in this concentration camp any longer."<sup>410</sup>

The gut-wrenching story of strip-mining on Black Mesa is intricately tied to the multilayered, interconnected history of indigenous water rights, water reclamation, and energy development in the American Southwest. Plans for various infrastructure projects began in earnest during the waning years of the Progressive Era and culminated with the passage of the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956, promoting Glen Canyon Dam as its sensational star, and Congress's approval of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) as part of the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968. These federal laws and interstate compacts historically ignored indigenous claims to the region's rivers and streams.

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<sup>410</sup> Asa Bazhoonodah, quoted in "Dine-Hopis Protest," 10.

During negotiations for the Central Arizona Project in the mid-1960s, Arizona politicians, spearheaded by the state's senior senator Carl T. Hayden, continued that tradition, snubbing Navajo property rights and ignoring the tribe's historical land and water claims. The tribal council, emboldened by their newly elected chairman Raymond Nakai, who preached tribal sovereignty and Indian nationalism, originally helped block plans for a hydroelectric dam at Marble Canyon in Grand Canyon as part of the CAP but later endorsed the construction of the Navajo Generating Station, relinquishing control of Diné rights to the Colorado River. Nakai and the tribal council cared less about saving the Grand Canyon than asserting Navajo self-determination and securing economic security for the People through extractive industries, especially coal mining on Black Mesa. Arizona's political players infuriated Nakai and members of the Navajo Tribal Council when they openly ignored Diné claims to Marble Canyon and failed to include tribal leaders in discussions for the CAP. Navajo officials shut down further negotiations with CAP proponents once they realized that Hayden, Senator Barry M. Goldwater, and Arizona representatives John J. Rhodes and Morris K. "Mo" Udall intended to take Navajo land for the massive public works project.

If constructed, the dam at Marble Canyon would have flooded forty-six miles of the Navajo Reservation. Moreover, early negotiations with the Diné had established tribal rights to waterways, including the Colorado and San Juan rivers, abutting reservation boundaries. The treaty signed between the Navajos and the U.S. government in 1868, for example, guaranteed the People a permanent homeland, which implied tribal access to

southwestern rivers and streams, and in 1908, the U.S. Supreme Court reserved water rights for Native communities in its landmark decision *Winters v. United States*.<sup>411</sup>

The case centered on the Assiniboines and Gros Ventres living on the Fort Belknap Reservation in north-central Montana. Originally part of a vast area set aside in 1855, but reduced to fourteen hundred acres in 1888, the reservation adjoined the Milk River, a tributary of the Missouri River. In the late 1880s, an influx of Euroamerican ranchers and farmers accompanied the arrival of the Great Northern Railroad bisecting Montana. The new settlers immediately established small isolated farming communities all along the Milk River and diverted its waters to their fields, ignoring their indigenous neighbors. Farmers and ranchers fought amongst each other over access to the Milk. Canada, along with additional upstream users, appropriated a large portion of the river prior to its waters flowing downstream. Most summers, the Milk would dry up completely. By 1900, this reality had forced the nascent Reclamation Service, a forerunner to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, to consider the feasibility of diverting water from the St. Mary River, which effuses from Gunsight Mountain in Glacier National Park, through a gravity canal to the Milk River. In 1904 and 1905, a severe drought gripped the entire region. This climatic catastrophe, combined with upstream diversions, drained the Milk River dry before it ever reached Fort Belknap. “Our meadows are now parching up,” Superintendent William R. Logan wrote to his superiors at the Office of Indian Affairs. “The Indians have planted large crops and a great deal of

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<sup>411</sup> “Treaty of 1868,” in Iverson, *Diné*, 325–34.

grain. All this will be lost unless . . . radical action is taken . . . to make the settlers above the Reservation respect our rights.”<sup>412</sup>

Given the federal government’s obsession with assimilating the nation’s indigenous populations by turning Indians into sedentary farmers, Logan’s call did not go unanswered. U.S. Justice Department attorney Carl Rasch quickly requested a court order to restrict Henry Winter and other non-Native farmers and ranchers from diverting water needed by Indian inhabitants on the reservation. Rasch argued that Fort Belknap held riparian rights to the Milk River. The Riparian Doctrine, the traditional water law governing the eastern United States, asserts that everyone living along a river shares in its bounty.<sup>413</sup> Realizing his argument presented numerous pitfalls when applied to western water, Rasch also maintained that the treaty between the United States and the Assiniboines and Gros Ventres created a water right. Moreover, he claimed no state could repudiate the federal government’s privileges as a landowner and trustee for Native peoples.<sup>414</sup> Much to the settlers’ chagrin, a federal district court upheld the Indians’ reserved rights to water and invented a wholly new water doctrine based on treaty promises. “When the Indians made the treaty granting rights to the United States,” Judge

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<sup>412</sup> William R. Logan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp, 3 June 1905, quoted in Norris Hundley Jr., “The Dark and Bloody Ground of Indian Water Rights: Confusion Elevated to Principle,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 9 (October 1978): 462–63.

<sup>413</sup> McCool, *Native Waters*, 11.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

William H. Hunt wrote, “they reserved the right to the use of the waters of the Milk River.”<sup>415</sup>

Winter and the other appellants appealed, igniting a firestorm of controversy that lasted three years and spread to the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>416</sup> In January 1908, the high court ruled in favor of the Assiniboines and Gros Ventres. The court’s eight-to-one decision reflected the nation’s commitment to assimilating Native peoples into the dominant culture through farming, not its concern for indigenous ways of life. It concluded that the government, through its treaty with the Assiniboines and Gros Ventres, reserved the waters of the Milk River “for a use which would be necessarily continued through the years.”<sup>417</sup> In other words, when Congress set aside land for an Indian reservation, it also retained the water rights to fulfill the reservation’s purpose. Although this case, the first in a long sequence of litigations known collectively as the Winters Doctrine, secured Native claims to water, it created a great deal of uncertainty surrounding indigenous water rights by failing to enumerate those privileges. The ruling’s ambiguity allowed the federal Bureau of Reclamation to launch a well-organized resistance against the mandate, an all-out assault on Native peoples that continued for nearly a century.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Judge William H. Hunt, quoted in *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>416</sup> Hundley, “The Dark and Bloody Ground of Indian Water Rights,” 463. For an in-depth study of the Winters Doctrine, see John Shurts, *Indian Reserved Water Rights: The Winters Doctrine in Its Social and Legal Context, 1880s–1930s* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

<sup>417</sup> *Winters v. U.S.*, 207 U.S. 564 (1908). See also McCool, *Native Waters*, 14.

<sup>418</sup> McCool, *Native Waters*, 12–15.

Forty years after the implementation of the Winters Doctrine, the upper Colorado River basin states of New Mexico ratified the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact of 1948. Although the agreement ignored the needs of Native peoples dependent on Colorado River water, it apportioned the 7.5 million-acre feet of upper basin water among New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Arizona. More important, it guaranteed Arizona, which rested on each side of the dividing line at Lee's Ferry, 50,000-acre feet of river water annually. Given that almost all of Arizona's lands in the upper basin lie in the geopolitical boundaries of the Navajo Reservation, the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact indirectly granted the Diné a significant portion of the Colorado River, an allotment coveted by Arizona's mid-century politicians who pushed for the creation of a central Arizona project.<sup>419</sup>

These figures, however, failed to represent an accurate amount of water flushing the Colorado River system each year. The Colorado River Compact of 1922 simply neglected to observe environmental conditions that often produced an erratic source of water, and certainly adhered more to arbitrary geopolitical boundaries separating one state, or basin, from another than natural borders defined by watersheds. Folklorist Hal Cannon denotes a vast difference between wet and dry years in an arid ecosystem. "The drama between those two amounts are so extreme," Cannon contends, "that it is hard to believe that you can assume that it is always going to be a constant to just turn on your tap, because Nature don't work that way." Colorado River historian Norris Hundley Jr., flat-out insists, "The River Flow assumptions were in error." When congressional debates over the construction of the Boulder Canyon Project, which included Boulder Dam (now

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<sup>419</sup> "Article 3," in Upper Colorado River Commission, *Upper Colorado River Basin Compact*, 81st Cong., 1st session, 31 January 1949 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1949), 6.

Hoover Dam), erupted in the 1920s, the Colorado River Board of California realized that the average annual flow of the river's main stem hovered somewhere around 14 million-acre feet of water not 17 or 18 million-acre feet as the compact of 1922 predicted.<sup>420</sup>

The Colorado River Compact's miscalculations of realistic water flow at once undermined the entire premise of southwestern water law. In addition, the compact failed to clarify rights to surplus river water and never allocated specific amounts to states within each basin. Instead, it randomly split the Colorado River between the upper and lower basins and awarded each an absolute sum of flow. Nevertheless, the Rio Colorado presented possibilities for economic development unmatched by any other water source in the arid Southwest, and farmers, civic boosters, politicians, engineers, businessmen, and government officials, all wanting to control the region's most valuable natural resource, have fought a myriad of battles over its destiny.<sup>421</sup> The compact's ambiguities, for example, fanned intense conflicts already underway between the Grand Canyon State and its western neighbor. Indeed, clashes between Arizona and California over a reliable supply of water, one large enough to sustain growth, began at the turn of the twentieth century before Arizona even became a state.

According to historian Marc Reisner, the controversy stemmed from the Salt River Project, a series of dams erected on the Gila River in mountain canyons east of

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<sup>420</sup> Hal Cannon, interview by Jack Loeffler, and Norris Hundley Jr., interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters: The Colorado River and the West*, program 2, six-part radio series, produced by Jack Loeffler for the Arizona Humanities Council, 2001, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>421</sup> David P. Billington and Donald Conrad Jackson, *Big Dams of the New Deal Era: A Confluence of Engineering and Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 102.

Phoenix during the early twentieth century.<sup>422</sup> The Gila and its primary tributaries, the Salt and Verde rivers, serves as Arizona's only "indigenous river of consequence." Flowing from the Black Range of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico along the western slopes of the Continental Divide, the Gila River drops 650 miles before reaching the Colorado River at Yuma, Arizona. The Gila historically evaporated as it rambled across the scorching plains of the Sonoran Desert, resulting in a fickle water source that necessitated dams as a means to increase storage and decrease water loss. Theodore Roosevelt Dam, as well as others constructed on both the Salt and Verde rivers, provided Arizona 2.3 million-acre feet of water to use for agricultural and municipal purposes.

During negotiations to divvy up the Colorado River between its upper and lower basins, California argued that Arizona already possessed its share of river water owing to the Salt River Project. Arizona maintained it deserved more than 500,000 acre-feet of water from the main stem of the Colorado River in order to sustain growth. Moreover, Arizona's political, agricultural, and economic interests had long coveted an aqueduct to carry water from the Colorado River to the central part of the state. Mostly local- and state-level endeavors, proposed schemes included a "Highline Canal" 500 miles long, with 60 miles of tunnels and numerous concrete-lined canals designed to transport boats and barges.<sup>423</sup> At the meeting in 1922 at Bishop's Lodge in Santa Fe, New Mexico, however, California vowed to squash Arizona's dream of a federally funded aqueduct. Worried that California would eventually consume Arizona's meager share of the

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<sup>422</sup> Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, kindle edition, chap. 8.

<sup>423</sup> Byron Pearson, "'We Have Almost Forgotten How to Hope': The Hualapai, the Navajo, and the Fight for the Central Arizona Project, 1944–1968," *Western Historical Quarterly* 31 (autumn 2000), 297.

Colorado River; incensed by the compact's inclusion of Colorado River tributaries, particularly the Gila River, in its allocation scheme; and bitter over the possibility of using Arizona's tributaries, especially the Gila, to alleviate "the Mexican burden," representatives for the Grand Canyon State walked away from Santa Fe without signing the Colorado River Compact of 1922.<sup>424</sup> Arizona eventually acquiesced and ratified the agreement in the mid-1940s, when the United States entered treaty negotiations with Mexico in an effort to secure Mexican claims to the Colorado River. Arguments between the Grand Canyon State and its western neighbor over a central Arizona project continued well into the twentieth century, and culminated with an eleven-year court battle that ended on 3 June 1963, when the U.S. Supreme Court finally awarded Arizona its annual apportionment of 2.8 million-acre feet of Colorado River water in its decision *Arizona v. California*. In addition, the judgment divided surplus flows between the Grand Canyon and Golden states fifty-fifty.<sup>425</sup>

The case proved somewhat beneficial to Native communities as well. Similar to the *Winters* decision, *Arizona v. California* maintained that the establishment of a reservation necessarily implied rights to water sources within or abutting reservation boundaries. It also secured enough water for indigenous peoples "to irrigate all the practically irrigable acreage," or PIA, on reservations.<sup>426</sup> Although *Arizona v. California* quantified Indian water based on a reservation's PIA, the court's decision fell short of

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<sup>424</sup> *Arizona v. California*, 373 U.S. 546 (1963).

<sup>425</sup> For a history of California's rivalry with Arizona over Colorado River water, see Rich Johnson, *Central Arizona Project, 1918–1968* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 87–124; and Norris Hundley Jr., *The Great Thirst: Californians and Water; A History*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>426</sup> *Arizona v. California*, 373 U.S. 546 (1963).

making the standard a universal and timeless test. This uncertainty eventually forced tribes, including the Navajos, to bargain for their apparent water rights in exchange for economic security, a move that potentially threatened the political and cultural integrity of Native communities.

Although Arizona's powerful water interests had proposed a public-works project funded by the state since the early twentieth century, Arizona's politicians wasted no time in their push for a federally subsidized central Arizona project. On 4 June 1963, one day after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Arizona receiving its fair share of the Colorado River, Arizona's senators Hayden and Goldwater introduced to the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation a bill authorizing a central Arizona project. Hayden and Goldwater's proposal called for a system of conduits, canals, and pumping plants to divert water from Lake Havasu, impounded behind Parker Dam on the Arizona-California border, via the Havasu Intake Channel Dike to Orme Dam at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers on the Yavapais' Fort McDowell Reservation near Phoenix.<sup>427</sup> In addition to a main canal carrying water from Lake Havasu, the plan included regulating facilities; a hydroelectric dam, reservoir, and power plant at Bridge Canyon on the Hualapai Reservation near Peach Springs, Arizona; electrical transmission lines; Buttes and Hooker dams on the Gila River to provide conservation storage, flood and sediment control, and recreation opportunities; Charleston Dam and its subsequent

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<sup>427</sup> Final legislation for the Central Arizona Project, approved by Congress in 1968, included the Orme Dam, which would have flooded half of the Fort McDowell Reservation. The Yavapais fought the project for ten years and eventually blocked its construction. For a brief history of this water reclamation battle, see Daniel Kraker, "Tribe Defeated a Dam and Won Back Its Water," *High Country News*, 15 March 2004, <http://www.hcn.org/issues/270/14627>.

reservoir on the San Pedro River southeast of Tucson; and the Tucson and Salt-Gila aqueducts.<sup>428</sup> Likewise, in January 1964, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall published the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's *Pacific Southwest Water Plan*. He proposed to redirect water from the verdant Pacific Northwest to the arid Southwest through a series of tunnels, ducts, and canals.<sup>429</sup> The increased water flow through this interbasin transfer would aid in new dams and diversions designed to remedy the growing water shortage in the Southwest. Calling for two phases of construction over thirty-five years and costing more than four billion dollars, the secretary's blueprints centered on Arizona's long-awaited aqueduct system. To power the delivery of water from the Colorado River to farmers and cities in the state's central valleys, Secretary Udall, backed by Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Floyd Dominy, suggested building two hydroelectric dams on opposite ends of the Grand Canyon, including one at Bridge Canyon and the other at Marble Canyon on Navajo land.

"[I]n 1949, when I was on the Sierra Club Board of Directors," David Brower once recalled, "I voted for both dams [in Grand Canyon]."<sup>430</sup> Evidently relying on a faulty memory, he later admitted he first became aware of plans for the Central Arizona Project during the early 1950s. At the time, the conservation movement battled the U.S.

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<sup>428</sup> Carl T. Hayden and Barry M. Goldwater, "Central Arizona Project," S. 1658, part 1, Senate, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs*, 88th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), 2.

<sup>429</sup> Stewart L. Udall, *Pacific Southwest Plan: Report, January 1964* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Reclamation, 1964). See also Robert Dean, "'Dam Building Still Had Some Magic Then': Stewart Udall, the Central Arizona Project, and the Evolution of the Pacific Southwest Water Plan, 1963–1968," *Pacific Historical Review* 66 (February 1997): 81–98; and Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 228.

<sup>430</sup> David R. Brower, interview by Jack Loeffler, n.d., transcript in author's possession.

Bureau of Reclamation to save Dinosaur National Monument from Echo Park Dam. The completion of Glen Canyon Dam in January 1963, and its subsequent reservoir, paved the way for major power projects requiring substantial amounts of water, such as the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) built on the shores of Lake Powell during the early 1970s. Indeed, Brower alluded to plans for a gigantic build-up in the American Southwest, a juggernaut of hydroelectric dams, power lines, and coal-fired power plants to light up the region's swelling urban centers, including San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, and Albuquerque. Of course, federal officials and congressional leaders touted agriculture as the primary reason for the erection of dams up and down the Colorado River, but Brower and his conservation cohort "could count on developers getting hold of the water one way or the other." Loeffler validated Brower's initial suspicions, adding, "The Southwest was being raped by developers and mining companies. The land was being pillaged, the waters fouled, the air smoke-dimmed, traditional cultures left bereft. Power lines marched across the land like electric kachinas."<sup>431</sup>

The Southwest experienced tremendous growth immediately following World War II. The Cold War essentially propelled federal expenditures as the Department of Defense consumed the region's open space to support its military bases, naval shipyards, air force landing strips, and nuclear test sites. Defense spending had ignited a firestorm of development rapidly spreading to southwestern urban centers. Phoenix proved the most remarkable. By the mid-1950s, Arizona ranked as the fastest-growing state in the Union, and Phoenix stood poised for a "long, explosive boom." Edward Abbey referred to the population upsurge plaguing Arizona as "the Blob, . . . a mad amoeba . . . growing

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid.; and Loeffler, *Adventures with Ed*, 104.

*growing* ever-GROWING.”<sup>432</sup> City planners set “all the machinery in place.”<sup>433</sup> In order to attract new settlers, civic boosters, primarily financed by military installations and the aeronautics industry, spearheaded capital improvements, including roads, airports, water supplies, sewer systems, and parks.<sup>434</sup> Yet, business leaders and congressmen surmised that Phoenix still lacked capital and water. “Arizona is at a crisis point,” Hayden testified at the CAP hearings in 1963. The state “urgently needs more water . . . to meet her rapidly expanding domestic requirements.”<sup>435</sup> Indeed, the Grand Canyon State demanded water and electricity to illuminate its developing cities. Fortunately, Phoenix rested on the edge of the Colorado Plateau, a rich storehouse of natural resources and home to the nation’s largest Native community, both crucial for a colonialist system dependent on Indian assets to feed the dominant culture.

From 1963 to 1968, Arizona’s political players, including Secretary Udall; senators Hayden and Goldwater; and representatives Rhodes and Morris Udall, Stewart’s younger brother and successor in the House, fought Sierra Club executive director Brower and other conservation leaders over the inclusion of dams in the Grand Canyon as

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<sup>432</sup> Edward Abbey, “The BLOB Comes to Arizona,” in *The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977), 148.

<sup>433</sup> Charles Wilkinson, *Fire on the Plateau: Conflict and Endurance in the American Southwest* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999), 182.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> Statement of Arizona senator Carl T. Hayden, in Senate, “Central Arizona Project,” part 1, p. 4.

part of the CAP.<sup>436</sup> Somewhere between saving Dinosaur National Monument and abandoning Glen Canyon, Brower seemingly learned a lesson on the value of a wild river. Brower confessed his “big slip” occurred “when I was at least momentarily for . . . a taller Glen Canyon Dam.” “That’s a story I’d rather forget,” he admitted. Although the Colorado River Compact of 1922 necessitated a dam at or near the mouth of Glen Canyon, Brower still regretted his lack of concern for the labyrinthine abyss. “That’s where I began to learn,” Brower divulged, “that you don’t give anything away that you haven’t looked at.”<sup>437</sup> Despite Brower’s blunder, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had always intended to construct a dam at Glen Canyon near the compact’s dividing line at Lee’s Ferry. Brower’s epiphany, however, perhaps motivated his all-out assault on the CAP’s inclusion of dams in Grand Canyon. Brower used his clout within the budding environmental movement as well as Sierra Club monies to launch an impressive publicity campaign. Full-page ads appeared in national newspapers, including the *New York Times*, galvanizing the American public into action. For its part, Arizona, in cahoots with the Bureau of Reclamation, continued to fight for a federally funded central Arizona project, complete with dams on both ends of the Grand Canyon. Stewart Udall’s post as interior secretary no doubt bolstered the Grand Canyon State’s position within President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration.

Arizona’s Native communities played an important part, too. Historian Byron Pearson argues that both environmentalists and CAP enthusiasts capitalized on increasing

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<sup>436</sup> For a detailed history of this battle, see Byron Pearson, *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save Grand Canyon* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002).

<sup>437</sup> David R. Brower, interview by Jack Loeffler, n.d., transcript in author’s possession.

public concern about civil rights and race relations dominating mainstream America during the mid-1960s. According to Pearson, both sides wooed the Hualapai and Navajo nations in an attempt to obtain indigenous support for their respective agendas. Ultimately, Pearson asserts, they wanted to influence public opinion on debates surrounding the Central Arizona Project.<sup>438</sup> Although they promised the Hualapais tremendous economic benefits from Bridge Canyon Dam, proponents of the Grand Canyon dams never offered the Navajo Nation compensation for a structure at Marble Canyon. Goldwater told geographer Stephen C. Jett, a young professor at the University of California, Davis, that as far as he knew, the Navajos “possessed no legal rights” to Marble Canyon and “had not been consulted.” The senator admitted that the Department of the Interior refused to acknowledge Diné claims to the site.<sup>439</sup>

The failure of CAP devotees to include the country’s largest Indian group as beneficiaries arguably hindered the advancement of their dam agenda. To make matters worse, CAP lobbyists had agreed to pay the Hualapais \$16 million for the construction of Bridge Canyon Dam on their land near Peach Springs, while denying Navajo claims to the Marble Canyon site.<sup>440</sup> Their actions no doubt infuriated Navajo tribal chairman Nakai and other Diné leaders and convinced them to reconsider their support for hydroelectric structures in Grand Canyon. The Navajo Tribal Council backed proposals calling for a dam at Marble Canyon as late as 1961, when Arizona still planned on

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<sup>438</sup> Pearson, ““We Have Almost Forgotten How to Hope,”” 299.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 308, 310.

<sup>440</sup> “Actions of Udalls Rapped by Council,” *Gallup (N.Mex.) Independent*, 4 August 1966.

constructing a state-funded central Arizona project. On 3 May 1967, however, Nakai wrote New Mexico senator Clinton P. Anderson, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources, outlining the tribal council's new stance. In his letter, Chairman Nakai expressed frustration with both the Arizona Power Authority and the Federal Power Commission, state and federal entities charged at different times with constructing and maintaining a dam at Marble Canyon, and the agencies' refusal to offer the Navajos "reasonable compensation" for the use of their land. The chairman then dropped a bombshell. Nine months earlier, on 3 August 1966, the Navajo Tribal Council, asserting Diné rights as a sovereign nation, had passed resolution CAU-97-66. In its 29-to-2 decision, the council cited the "ruthless character" of CAP lobbyists, including Mo Udall and his brother, and revoked the tribe's initial support for a dam at Marble Canyon.<sup>441</sup> The declaration directly addressed the Udall brothers, maintaining that "You have violated the policy of the administration, you have violated the wishes of the President, you have violated the Park Service, . . . [and you] have ignored the property rights and interest of the Navajo Tribe."<sup>442</sup>

Despite CAP enthusiasts' repudiation of Diné claims to the upper end of Marble Canyon, resolution CAU-97-66 insisted the proposed dam would flood forty-six miles of scenic reservation land. "Our resolution makes quite clear," tribal councilwoman Annie

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<sup>441</sup> Navajo Tribal Council, "Resolution CAU-97-66," in "Tribe Opposes Dams in Grand Canyon," *Window Rock (Ariz.) Navajo Times*, 11 August 1966. See also Raymond Nakai to Clinton P. Anderson, 3 May 1967, Window Rock, Arizona, in U.S. Congress, Senate, "Central Arizona Project," *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources on S. 1004, S. 1013, S. 861, S. 1242, and S. 1409*, 90th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967), 714.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*

Dodge Wauneka contended, “that the great expenditures contemplated for the two dams . . . are wholly unnecessary.” Instead, the Navajo Tribal Council wanted to exploit the “huge deposits of coal” buried in the Four Corners and on Black Mesa. “We have learned,” Wauneka told the press, “that hydropower cannot possibly compete with cheaper thermo-electric plants stoked with Reservation coal,” and “we have concluded agreements with Peabody Coal Co. and Utah Construction Co. for burning Navajo coal to power what are probably the largest generating plants in the country.”<sup>443</sup>

On 1 February 1964, Peabody Coal Company’s predecessor in interest Sentry Royalty Company signed a ten-year lease with the Navajo Tribal Council to extract Dziłíjín’s coal. According to contract number 14-20-0603-8580, or lease no. 8580 for short, Sentry Royalty agreed to pay the Navajo Nation a variable rate ranging from 25 cents to 37.5 cents per ton of coal sold and utilized off the reservation in exchange for the right to mine approximately 25,000 acres of Navajo land on Black Mesa near Kayenta, Arizona. When coal from the Kayenta Mine remained on the reservation, the Diné pocketed between 20 and 30 cents per ton, depending on the total amount sold.<sup>444</sup> In addition, Sentry Royalty rented the Kayenta Mine from the Navajos for 1 dollar per acre per year for the agreement’s first five years. In other words, the Navajo tribe initially received \$125,000 for the use of their land, excluding any royalties from the sale of

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<sup>443</sup> Annie Dodge Wauneka, quoted in “Actions of Udalls Rapped by Council,” *Gallup (N.Mex.) Independent*, 4 August 1966.

<sup>444</sup> “Mining Lease, Contract No. 14-20-0603-8580, between Sentry Royalty Company and the Navajo Tribe,” in Joint Appendix, vol. 2, *United States of America v. Navajo Nation*, 13 May 2008, p. 191, [http://www.narf.org/sct/usvnavajonation/joint\\_appendix\\_vol\\_ii.pdf](http://www.narf.org/sct/usvnavajonation/joint_appendix_vol_ii.pdf).

coal.<sup>445</sup> Finally, Sentry Royalty agreed to hire “Navajo Indians when available for all positions,” with one caveat: the company, or lessee, judged the qualifications of potential workers.<sup>446</sup>

At about the same time that the Navajo Tribal Council entered negotiations with Sentry Royalty, Secretary Udall realized that legislation for a central Arizona project must contain alternative sources of power. The Navajos’ rejection of Marble Canyon Dam, combined with fierce public outcry over inundating parts of the Grand Canyon, persuaded the secretary to consider other possibilities for fueling the CAP. Although Udall asked his Interior underlings to explore alternate options for energy production, he knew about the mining lease between Sentry Royalty and the Navajo Nation. The Indian Mineral Leasing Act of 1938 required the secretary’s approval of all agreements between Native peoples and commercial enterprises in an effort to ensure Indian communities received maximum profits and a lease’s terms represented their best interest. In May 1965, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash sent Secretary Udall a memo informing him that Peabody had proposed to install two coal-fired steam generating units of one thousand megawatts each and had requested to use approximately two thousand acres of Navajo land close to Lake Powell for the new plant.<sup>447</sup> In addition, Peabody anticipated burning up to six million tons of Black Mesa coal per year and needing forty

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<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>447</sup> Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, 12 May 1965, Washington, D.C., folder 14, box 154, SLUP.

thousand acre feet of water annually to operate the generating station.<sup>448</sup> The latter would no doubt come from Arizona's (read the Navajos') heretofore-unused yearly apportionment of fifty thousand acre feet of Colorado River water allotted to the Grand Canyon State by the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact of 1948. In addition, based on the royalty rates summarized in its agreement with Sentry Royalty, the Navajo Tribal Council would potentially receive at least 1.2 million dollars each year from Dziłíjiiin's coalfields.

On 6 June 1966, the Navajo Tribal Council signed a second ten-year mining lease with Sentry Royalty Company. This time, the agreement covered mining operations on forty thousand acres of the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Area (JUA), 2.5 million acres of land "shared" between the two tribes and the focal point of a hotly contested land dispute that erupted when Peabody Coal Company first discovered coal within JUA boundaries in 1909.<sup>449</sup> The two leases totaled approximately 100 square miles loaded with 337 million

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<sup>448</sup> Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, 26 August 1965, Washington, D.C., folder 14, box 154, SLUP; and Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Mining Lease, Contract No. 14-20-0603-9910, between Sentry Royalty Company and the Navajo Tribe," 6 June 1966, in Joint Appendix, vol. 2, *United States of America v. Navajo Nation*, 13 May 2008, p. 191, [http://www.narf.org/sct/usvnavajonation/joint\\_appendix\\_vol\\_ii.pdf](http://www.narf.org/sct/usvnavajonation/joint_appendix_vol_ii.pdf). The Navajo-Hopi land dispute, for all practical purposes, began in 1882, when President Chester A. Arthur established the "Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Area." Owing to the ambiguous nature of Indian law, which tribe held exclusive mineral rights to the sulfur-rich coalfields on the reservation and which tribe had the authority to lease to private mining interests remained unclear. Following the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934, which overlooked traditional forms of government among Native peoples and, instead, reflected representative democracy run amuck, the Hopis lobbied for the eviction of Navajos from the original 1882 reservation. Although federal officials initially ignored the request, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier proposed District Six, which included 499,248 acres of exclusive Hopi grazing land centered on the First, Second, and Third mesas. Despite Hopi refusal to participate in land negotiations with government officials and Navajo representatives, Collier and the Bureau of Indian Affairs

tons of coal.<sup>450</sup> The raw material supplied the Mohave Generating Station at Bullhead City, Nevada, for nearly thirty years, and it continues to feed the Navajo Generating Station at Page.

The Department of the Interior, working closely with Peabody Coal, seemingly orchestrated the industrialization of Dinétah in order to proceed with Reclamation's stratagems for Arizona's central valleys. On 17 August 1966, just two weeks after the tribal council condemned the proposed Grand Canyon dams and announced their plans for Black Mesa, James H. Krieger of Best, Best, and Krieger, a California-based law firm representing Peabody's interests in the West, informed the Department of the Interior that

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implemented District Six in 1936. Eventually established as the Hopis "official" reservation in 1943, District Six remained at the forefront of Navajo-Hopi affairs. The *Healing v. Jones* decision of 1962 judged that the Navajos and Hopis possess joint and equal rights to the 1882 reservation outside District Six. Arizona congressmen, including Sam Steiger, lobbied to partition this land twelve years later, following the coal-mining leases signed between the Navajos and Peabody Coal Company and the Hopis and Peabody. The U.S. government disregarded arguments from a grassroots alliance formed between Hopis and Navajos for a traditional settlement of the contested area. On 22 December 1974, Congress passed the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act (a.k.a. Public Law 93-531) in one last attempt to resolve the dispute "legally." The bill ordered representatives from the two tribes to begin a six-month period of negotiations aiming for a settlement. If the tribes did not reach an agreement after six months, the federal government would be authorized to divide the Joint Use Area into equal Navajo and Hopi lands. More important, Public Law 93-531 established the Navajo-Hopi Relocation Commission, responsible for drafting a relocation plan for members of one tribe living on lands partitioned to the other. Public Law 93-531 resulted in the relocation of several thousand Navajos from their traditional homeland. This mass removal of Navajos from the JUA represented the largest forced removal of Native peoples since the late nineteenth century. For Navajo perspectives on the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute, see John Redhouse, *Geopolitics of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute* (Albuquerque, N.Mex.: Redhouse/Wright Productions, 1985); and "Monster in Dinétah," in Loeffler, *Headed Upstream*, 101–11. For a detailed history of the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Area, see Jerry Kammer, *The Second Longest Walk: The Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980).

<sup>450</sup> Alvin M. Josephy Jr., "The Murder of the Southwest," *Audubon*, July 1971, 57.

Peabody's "investor group" would place the Arizona power plant "next on the list" if the agency could guarantee Peabody "early assurance of the water."<sup>451</sup> As a bonus, Peabody estimated that construction would require approximately three hundred workers.

The following February, six months after Peabody's proposition, Udall rescinded his support for hydroelectric dams in Grand Canyon and lobbied, instead, for a coal-fired power plant on the Navajo Reservation abutting Lake Powell to fuel the CAP. At the time, Udall adulated the benefits of mineral extraction for the Navajo Nation, but confessed years later that "the whole Central Arizona Project would have failed . . . [without] an energy source." Since "nuclear power was not sufficiently advanced at the time," Udall maintained, "some of the Arizona people and some of the power companies got busy and put together this Page Power Plant."<sup>452</sup> Given Peabody's close working relationship with Western Energy Supply and Transmission Associates (WEST), a united consortium of twenty-three "investor-owned and state, municipal, and federal" electric utilities, "some of the power companies" Udall referenced no doubt helped devise this new plan.<sup>453</sup> Navajo leaders also realized the potential monetary benefits of extracting raw materials. In September 1966, the *Arizona Republic*, a Phoenix newspaper, announced an agreement authorizing the use of Black Mesa coal for the production of electricity at a coal-fired steam generating plant near Las Vegas in Clark County,

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<sup>451</sup> Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs E. Reeseman "Si" Fryer to Assistant Secretary Orren Beaty Jr., 17 August 1966, Washington, D.C., folder 14, box 154, SLUP.

<sup>452</sup> Stewart L. Udall, interview by Jack Loeffler, n.d., in *Headed Upstream*, 122, 123.

<sup>453</sup> For Peabody Coal Company's relationship with Western Energy Supply and Transmission Associates (WEST), see Wilkinson, *Fire on the Plateau*, 303. For the description of WEST, see Josephy, "The Murder of the Southwest," 54.

Nevada. The facility, dubbed the Mohave Steam Station, would supposedly yield more than \$30 million in royalties for both the Navajo and Hopi nations.<sup>454</sup> Owing to the possibility of obtaining a tremendous amount of money, then, council members supported Udall's recommendation for a thermal generating plant near Page in lieu of hydroelectric dams to provide pumping power for the Central Arizona Project.<sup>455</sup> The new plant promised the People jobs and additional income, long-time priorities of the Navajo Tribal Council, and guaranteed the Southwest's urban centers a seemingly endless supply of electrical energy.

Historian Alvin M. Josephy Jr., who actively protested strip-mining on Black Mesa during the early 1970s, accused the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation of facilitating the uninhibited growth of southwestern cities.<sup>456</sup> During congressional hearings for the Colorado River Storage Project, for example, Reclamation had lauded Glen Canyon Dam and its production of hydroelectric power, while purportedly negotiating with private utility companies for coal-fired power plants. "The bureau had the usual self-serving reasons for busying itself with these added projects," Josephy penned in a damning piece on "the murder of the Southwest" published by *Audobon* magazine in the summer of 1971. "As everyone knows," he wrote, "without projects there is no need for the

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<sup>454</sup> "Riches for Navajos, Hopis," *Phoenix Arizona Republic*, 29 September 1966.

<sup>455</sup> Raymond Nakai to Clinton P. Anderson, 3 May 1967, Window Rock, Arizona, in U.S. Senate, "Central Arizona Project," *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources on S. 1004, S. 1013, S. 861, S. 1242, and S. 1409*, 90th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967), 710–11.

<sup>456</sup> Josephy, "The Murder of the Southwest," 59.

[agency].”<sup>457</sup> Indeed, Reclamation divvied up, transported, and delivered its “rivers of empire” through whatever means necessary to reclaim the arid Southwest, to “green it up” as historian Patricia Nelson Limerick quips.<sup>458</sup>

In spite of Diné claims to the Colorado River, Interior assured Peabody access to Arizona’s “unused” portion of the waterway. On 11 December 1968, the Navajo Tribal Council passed resolution CD-108-68 essentially waiving Navajo rights to Colorado River water in exchange for “limited promises by a consortium of utilities” to light up the reservation’s hogans.<sup>459</sup> The council agreed to limit Diné demands on the fifty thousand acre-feet of water allocated to Arizona each year. Instead, council members granted 34,100 acre-feet of the tribe’s annual apportionment to the Page power plant in order to water its cooling towers. The tribal council mandate ostensibly negated Diné claims to the Colorado River in favor of a coal-fired power plant that promised economic security and jobs for the People, as well as electricity for the nation. Interestingly, fragmentary evidence suggests Secretary Udall never approved resolution CD-108-68. His failure to endorse the agreement renders it virtually ineffective and does not legally bind the tribe, freeing the Diné to claim more than fifty thousand acre-feet of water for tribal lands situated in Arizona’s upper basin.<sup>460</sup> Today, individual members of the Navajo Nation

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> See Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Patricia Nelson Limerick, interview by Jack Loeffler, in *Moving Waters*, program 1.

<sup>459</sup> Navajo Tribal Council, Resolution CD-108-68, excerpt in William Douglas Back and Jeffrey S. Taylor, “Navajo Water Rights: Pulling the Plug on the Colorado River?” *Natural Resources Journal* 20 (January 1980): 88.

<sup>460</sup> Back and Taylor, “Navajo Water Rights,” 88.

argue that the Colorado River belongs to the Diné and holds tremendous economic potential for the tribe if their government leaders, who, they maintain, are often influenced by white lawyers, would only assert the People's rights.<sup>461</sup>

By May 1969, the tribal council had entered negotiations with a conglomerate of utility companies to lease almost two thousand acres of reservation land for the Navajo Generating Station. According to the *Navajo Times*, the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) would share in the plant's electrical output. Bureau of Indian Affairs regional director Graham Holmes told reporters, "the proposal fits in with overall plans to develop the reservation."<sup>462</sup> Holmes's admission highlighted the efforts of both the Department of the Interior and the Navajo Tribal Council to industrialize Dinétah during the postwar era. In this case, their actions displayed utter disregard for the People living in the shadows of Peabody's draglines, those traditional Navajos whose families had inhabited Dziłíjiiin for generations. The Salt River Project, responsible for the operation and maintenance of the power plant, built the Navajo Generating Station in three phases. It completed the third and final unit in 1976. With smoke stacks seven stories high, the smoke-billowing monster devours 23,000 tons of coal daily and swallows 270,000 gallons of Navajo water, pumped out of Lake Powell, per minute. The plant delivers 2,310 megawatts of electricity to its customers via 800 miles of transmission lines marching across the desert

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<sup>461</sup> For this argument, see Goldtooth, McDonald, and Milford, "Navajo Water Rights: Truths and Betrayals."

<sup>462</sup> Graham Holmes, quoted in "Council Studies Power Proposal," *Window Rock (Ariz.) Navajo Times*, 29 May 1969.

like storm troopers from *Star Wars*.<sup>463</sup> Interior secretary Udall, worried Congress would never approve CAP legislation authorizing hydroelectric dams in Grand Canyon, worked closely with Peabody and the region's utility companies to develop alternate solutions, eventually concocting the NGS to fuel the Central Arizona Project.<sup>464</sup> Reclamation, one of Interior's subordinate agencies, currently owns 24.3 percent of the electricity effusing from the Page power plant, while the Salt River Project claims 21.7 percent, Nevada Power receives 11.3 percent, the Arizona Public Service gets 14 percent, Tucson Gas and Electric maintains 7.5 percent, and, finally, Los Angeles Water and Power holds 21.2 percent.<sup>465</sup> The last figure evidently reflects the long-time controversy between Arizona and California over which state receives more benefits from the Colorado River. "We broke the mold with that plant," Secretary Udall reminisced.<sup>466</sup>

The origins of strip-mining coal on Black Mesa can be found amongst the pages detailing a multilayered, interconnected history of indigenous water rights, water reclamation, and energy development in the American Southwest. The Colorado River Compact of 1922, which for all intents and purposes neglected Native rights to the Colorado River, necessitated the construction of Glen Canyon Dam to transfer Colorado

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<sup>463</sup> For Navajo Generating Station statistics, see William Brown, "Black Mesa," in *Los Angeles: Biography of a City*, ed. John Caughey and LaRee Caughey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 457.

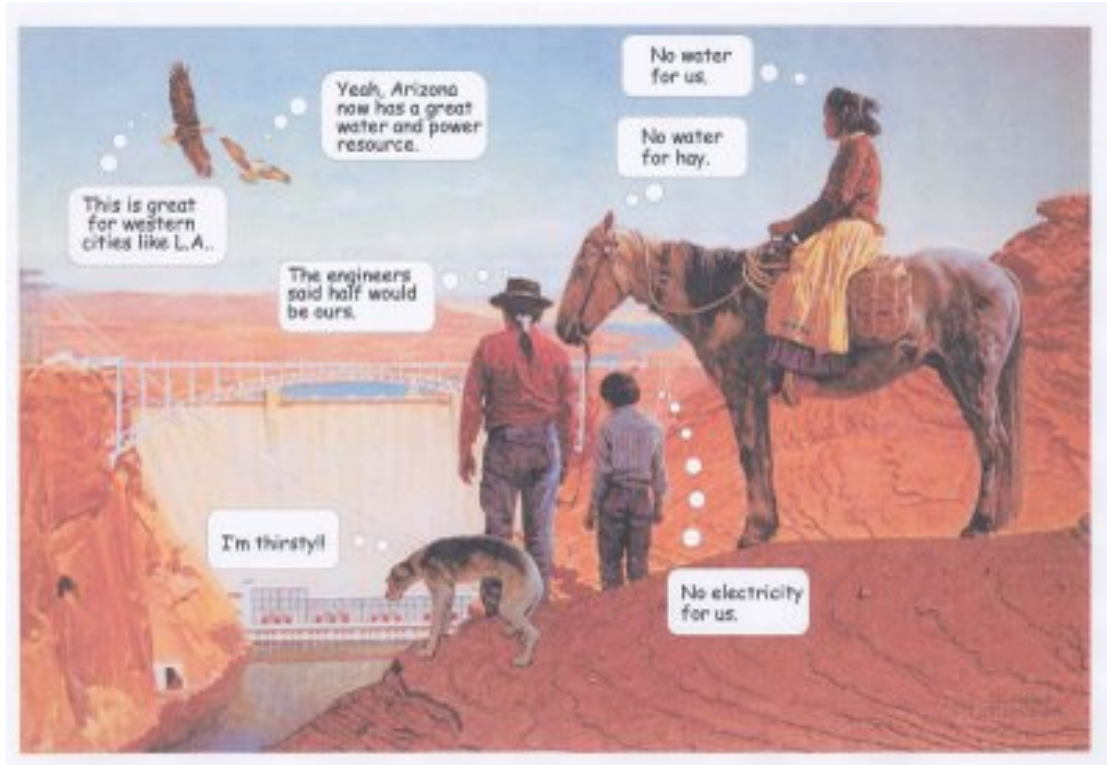
<sup>464</sup> Environmental Preservation Classes of Many Farms High School, *Environmental and Economic Issue: The Strip Mining on Black Mesa and the Coal Burning Power Plants in the Southwest* (Many Farms, Ariz.: Many Farms High School, July 1971), 2–3.

<sup>465</sup> Rosanda Suetopka Thayer, "Navajo Hopi Group Meets to Discuss Peabody, Navajo Generating Station," *Flagstaff (Ariz.) Navajo-Hopi Observer*, 12 July 2010.

<sup>466</sup> Stewart Udall, interview by Jack Loeffler, n.d., in *Headed Upstream*, 122.

River water from one basin to the next. Likewise, the concrete plug paved the way for major power schemes, such as the Central Arizona Project, requiring substantial amounts of water to illuminate the region's cities. Although these federal laws and interstate compacts historically ignored indigenous claims to the region's rivers and streams, the saga nonetheless entangled Native peoples, including Navajos and Hopis, in a watery web spanning both time and space. Likewise, the expansion of southwestern urban centers rested on the region's Native populations who supplied raw materials and natural resources necessary to sustain growth. As debates surrounding the Central Arizona Project demonstrate, Native leaders seemed as responsible for the environmental degradation of their homeland as federal officials and private companies orchestrating the entire deal. Although Nakai advocated tribal sovereignty, Native nationalism, and Navajo self-determination during his election campaign in the early 1960s, his resolve to industrialize Diné Bikéyah in an effort to generate much needed revenue on the reservation helped tighten the bond between water reclamation and Navajo colonization. Despite huge strides toward asserting the People's power, Nakai and the Navajo Tribal Council resorted to the same type of money-making schemes characteristic of other Navajo leaders during the postwar era. Their efforts reflected an imposed economic system bent on turning habitat into money, all at the expense of their constituents.

## Conclusion



Years after Norman Rockwell painted his impression of Glen Canyon Dam, a small group of Diné elders offered some Navajo perspective on the bung's contorted chronicle by adding comic-book-like dialogue boxes to the illustrator's canvas. "The engineers," John Lane protests, "said half [the water] would be ours." His son laments, "No electricity for us," while John's wife looks toward the chasm, and surmises, "No water for us." The anonymous faction provided the animals a poignant voice, too. "No water for hay," the horse bemoans. "I'm thirsty," complains the listless dog. But, the bald eagle and the red-tailed hawk, perhaps representing individual states as well as the U.S. government, celebrate the dam. "This is great for western cities like L.A.," the eagle cries. "Yeah," the hawk screeches, "Arizona now has a great water and power resource."

Similar to the Navajos' interpretation of Rockwell's painting, this study presents a different tale about the history of water and energy development in the Southwest during

the Cold War. Spun from the perspectives of the People and their leaders, a chronological yarn emerges, linking Navajo water rights to Glen Canyon Dam and Glen Canyon Dam to the “big buildup” of the American Southwest that began in earnest during World War II. In reality, however, the dam traces its deeper historical roots to the Colorado River Compact of 1922. During its meeting in Santa Fe that year, the all white, male commission charged with divvying up the canyon-cutter ignored Navajo rights to the Colorado River in spite of the Navajo Treaty of 1868 and the *Winters* decision of 1908, which emphasized the inherent rights of accords between the United States and its indigenous populations. Likewise, the commission overlooked Nature’s boundaries or watersheds and disregarded basic basin hydrology that guaranteed an erratic water supply. Instead, the members focused on geopolitical borders separating one state, or basin, from another; split the river’s flow; and arbitrarily severed its body at Lee’s Ferry, Arizona. Combined with unrealistic numbers that measured the amount of water flushing the river’s system each year, the commission’s imaginary dividing line—a fence, border, or boundary—set in motion decades of interbasin transfers or systems of water exchange bent on turning habitat into money through irrigation works, hydroelectric power units, and recreational facilities. In short, the commission’s ecological negligence necessitated a stopgap to ensure a regular flow of water from wet years to ones dominated by drought. In order for New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah to deliver an even flow of water to California, Nevada, and part of Arizona each year, the United States had no choice but to build a dam at the mouth of Glen Canyon just north of the partition at Lee’s Ferry.

Although the Southwest experienced steady growth for twenty years after the Colorado River basin states signed the compact, the onset of World War II and the U.S.

government's rampant defense spending in the region unleashed an unprecedented era of growth and development. As Americans migrated to sites hosting wartime industries, the populations of southwestern cities swelled, bursting at their seams, thirsting for water, itching for electrical power, and searching for prime vacation spots. Fortunately, these urban centers rested on the verge of the Colorado Plateau, an area replete with natural resources and Native peoples. The dilation of cities like Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Los Angeles hinged on the exploitation of the region's rivers and streams; its coalfields, oilfields, and uranium deposits; and its Native inhabitants, whose reservations hosted these vast caches of raw materials.

This tale of colonialism all too often permeates the chronicles of indigenous societies; Indian peoples whose land lies at the periphery of industrial expansion frequently condemn the human and ecological costs of unbridled growth. For their part, contemporary historians invariably reproach the dominant culture for this ecocide.<sup>467</sup> Certainly, the actions of the U.S. government confronting the challenges of western growth warrant this criticism, but situating the Navajos at the center of the Glen Canyon Dam story unmask a more complicated narrative. Indeed, beginning with the administration of Sam Ahkeah, mid-twentieth-century Navajo leaders fully embraced the industrialization of Diné Bikéyah in hopes of gaining some semblance of independence from the United States. Chairmans Ahkeah, Paul Jones, and Raymond Nakai's efforts to advance Navajo nationalism and tribal unity contributed to the ultimate sacrilege of

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<sup>467</sup> See Donald A. Grinde and Bruce E. Johansen, *Ecocide of Native America: Environmental Destruction of Indian Lands and Peoples* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Clear Light Publishers, 1995); Richmond L. Crow and Imre Sutton, eds., *Trusteeship in Change: Toward Tribal Autonomy in Resource Management* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2001); and Wilkinson, *Fire on the Plateau*.

Dinéyah: the environmental degradation of Navajoland at the expense of their own constituents. Indeed, their economic endeavors exacerbated the deeds carried out by U.S. agents of colonialism, a faction that ranged from special interest groups like the Aqualantes to federal officials who promoted the desiccate desert's reclamation.

In addition to the Navajo stock reduction of the 1930s and 1940s and their World War II experiences as both overseas soldiers and domestic workers, the postwar federal Indian policy threatening to terminate its trust responsibilities to Indian country convinced Navajo administrators to seek alternative sources of income as they combated mounting poverty levels and malnutrition within the tribe. By lobbying Congress for the passage of the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project as part of the CRSP, Ahkeah, for example, advocated sedentary farming and the implementation of industrial agriculture, in spite of the Navajos' pastoral tradition that had long reinforced their identity as a seminomadic tribe. Indeed, during the early 1950s, Ahkeah intended to relocate a significant portion of the Diné population to eastern Navajoland. His plan, however, failed to consider the People's relationship to homeland.

Several years later, in an effort to secure Navajo jobs associated with Glen Canyon Dam, Ahkeah's successor Jones fully supported the barrage's manufacture and the construction of a government town at Page on Manson Mesa, traditional Navajo livestock range bordering Glen Canyon. In addition, the dam provided an opportunity for Montezuma Creek Navajos to escape the mayhem inflicted on their animals and their local culture by Mormon stockmen and U.S. Bureau of Land Management administrators. Jones also actively promoted the development of a Navajo tourist trade centered on Lake Powell, even though Navajos living in the area loathed the multitude of tourists

encroaching on their traditional homeland and infringing upon their sacred space. Jones's vision reflected the aspirations of Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and the region's congressmen and senators to transform sections of the Colorado Plateau into a vacation empire fueled by industrial tourism. Yet, the U.S. government never intended for Navajos to completely manage tourist facilities along the reservoir's shoreline abutting the reservation. Although Udall asserted his belief in Indian self-determination, his actions during the great debate over Navajo Rainbow National Park reflected Capitol Hill's antiquated perceptions of Indians as wards of the state. Eventually taking their case to court, the People of Navajo Mountain, Shonto, and Inscription House resisted both internal and external forces advocating the inundation of their homeland with a spate of tourists.

Finally, the Black Mesa saga, with all its backroom deals and alliances struck by federal officials, tribal leaders, and private corporations, reinforces a story of internal colonialism spurred by external interests. Endorsing mineral extraction for the manufacture of electricity in an effort to elevate their people from the depths of poverty, Chairman Nakai and the Navajo Tribal Council launched an all out assault on Navajo water and coal, essentially selling Diné rights to the Colorado River, now impounded behind Glen Canyon Dam, downstream to Phoenix and Tucson. The incredibly complex story also exemplifies the need for watershed thinking. This approach holistically considers the interconnected biospheres that compose the montage of watersheds shaping the American West, and it links water reclamation directly to the colonization of Native peoples. This watery web reveals, too, the perils of reclaiming the desert and the utter destruction this process inflicted on both ecological spaces and the people who call those

places home. The exploits of Nakai and his council during the mid- and late 1960s still haunt Navajos today. The reservation and the People still struggle with water shortages, and Dziłjiiin's inhabitants still combat Peabody Coal's draglines that rip the female mountain's lungs from her body.

Ahkeah, Jones, and Nakai hoped to transmogrify their people into a unified society that emulated American ideas of modernity and civilization rather than Navajo systems of community connecting the People to the physical and metaphysical worlds around them. In the process, they unremittingly pursued the creation of an independent Navajo Nation, one that rested on political and financial security. In doing so, however, Ahkeah, Jones, and Nakai, as well as members of their tribal councils, shared responsibility for the environmental degradation of Navajoland and the colonization of its inhabitants with federal bureaucrats and politicians who sought to mastermind the entire scheme. The People themselves, those Diné who resisted these internal and external forces urging them to abandon ancestral ties to homeland, emerge as the real heroes of this story. Insisting on self-determination, tribal sovereignty, and religious freedom, they struggled to overcome a violent cycle of conquest rooted in external and internal colonialism that continues to shape the Navajo Nation's political discourse in the twenty-first century.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> For a current discussion of Navajo rights to the rivers and streams flowing through tribal lands, see Matt Jenkins, "Seeking the Water Jackpot," *High Country News*, 17 March 2008; Max Goldtooth, Peter McDonald, and Ron Milford, "Navajo Water Rights: Truths and Betrayals," *High Country News*, 21 July 2008; and Concerned Citizens for Diné Water Rights website, [www.dinewaterrights.org](http://www.dinewaterrights.org).

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