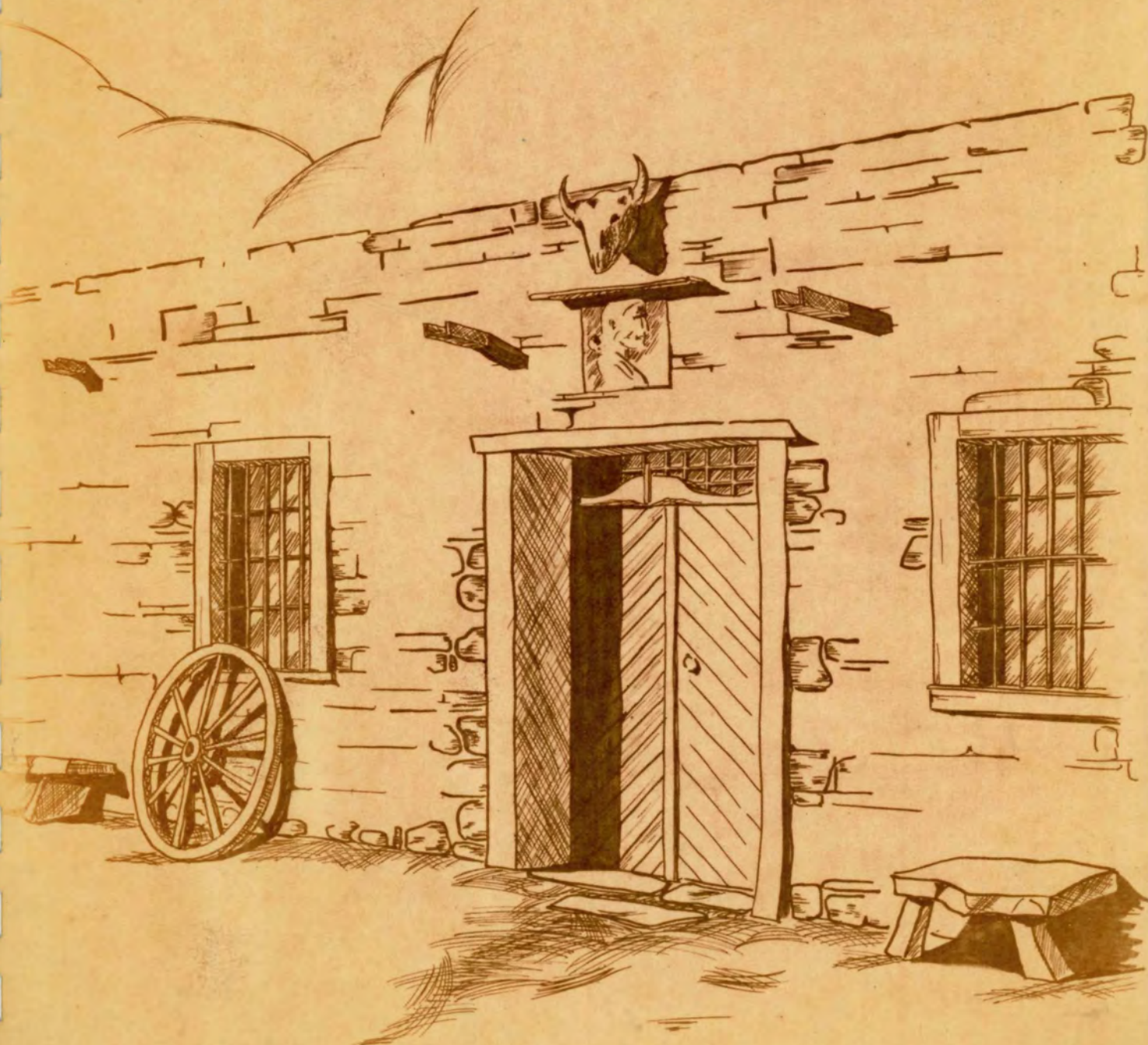


HUBBELL TRADING POST



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

In reply refer to:
158-IBH

March 10, 1959

Memorandum

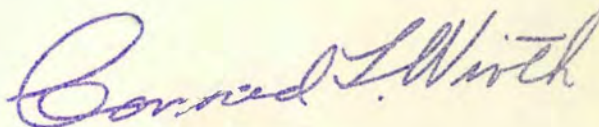
To: Members of the Advisory Board on National Parks,
Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments

From: Director

Subject: Special Report on The Hubbell Trading Post

Attached is a special report on The Hubbell Trading Post prepared by Robert Utley. This matter was held over from the last meeting pending completion of this study.

The Hubbell Trading Post presents a number of perplexing problems referred to in the attached material. For that reason we are sending you this material well in advance of the Board meeting. Members of the staff of our Branch of History will be prepared to discuss these questions with the History Committee of the Advisory Board at the Shenandoah meeting.



Director

Attachments

Copy to: Mr. Walter L. Huber
Mr. Frank E. Masland, Jr.
Mr. Harold S. Wagner
Dr. Edward B. Danson, Jr.
Mr. Harold P. Fabian
Dr. E. Raymond Hall
Dr. John A. Krut
Mr. John B. Oakes
Mr. Earl Howell Reed
Mr. Fred Smith
Mr. Carl I. Wheat

Observances on The Hubbell Trading Post Proposal

In considering the Hubbell Trading Post for national monument status, some important issues must be resolved:

1. Is the reservation Indian Trader nationally significant? If so, why? Mr. Utley struggles with that problem on pp. 35-36.

2. If the reservation Indian Trader is nationally significant, is the period 1880 to 1958 the high peak of that importance?

2a. Can the present trading post, built after 1880, and the house finished in 1900 be considered the outstanding example?

3. Is the Indian Trader to the Navajos national or regional in importance?

4. "The way of life" at the Trading Post has been considered one of its most important assets and in the past has attracted artists, scientists, and statesmen. How can this be maintained in view of the good roads and "greater mobility" of the Indian on the reservation?

5. Is the art collection of major importance? If so, should it be housed elsewhere to get adequate protection?

In considering The Hubbell Trading Post, the request to include it in the National Park System must be kept in mind. Does it qualify to be included in the System? That, of course, is the basic issue on which we need your advice.

Digest - Historical Background of The Hubbell Trading Post

The trading post is usually associated with Don Lorenzo Hubbell's life span from 1853 to 1930. Don Lorenzo was of Anglo-Spanish (Mexican) descent and spent practically all of his life in the Southwest, on or near the Navajo Reservation. He spoke both the English and Spanish tongues and he could understand and speak Navajo and Hopi as well. Because of his ancestry, the place in which he lived, and his understanding of all the languages spoken there, he was ideally suited for the work he did and the life he led. Lorenzo Hubbell was not a "Don," but was commonly called "Don Lorenzo."

Hubbell's establishment at Ganado was not the first to be in operation there. It appears that the first trading store was built at Ganado in 1870. Lorenzo Hubbell apparently bought this establishment in 1876. At the time Hubbell bought this Post it was not within the Navajo Reservation. In 1878 he homesteaded 160 acres at Ganado. Two years later the Navajo Indian Reservation boundary was extended southward and included the site of Hubbell's Post at Ganado. It appears that Hubbell had considerable difficulty in securing patent to his 160 acres and it was not until a special Act of Congress was passed and considerable subsequent negotiations consummated that he did receive a patent for this land in 1908.

In the meantime, Hubbell had demolished the old post and built a new one at the site in 1880. He built a new house in 1900. The two main buildings that stand at the Hubbell Trading Post today, the Trading Post itself and the House, therefore, date from 1880 and 1900, respectively. The Hubbell Trading Post has remained in the Hubbell family from 1876 to the present time. During that period two generations of Hubbells have owned and operated it up to 1957. Roman Hubbell, the youngest son of Lorenzo, died in 1957. At that time, the trading post was offered for sale to the United States Government for the sum of \$300,000.

In earlier days there were many trading posts on the Navajo Reservation and Lorenzo Hubbell himself is said to have owned eight in addition to the one at Ganado. All of his other posts, however, were sold by 1952, and accordingly the one at Ganado is the last to survive in possession of the Hubbell family.

Hubbell's career is identified almost entirely with his trading establishment on the Navajo Reservation. He was elected a State Senator in 1912 to the first Arizona State Legislature but it appears that his political rise never progressed beyond that and he soon returned to his trading business. Hubbell's personal influence on political, economic, and cultural affairs, therefore, can be said generally to have been greatest on the Navajo Reservation.

Theme of Study Under Which Hubbell Trading Post
is Considered

It is not easy to determine the theme or themes under which this subject should be listed in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. Mr. Utley, on page 99 of his report, lists Themes VIII, XV, and XVII.

The National Survey
of
Historic Sites and Buildings

Special Report

on

HUBBELL TRADING POST
Ganado, Arizona

by

Robert M. Utley
Historian

January, 1959

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
Region Three
Santa Fe, New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

The specific purpose of this study is to assess the historical significance of the Hubbell Trading Post at Ganado, Arizona. That this trading post exerted a significant influence on the development of the United States, few will contend. That it was a significant factor in the history of the Navajo Indians, few will deny. If the Hubbell Trading Post is of historical value to the nation, it is as a representative of an institution of national historical significance--the reservation trader. It is the primary purpose of this study, then, to consider the role of the reservation trader in the development of the Trans-Mississippi West, and to determine whether or not that role was important enough to merit the distinction of national historical significance. It then remains to determine if the Navajo trading post in general, and the Hubbell Trading Post in particular, exemplify this role in such a way as to illustrate the institution as a whole. If the reservation trading post as an institution is in fact believed to be nationally significant, and if the Hubbell Trading Post is believed to portray in its physical makeup, its pattern of operations, and its local influence the essentials of the institution, then the claim of the Hubbell Trading Post to national significance merits serious consideration.

This study is therefore divided into three parts. The first attempts to evaluate the significance in frontier history of the licensed

reservation trader. The second discusses the conduct of the trade on the Navajo Reservation. And the third describes the growth and importance of the Hubbell Trading Post.

This is not a study of the fur trader of the pre-reservation period. Although he was the historical antecedant of the reservation trader, and the reservation trade owed much to his precept, there are many obvious contrasts. The fur trader dealt with unconquered, autonomous tribes, the reservation trader with a conquered tribe subject to the will of the United States. The fur trader, like his clientele, was often a nomad. Although operating from a fixed base, usually a strategically located trading post, he and his companions made seasonal excursions to the tribal habitat. His successor of reservation days established a fixed post and his clientele came to him. The fur trader was an adventurous wanderer usually employed by such mammoth corporate enterprises as the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the American Fur Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company. With a few exceptions, notably the sprawling empire of Duffee and Peck, the reservation trader was a private entrepreneur--a small businessman--who, normally in partnership with another trader, operated one, sometimes several, trading posts that strongly resembled the contemporary country general store. The early traders conducted business almost entirely by barter, exchanging European manufactured goods for pelts and hides. The later traders operated principally on a cash and credit basis, with barter largely secondary.

One further contrast should be noted. The fur trader has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies and much popular writing. An assessment of his role, and hence his significance, in American history is not difficult to conceive. The reservation trader, on the other hand, has not been so fortunate. His role in westward expansion has been entirely neglected by historians, his role in acculturation almost entirely neglected by anthropologists. Nevertheless, there are enough references in the literature of westward expansion to suggest the ways in which he made his influence felt. The conclusions reached in this report, however, must be considered tentative. Definitive conclusions would require exhaustive and time-consuming research in a much wider range of source material than was available for this study.

For a more thorough description and a complete photographic coverage of the Hubbell Trading Post today, see the area investigation report submitted by Regional Archeologist Charlie R. Steen and Superintendent Kittridge A. Wing in February, 1958.

The assistance of the following persons is gratefully acknowledged: Miss Gertrude Hill and her staff at the Library of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe; Mr. Stanley Stubbs, Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe; Mr. Maurice Frink, Executive Director of the Colorado State Historical Society, Denver; Mr. Arthur Woodward, Altadena, California; Mrs. Alys Freeze, Head of the Western History Department, Denver Public Library; Mr. John C. Ewers, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Roman

J. Hubbell, present owner and operator of the J. L. Hubbell Trading Post, Ganado, Arizona; Archeologist Sally Van Valkenburgh, National Park Service, Montezuma Castle National Monument, Arizona; Dr. William Y. Adams, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff; and Mr. Don Perceval, Tucson, Arizona. I have also profited by discussion of the problem with the following officials of the National Park Service: Chief Historian Herbert E. Kahler and Staff Historian John O. Littleton of the Washington Office; and Dr. Erik K. Reed, Regional Archeologist Charlie R. Steen, Archeologist Albert H. Schroeder, and Museum Curator Franklin G. Smith, all of the Region Three Office.

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PART I

THE RESERVATION TRADER AS A FACTOR IN FRONTIER HISTORY

For four centuries the Indian trade was one of the dominant influences that shaped the course of North American history. It furnished, in fact, one of the earliest and most important motives for European colonization. France, England, and Spain established a vast system of trading posts among the tribes in their respective colonial empires of North America. To each, the Indian trade became not only a profitable economic enterprise but also an enormously potent weapon in the contest for empire. Regardless of legal claims to territory, the Indian usually accorded his allegiance to the colonial power that achieved ascendancy in trade. And the allegiance of the Indian was a powerful factor in deciding ultimate possession of the land. The French enjoyed a long colonial life in America largely because they controlled the Indian trade in vast areas of the continent. Even after the United States won its independence, the new government worked long and hard to destroy the influence of English and Spanish traders among the Indians of the Trans-Appalachian region.

For over half a century after the American Revolution, the Indian trade in the United States was dominated by big fur companies. Such firms as the American Fur Company, the Missouri Fur Company, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company built trading posts at strategic points in the Indian country. At posts like Fort Laramie, on the North Platte,

and Fort Union, on the Upper Missouri, company agents traded whiskey, firearms, and trinkets for hides and furs. They also sent seasonal expeditions deep into the Indian country to trade at appointed "rendezvous." A few independent traders and small firms tried to compete with the corporate giants, but were usually driven from the field after several seasons.¹ The big companies also succeeded in crushing the more formidable competition of the United States Government. Motivated by a genuine desire to protect and help the Indians, and also by a determination to strike back at English and Spanish traders operating on American soil, Congress in 1790 authorized the establishment of government trading posts, or "factories." Although foreign influence was ultimately eliminated by diplomacy and force of arms, the factories operated until 1822. In that year the private traders, led by John Jacob Astor's powerful American Fur Company, finally destroyed the factory system.²

Vanguards of the westward moving frontier, the company fur traders by the 1840's found the frontier overtaking them with alarming speed. Immigrants started across the continent, and the Army, in order to clear

1. See Hiram M. Chittenden, A History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West, 2nd ed. (2 v., Stanford, Calif., 1952), for a complete and authoritative history of the fur trade. A good picture of the mechanics of the trade is also found in George B. Grinnell, "Bent's Old Fort and its Builders," Kansas State Historical Society, Collections, XV (Topeka, 1923), 28-91.

2. Royal B. Way, "The United States Factory System for Trading with the Indians, 1796-1822," American Historical Review, VI, 2 (September, 1919), 220-235.

the paths of expansion, began the long and costly task of tearing down the Indian barrier. The Indian wars brought forth another brand of traders, unscrupulous men whom one historian characterized as "the jetsam of the turbulent sea of border life." Usually without a fixed post, these roving traders freighted goods to the hostile country in wagons. By furnishing the Indians with arms, ammunition, and liquor, and by purchasing the loot of frontier raids, they aggravated the problem of pacification.³

Once the Army had triumphed, however, the roving traders vanished from the plains. As the frontier advanced across the continent between 1840 and 1890, one Indian tribe after another capitulated to the white man, to be confined on reservations. At each reservation, the trader made his appearance. More respectable and perhaps even more influential than his predecessors, the reservation trader, licensed by the Government, established a fixed trading post amid a newly conquered tribe and continued to supply the Indians with the white man's goods.

The Era of the Reservation Trader

The Indian brought to the reservation a long history of trade relations with the whites, and his new role as ward of the Great Father

3. C. C. Rister, "Harmful Practices of Indian Traders of the Southwest, 1865-1876," New Mexico Historical Review, VI, 3 (July, 1931), 231-248; and "Significance of the Jacksboro Indian Affair of 1871," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIX, 3 (January, 1926). See also Richard I. Dodge, Our Wild Indians (Hartford, 1882), 269.

in Washington did not lessen his desire for goods of white manufacture. The one familiar institution he found in his bewildering new environment was the trading post. "So the Indian having been a frequenter of the store for a century or two before coming to the reservation," observed Clark Wissler, "and all this time the store having been the most real and lively contact with the white man's culture, it was natural that there should be stores on the reservation and that around them was centered the life of the reservation Indians."⁴ Nor did the reservation lack prospective traders. It promised more favorable conditions for conducting trade, as well as opportunities for creating a demand for new items. Thus, from the beginning of the reservation period, the trader took his place as one of the prominent features of reservation life.

The reservation period, and hence the era of the reservation trader, began to assume its characteristic form about 1840. The reservation system had been inaugurated by the United States in 1786, but not until the Indian Removals of 1820-1840 did it become a major feature of Indian policy or an institution of importance.⁵ During these two decades, the United States moved many eastern tribes to new homes west of the

4. Clark Wissler, Indian Cavalcade: Life on the Old-time Indian Reservation (New York, 1938), 115.

5. Cf. Frederick W. Hodge (ed.), Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30 (Washington, 1910), II, 373-74.

Mississippi River, and in the "Indian Territory" (originally the entire Trans-Mississippi West, later what is now Oklahoma) created reservations for them. At the same time, the frontier of settlement crossed the Mississippi and edged towards the plains. The tribes of the Mississippi and lower Missouri valleys saw the futility of resistance, and additional reservations were marked out.

Attracted to a market confined by reservation boundaries, the trader soon appeared at the agency. Like the early fur traders, he had to apply for a license from the Government before entering the trade. But here the similarity ended. Although traders had been licensed since 1790, not until the advent of the reservation was control more than theoretical. The early traders operated in regions remote from authority, and officials found themselves powerless to enforce trade regulations. The fur companies, spurred by brutal competition, rarely let respect for the law interfere with operations.⁶

The reservation trader enjoyed few of these advantages, for his business lay convenient to the scrutiny of the resident agent and visiting inspectors. For the first time, control lay within the grasp of the Government, although it never proved uniformly effective. In 1834, as the first reservation traders made their way west, Congress devised a new regulatory code, which was enacted as part of a comprehensive Indian Intercourse Act. No person could trade without a license from a

6. Cf. Chittenden, History of American Fur Trade, I, 9-43.

Superintendent of Indian Affairs or an agent or sub-agent. Licenses would be valid for only two years east of the Mississippi and four years west of that river, then must be renewed. "Applicants of bad character" or those whose licenses had previously been revoked might be refused licenses. Superintendents were authorized to revoke a license whenever a trader violated trade regulations or whenever he considered it "improper" for any trader to remain in the Indian country. The President, finally, could at any time proscribe any or all articles of trade from a reservation, and could revoke all licenses and reject all applications for licenses to trade with a particular tribe. Subsequent legislation tightened governmental control. An act passed in 1866 required traders to post bond of five to ten thousand dollars as further insurance of compliance with regulations. Acts of 1864 and 1873 set heavy penalties for introducing liquor, arms, and ammunition into the Indian country. In 1876, with abolition of the office of Superintendent, authority to license traders was lodged solely with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.⁷ The reservation trader thus found his business regulated to a degree undreamed by such men as Manuel Lisa, William Ashley, and Jedediah Smith.

The first reservation traders to leave an impression on history appeared among the Civilized Tribes. A few had arrived by 1834, when

7. Charles J. Kappler (comp.), Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties (Washington, 1904), I, 7, 16-17, 27-29.

the new regulations took effect, but many more came during the Panic of 1837, lured by the silver coin disbursed as annuity payments. They freighted in goods and built makeshift stores that later grew into respectable establishments. A novel innovation in this region was the "floating doggery," trading boats that came up the Arkansas River with cake, pie, fruit, cider, applejack, and whiskey.⁸ The trading posts of the 1830's and 1840's were, for the most part, successful businesses, for the Civilized Tribes were not without substantial means. At his trading post near Fort Gibson, Colonel A. P. Chouteau was said to have grossed \$1,200,000 between 1817 and his death in 1838.⁹ Choctaw Agent Francis W. Armstrong in 1841 recorded his amazement at the volume of business conducted at Boggy Depot, where the firms of Saffarans and Lewis, and Bartlett, Heald, and Company had established trading posts among the Chickasaws.¹⁰ In 1843, six licensed traders were operating in the Creek Nation. One at Shieldsville, and Edwards' Trading Post, on the Canadian River, were the most important. By the decade of the 1860's, traders had become an integral part of the economic life of the Civilized Tribes.¹¹

8. Oliver Knight, "History of the Cherokees, 1830-1846," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXIV, 2 (Summer, 1956), 161-63.

9. Grant Foreman, The Last Trek of the Indians (Chicago, 1946), 267.

10. Grant Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860 (Norman, 1933), 96.

11. Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance (Norman, 1941), 113-114, 287.

Farther west, the wilder tribes of the plains, mountains, and desert had not yet been conquered and confined to reservations. They dealt, however, with traders who combined the characteristics and techniques of the earlier fur traders with those of the later reservation traders. Dominating this trade was the firm of Durfee and Peck. From its headquarters in Leavenworth, Kansas, the company administered a string of trading posts that stretched from the Upper Missouri to Texas. Its agents traded with reservation Indians at these posts and also, through expeditions to the plains, with the unpacified tribes. It employed in 1867 about one hundred traders. E. H. Durfee estimated in that year that his employees traded with over 100,000 Indians, principally Sioux, Cheyenne, Comanche, Apache, Osage, and Kaw. The proceeds of the Upper Missouri posts alone for one season he calculated at \$150,000.¹² Durfee and Peck did not always operate within the letter of the law. According to one observer, the Upper Missouri posts sold improved firearms and metallic ammunition "to suit the demands of their customers," principally Sioux. He noted, too, that Durfee and Peck traders were far more powerful than the Government agents, whose appointments, in fact, were largely controlled by the politically influential company.¹³

12. Interview with E. H. Durfee, Leavenworth (Kansas) Daily Conservative, May 17, 1867, quoted in Kansas Historical Quarterly, XVII, 3 (August, 1949), 297-301.

13. Joseph Henry Taylor, "Fort Bertold Agency in 1869, " North Dakota Historical Quarterly, IV, 4 (July, 1930), 222.

With the spread of the reservation system during the 1870's and 1880's, big companies like Durfee and Peck passed from the scene. A more representative type of trader emerged as, one after another, the tribes suffered final defeat by the Army. On the northern plains, the Sioux, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Shoshone, and Crow agencies had been established by 1880. On the central plains, the power of the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Arapahos was broken in 1874-75. The Navajos had been assigned an agency in 1868. The Apaches of the Southwest had reservations in the 1870's, although resistance was not entirely crushed until 1886. On each reservation, during the decade of the 1880's, the trader became sharply institutionalized and reached the peak of his influence. On some, this influence had waned by 1900; on others it lasted into the twentieth century. Among the Navajos, it persists today.

Figures revealing the growth and spread of the reservation trader over a span of time, although they probably exist, have not been available for this study. An idea of the number and distribution of licensed reservation traders in 1885, however, may be gained from data submitted by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to a Senate investigating committee in this year. It is a fortunate year, for the plains tribes had been pacified during the previous decade, and the reservation system had been cast in a form that was to last, except for the breakup of the Oklahoma reservations, until the present. (These figures do not include the Civilized Tribes, among whom, as will become apparent, the trader had

lost the characteristics that typified his counterpart elsewhere, and among whom, indeed, the reservation itself had lost its distinguishing features.)

On March 26, 1885, there were 123 traders conducting business at 146 trading posts under the supervision of 44 of the 62 agencies in the United States. They were distributed as follows:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Trading Firms</u>	<u>Number of Posts</u>
1. Pima & Papago, Ariz.	5	8
2. San Carlos (Apache), Ariz.	4	7
3. Southern Ute, Colo.	1	1
4. Cheyenne River (Sioux), Dak.	3	3
5. Crow Creek (Sioux), Dak.	1	1
6. Lower Brule (Sioux), Dak.	1	1
7. Devil's Lake, Dak.	1	1
8. Fort Berthold, Dak.	1	1
9. Sisseton (Sioux), Dak.	1	1
10. Pine Ridge (Sioux), Dak.	8	12
11. Rosebud (Sioux), Dak.	4	4
12. Standing Rock (Sioux), Dak.	2	2
13. Yankton (Sioux), Dak.	1	1
14. Fort Hall (Bannock), Ida.	1	2
15. Nez Perces, Ida.	1	1
16. Cheyenne & Arapaho, I. T.	7	8
17. Kiowa & Comanche, I. T.	4	4
18. Otoe, I. T.	1	1
19. Pawnee, I. T.	1	1
20. Ponca, I. T.	1	1
21. Osage, I. T.	8	8
22. Kaw, I. T.	1	1
23. Sac & Fox, I. T.	9	9
24. Pottawatomie & Great Nemaha, Kans.	2	2
25. White Earth, Minn.	5	7
26. Crow, Mont.	3	3
27. Fort Belknap, Mont.	4	4

14. "Indian Traderships." Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Congress, 2nd sess. (1888-89), 172-75.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Trading Firms</u>	<u>Number of Posts</u>
28. Flathead, Mont.	4	4
29. Fort Peck, Mont.	3	3
30. Winnebago & Omaha, Neb.	2	2
31. Santee & Flandreau, Neb.	1	1
32. Nevada Agency, Nevada	3	3
33. Pueblos of N. Mex.	8	8
34. Navajo, N. Mex.	4	8
35. Mescalero (Apache), N. Mex.	1	1
36. Siletz, Oreg.	1	1
37. Green Bay, Wis.	1	1
38. La Pointe, Wis.	4	4
39. Shoshone, Wyo.	2	2
40. Ouray (Ute), Utah	2	2
41. Uintah (Ute), Utah	2	2
42. Colville, Wash.	3	3
43. Neah Bay, Wash.	2	2
44. Tulalip, Wash.	1	1
	<u>123</u>	<u>146</u>

As white civilization closed around the reservations, the importance of the trading post began to decline, and the characteristics that set it apart from the rural general store began to blur. Among the Civilized Tribes, the typical reservation trader was on his way out by the time his counterparts were getting started farther west. These tribes had lived up to their name, and had developed a highly organized society closely resembling the white society after which it was patterned. Merchants and professional men of every variety set up their businesses, and there was little to distinguish them from contemporaries in the East. Although these men continued to operate under trading licenses, they were not reservation traders as conceived by this study. In 1868 the tribes won the right to approve or disapprove all applications for traderships and, moreover, they began to levy taxes on trading enterprises. By 1895,

325 licensed "traders" had come under the supervision of the Union Agency. Numerous others--saloon keepers, for example-- operated without licenses. Professional men found the requirement awkward, and lawyers refused to apply for licenses. On the whole, the system proved impractical and cumbersome, but it persisted.¹⁵

After the Army had destroyed the Indian barrier, settlers populated the Great Plains so rapidly that by 1890 the Census Bureau could trace no distinct frontier line on the map. Whites soon surrounded the reservations of the plains tribes, and towns grew up near their boundaries. This meant competition to the reservation traders, who began to experience difficulty in holding their clientele. Many Indians went to town to trade, for there they found lower prices and could usually obtain liquor. Confronted with competition, the trader had to lower prices and share with outsiders his influence on the Indian's economic life. "Licensed Indian trading," reported the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1890, "is losing its distinctive characteristics."¹⁶

The Commissioner's statement accurately described conditions on many Indian reservations, principally those in the Dakotas and in Indian

15. Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (hereafter CIA), 1890, lx-lxiii; 1892, 257; 1893, 145; 1895, 163. Debo, Road to Disappearance, 287-90, 329.

16. Report of the CIA, 1890, lix-lx.

Territory.¹⁷ It did not mean, however, that the trading post had gone out of existence or even that it had lost its importance. The stores had indeed begun to lose their distinctive characteristics, but they continued to fulfill important functions, especially in more remote sections of the reservation.¹⁸ The Commissioner's statement, moreover, did not reflect the situation on the Navajo Reservation. As will be shown in Part II, the licensed trader among the Navajos retained his distinctive characteristics, as well as his paramount importance, well into the 1940's.

Character of the Trade

Once the reservation had been marked out and the administrative apparatus established, the trader, license in hand, quickly made his appearance. Usually near the agency, sometimes far out on the reservation, he built a store. Often he traded in a tent until a more enduring structure could be completed. Few posts were impressively designed or constructed. On the plains, rude log buildings with dirt roofs prevailed. In the Southwest, stone and adobe were favored. Most stores consisted of

17. "A License to trade here is no big privilege," wrote the Sisseton Agent in 1891. Ibid., 421. Agent J. George Wright reported from Rosebud the following year that "the reputed fortunes made by licensed traders formerly are a thing of the past, at this agency at least." Ibid., 1892, 404.

18. As late as 1944, a study of reservation life among the Sioux at Pine Ridge, S. Dak., concluded that "The most important single establishment of the village [Kyle] is the trader's store." Gordon MacGregor, Warriors without Weapons: A Study of the Society and Personality Development of the Pine Ridge Sioux (Chicago, 1950), 70-72.

a trading room, equipped with shelves and high, wide counters, a wareroom for storage, and living quarters for the trader and his clerk. Later he would erect other buildings for additional storage space and perhaps a home pretentious enough to enable him to bring his family from the East. With a small stock of goods, purchased in St. Louis or Chicago and shipped by rail and freight wagon, he was ready to begin trading.

Since trade with the white man was nothing new, the Indians flocked to the new store to continue the practice. Still, they viewed their new neighbor with a mixture of wonder and resentment--wonder at the display of plentitude and resentment because this bounty was not freely distributed. They grasped the material philosophy of the situation, recalled Clark Wissler, but still could not quite reconcile it with their own cultural values. "What is the use of having so much," one old Indian asked Wissler, "if nothing can be given away?"¹⁹ Despite their doubts, however, the Indians quickly made the trading post their principal point of contact with the white man and his civilization.

Although the trader fulfilled many functions, his main objective was to make money. This he tried to do by exchanging goods the Indians wanted for goods the Indians had, or could produce, that would turn a profit in the eastern market. The trader's stock, of course, was geared to native demand. This demand seems to have passed through two distinct stages, which, incidentally, furnish an index to the impact of white on red culture and the role of the trader in transmitting this impact.

19. Indian Cavalcade, 116.

During the 1860's and 1870's, the trader's shelves bore such staples as sugar, coffee (usually green), flour, and tobacco. On many reservations the Great Father dispensed these items as annuities, but in quantities insufficient to satisfy the Indian. The trader thus made up the difference between issue and demand. On other reservations, where annuities took the form of cash, the trader supplied almost the entire demand. Beside these staples, the trader carried as standard items calico, blankets, brightly printed yard goods, and a variety of trinkets and baubles. Beads, mirrors, and colored powders with which to mix paint for body decoration were favorites. Hardware, such as butcher knives, kettles, and frying pans, also were prominently displayed. In other words, the articles demanded by the Indians during these early years were those that fitted conveniently into the aboriginal scheme of life--superior substitutes for articles already in use. They improved, without fundamentally changing, the old way of doing things.²⁰

The character of commodity demand entered the second stage in the 1880's. The reservation brought the Indian, for the first time, into intimate and constant contact with the white world. At the trading post

20. Leavenworth (Kansas) Daily Conservative, May 17, 1867, quoted in Kansas Historical Quarterly, XVII, 3 (August, 1949), 299. James E. Finney (as told to Joseph B. Thoburn), "Reminiscences of a Trader in the Osage Country," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIII, 2 (Summer, 1955), 145. Sara B. Mitchell, "The Early Days of Anadarko," ibid., XXVIII, 4 (Winter, 1850-51), 390. Dennis Moran (as told to Will G. Robinson), "Recollections of an Adventurous Life," South Dakota Historical Society, Collections, XXIV (1942), 128-129.

and the agency, and in nearby towns, he observed the workings of the white way of life, and noted a variety of useful tools and dry goods that he had never encountered. On the trader's shelves he saw many of these articles. At the trader's urging, he bought them; following the trader's instructions, he tried them. The agent for the Shoshones and Bannocks of Wyoming in 1878 clearly saw what was happening: "This trade is changing rapidly, and is due to the change taking place gradually in the Indians themselves. Many articles a few years ago were not called for at all, such as fancy soaps, articles of kitchen furniture, dried and canned fruits, and all kinds of groceries. There is now a large trade built up by the demand of the Indians for these articles. Among the Shoshones the trade in beads, paints, and trinkets has fallen off greatly during the last five years."²¹

Thus, although the market for such staples as coffee, sugar, and flour remained constant, the Indians began to buy farm implements and new items of hardware. Farm wagons, harness, all manner of cooking utensils, and furniture passed from the trading post to the tepee or hogan. Traders had little difficulty developing in their customers a demand for groceries and canned goods, as well as a taste for such fancy foods as figs, prunes and raisins. At the Kiowa and Comanche Agency, Indian Territory, one observer as early as 1884 noted with surprise "the quantity and quality of the business of the two local traders,"

21. Report of Agent James I. Patten, Aug. 25, 1878, Report of the CIA, 1878, 153.

and "the variety and usefulness of the articles in demand by the Indians," which appeared "precisely what one would find in any Western store."²²

The trader at Standing Rock Agency, North Dakota, reported the same thing in 1891,²³ and two years later Theodore Roosevelt, touring the Sioux agencies, saw trading posts that were "much like ordinary frontier stores, with similar classes of goods."²⁴ Unlike the items demanded during the 1860's and 1870's, the new trade goods rarely fitted conveniently into the old way of life. They required a whole new set of techniques. As a result, they profoundly modified the aboriginal material culture.

In return for his wares, the trader had to take whatever the Indians could produce locally. On reservations where federal annuity issues were dispensed in the form of money instead of goods, the trader enjoyed a convenient and often lucrative cash business in addition to native trade items. On the Osage Reservation, for example, cash annuity payments in the 1880's totalled \$200,000 a year. The seven trading posts on the

22. S. C. Armstrong, Report of a Trip Made in Behalf of the Indian Rights Association to Some Indian Reservations of the Southwest (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1884), 18.

23. Statement of H. F. Douglas, trader at Standing Rock, Nov. 21, 1891, quoted in C. C. Painter, Extravagance, Waste and Failure of Indian Education (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1892), 13.

24. Report of Hon. Theodore Roosevelt Made to the United States Civil Service Commission Upon a Visit to Certain Indian Reservations and Indian Schools in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, Feb. 25, 1893), 9.

reservation in 1885 shared almost all of this cash as well as a lively business in Osage trade articles.²⁵

Conditions on the Osage Reservation, however, were not representative. Indians rarely had cash from sources independent of the trader, and therefore brought in goods either to barter directly or to exchange for cash with which to buy the trader's wares. Among the plains tribes, furs and skins were almost universally the basis of trade. Before the extermination of the great bison herds, the Indians found a ready market for vast quantities of buffalo robes. Tanned and dressed by the women, they were brought to the trading post and, with Indian help, baled for shipment. During the 1860's, Durfee and Peck bought 25,000 to 30,000 robes annually, shipped them by steamer down the Missouri, and disposed of them in St. Louis for about \$8.00 each.²⁶ In one year during the 1870's, the firm of Dunlap and Florer, which usually had a wagon train accompany the Osages on their annual hunt, bought 3,000 robes. These were freighted by wagon to the railhead at Coffeyville, Kansas, then shipped by train to St. Louis, where they sold for \$6.25 each.²⁷

More lucrative and lasting was the trade in furs and skins of other animals. Durfee and Peck listed, in order of value, otter, beaver, wolf,

25. "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), xix.

26. Leavenworth (Kansas) Daily Conservative, May 17, 1867, quoted in Kansas Historical Quarterly, XVII, 3 (August, 1949), 298.

27. Finney, "Reminiscences of a Trader in the Osage Country," 149.

elk, bear, fox, deer, and coon.²⁸ The trading post at Cheyenne River Agency, Dakota, did a lively business in skunk furs during the 1870's. The Indians at this agency found that the trader also would accept cow-hides, and after each beef issue the women tanned the hides and took them to the trading post.²⁹ The trade in pelts continued well into the twentieth century.

In the Southwest, where fur-bearing animals were scarce, the Indians traded grain crops. The Pima trade was founded principally on wheat.³⁰ The Apaches of Arizona brought barley to the traders at San Carlos Agency.³¹ Among the Navajos, the trader enjoyed an opportunity surpassed only by his counterparts on the Osage Reservation. The Navajos maintained large flocks of sheep, and traded with mutton and wool. But they were also craftsmen, and products of the weaver and the silversmith found a ready and continuing market in the East. The Navajo trader thus found and encouraged conditions that, along with other factors, insured his prosperous survival until recent years. (See Part II.)

28. Leavenworth (Kansas) Daily Conservative, May 17, 1867, quoted in Kansas Historical Quarterly, XVII, 3 (August, 1949), 298.

29. Moran, "Recollections of an Adventurous Life," 126, 129.

30. Report of Agent C. W. Crouse, Pima Agency, Ariz., Aug. 1, 1892, Report of the CIA, 1892, 215.

31. Testimony of Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, June 29, 1886, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 3.

That the reservation trade could and often did return enormous profits cannot be denied. The trader, however, has been badly maligned by history as well as by his contemporaries. For many years, a tradership was considered, as one official expressed it, "a golden opportunity for plunder and profit."³² In the early years of the reservation trade, many traderships did offer such an opportunity. But by 1880 few traders enjoyed a monopoly; other traders, and merchants outside the reservation, provided sufficient competition to discourage wild profiteering.

Instead of availing himself of a golden opportunity, the typical trader entered a profession requiring a whole range of unique abilities, and one fraught with possibilities of financial disaster. He took a substantial monetary risk, subjected his operations to official and not always enlightened regulation, sometimes tied his future to the vagaries of politics, and embarked on a business venture whose mechanics differed sharply from anything in the contemporary commercial world.

The initial investment itself required considerable capital. It varied, of course, with the size of the post and the anticipated volume of trade. Evidence placed before the Senate investigating committee in 1885 revealed that the average trading post in Indian Territory was worth about \$50,000. The firm of Hemphill and Woy, which operated a

32. Report of the CIA, 1890, lix.

post at the Cheyenne and Araphao Agency at Darlington, Indian Territory, submitted the following summary of its investment:³³

Paid for two-story frame store building 42x50; one-story ware-room 26x50, and sleeping rooms 14x28; freight and expense of buildings, same complete with stone foundations, cellars, and permanent furniture such as counters, shelving and office; value today. . . . \$10,155.98

Stock, estimated from inventories	31,079.04
Investment in hide-buildings	41,235.02
Investment in fences & appliances for drying, baling & shipping	700.00
Investment in wagons	1,000.00
Investment in buggy team.	147.25
Investment in accounts due, per balance sheet, June 13, 1885	9,343.05
Investment in insurance unexpired, June 15.	200.00
Investment in bills receivable on account mdse. sold . . .	2,525.77
Total	<u>\$55,151.09</u>

Although the initial investment may well have differed little from businesses of similar magnitude in the East, the Indian trader contended with several problems not encountered by merchants in settled areas. For one thing, the physical plant and all improvements on it were considered government property by virtue of their location on an Indian reservation. The trader paid for them but did not own them. He could not sell or wilfully damage them. Customarily, when a trading post changed hands the plant was listed as good will, and the buyer paid a price for this good will equal to the seller's valuation of the plant. An element of risk and uncertainty nevertheless was inherent in the system.³⁴

33. "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 220.

34. See, for example, Joseph Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader (Caldwell, 1951), 361.

The trader was also burdened with staggering freight costs and difficulty of transportation. Rarely did he find a railroad conveniently located. Instead he had to haul his goods by wagon from the nearest station over miles of uncertain prairie or mountain roads to the agency. Usually he hired Indian labor for this task, paying in store credit or in cash that ultimately returned to his money drawer. The freight cost he added to the wholesale price. Together with profit margin, this amounted to seemingly exorbitant prices the Indians paid for merchandise, and helped to give him a bad reputation.³⁵ High freight costs also applied to the Indian trade goods shipped to eastern mercantile houses for disposal. This charge, too, the trader had to consider when fixing retail prices.

Aside from official regulation, traders often encountered official suspicion and distrust, if not from the agent, from his superiors in Washington. The Indian Bureau seems never to have brought itself to approve entirely of the white reservation trader. One Commissioner declared it to be the objective of his administration to abolish white traderships and place all trade in the hands of full-blooded Indians.³⁶

35. Some traders took advantage of this excuse, however, to set unethically high retail prices. One Indian told Clark Wissler that the trader had charged 50¢ for a common sewing needle, defending the price on the ground that freight rates were so high. Indian Cavalcade, 104.

36. Report of the CIA, 1885, 116.

A few Indians did in fact open trading posts (a license was not required), but few could raise the necessary capital and still fewer possessed the necessary knowledge and skills.³⁷

Official regulation extended to every facet of trade, including the personal attributes of the trader and his assistants. The Quaker agent to the Osages in 1874 (before licensing powers were lodged solely with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs) required all applicants for licenses to prove that they were "honest, moral, temperate, and are regular attendants of religious services and Sabbath-school at home."³⁸ Inspectors in 1889 were charged not only with examining the commercial operations of the trading post, but also with determining and reporting "whether the trader and his employees are sober, respectable people whose conduct and example among the Indians will tend to elevate the Indians morally and socially instead of the reverse."³⁹

The main objective of regulation, however, was to control prices and profits. Throughout the decade of the 1880's the Indian Bureau attempted to fix and enforce fair retail prices. Several complex methods were tried, but none proved at all workable. A former agent testified in 1887 that "so far as I know the regulations were recognized as so entirely impracticable that I never heard of an agency where they were

37. See, for example, *ibid.*, 1892, 287, 442; 1901, 520-22.

38. Report of Agent I. T. Gibson, Sept. 1, 1874, *ibid.*, 1874, 225.

39. *Ibid.*, 1889, 30.

complied with."⁴⁰ An official in Washington simply could not devise an intelligent price schedule, nor could the trader wait for him to do so. Commissioner J. D. C. Atkins in 1885, however, attempted to go beyond price control and establish profit control. He calculated that a reasonable gross trade should amount to \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year, and by gearing the number of licenses issued to the total annual trade on each reservation he hoped to limit profits.⁴¹ This plan, too, appears to have been unworkable. Indeed, there is reason to believe that it was motivated more by political considerations than by a sincere desire to protect the red man.

Even while the Indian Bureau was trying to fix prices and limit profits, the growth of competition was protecting the Indian far more effectively than any regulatory scheme. Reports of Indian agents show clearly that, on reservations where several traders shared the Indian market, generally fair prices prevailed; where one trader had a monopoly, he frequently charged all the traffic would bear. At Fort Berthold Agency, Dakota, in 1882, the single trader, according to the agent, fixed retail prices one hundred percent above wholesale cost plus freight.⁴² At the Fort Apache Agency in Arizona, the trader in 1884

40. Testimony of Laban J. Miles, May 11, 1887, in "Indian Trader-ships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 439. Miles had been Cnaga Agent from 1878-1885.

41. Testimony of Atkins, June 29, 1886, in ibid., 5.

42. Report of Agent Jacob Kauffman, Sept. 4, 1882, Report of the CIA, 1882, 24.

maintained two price schedules, one for whites at the agency and fort, another, much higher, for the Indians.⁴³ On the Osage Reservation, by contrast, the agent reported in 1874 that competition had brought goods down to the lowest possible price, and the highest price is paid for the robes and furs to the Indians."⁴⁴ From the Shoshone and Bannock Reservation, Wyoming, the agent reported in 1881 that the advent of a second trader advanced the price paid the Indian for buffalo robes from \$5 to \$8, for antelope, elk, and deer skins from 75¢ to \$1.30 per pound, and for beaver pelts from \$1.50 to \$2.25 per pound. At the same time, the retail price level declined drastically.⁴⁵ So obvious were the merits of competition that by 1890 the Indian Bureau, instead of attempting to limit the number of traders, was licensing as many traders as possible in order to encourage maximum competition.⁴⁶ Competition of the keenest sort came to characterize trade on the large reservations, and added a further uncertainty to the business.

Besides government regulation, the trader sometimes encountered another uncertainty intruding upon his business from Washington--politics. Tradership appointments seem to have been generally free of the spoils

43. Robert Frazer, The Apaches of the White Mountain Reservation, Arizona, (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1884), 19-20.

44. Report of Agent I. T. Gibson, Sept. 1, 1874, Report of the CIA, 1874, 225.

45. Report of Agent Charles Hatton, Aug. 22, 1881, Report of the CIA, 1881, 183-184.

46. Report of the CIA, 1890, lix-lx.

system until 1885, when President Grover Cleveland appointed L. Q. C. Lamar Secretary of the Interior and J. D. C. Atkins Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Lamar came from Mississippi, Atkins from Tennessee. After twenty-five years of Republican ascendancy, scores of deserving Democrats from Mississippi and Tennessee replaced officials at most of the agencies, and numerous traders received notice that their licenses would be terminated and new traders, mostly from Mississippi and Tennessee, appointed in their place. A Senate investigation of the turnover in traderships drew from Commissioner Atkins some valid reasons for his actions, but also the candid admission that trade licenses had "been considered, to a certain extent, as other Federal patronage."⁴⁷ The investigation lasted for three years, and elicited testimony revealing the extreme hardship and frequent bankruptcy suffered by victims of the policy of Lamar and Atkins. Thereafter, while the spoils system sometimes crept into tradership appointments,⁴⁸ successive administrations avoided the trap into which Cleveland's administrators had fallen.

The trader's problems with politics and bureaucracy were slight compared to those he faced with his customers. Each tribe had its own peculiar mentality and psychology, and its own peculiar trading ritual,

47. Atkins to Senator O. H. Platt, April 30, 1887, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 170-171. This volume contains all the testimony and documents submitted in evidence. See also Frank F. Finney, "Troubles of Indian Traders Brings Senate Investigation," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXVI, 1 (Spring, 1958), 15-20.

48. See, for example, Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 347-64.

to which the trader had to adapt his behavior. Few Indians could speak English, and the trader had to learn the native tongue, usually a simple form of it known as trade jargon. Adequate for trading purposes, it rarely permitted conversation on other topics. Of course, those traders who acquired a broader knowledge of the language--J. L. Hubbell was one--had a decided advantage over their competitors. Most traders found that Indians, despite their ignorance of white business customs, turned out to be clever and astute customers. Tribal mores, furthermore, did not always prohibit practices regarded as unethical or dishonest by the white man. For eighty years Navajos have weighted their wool sacks with pebbles or sand. "The Indians were keen traders," recalled a trader to the Kiowas and Comanches, "and did not hesitate to take advantage of the other party to a deal if opportunity afforded."⁴⁹ Testifying before the Senate committee in 1887, Agent Laban J. Miles declared, "I would say to you, Mr. Senator, from the little experience I have had with traders down there [Osage Reservation], that no one need ever be greatly alarmed about the capacity of an Indian to take care of himself in trade if there is good competition."⁵⁰ The trader thus not only had to conduct business in an alien tongue according to alien customs, but also had to bargain relentlessly and remain constantly alert to clever attempts at cheating.

49. R. F. Gued, "Reminiscences of an Indian Trader," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XIV, 2 (June, 1936), 142.

50. Testimony of Laban J. Miles, May 11, 1887, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 440.

He was beset, too, with the vexations of the credit system. Although trade was sometimes conducted by direct barter or cash purchase, nearly every trader carried his Indians on credit for most of the year. In part, this resulted from the seasonal nature of the tribal economy, for the products of most tribes (e.g., furs, grain, wool) had seasonal yield. In part, it resulted from the naturally improvident inclinations of the Indians, who spent everything today and let tomorrow take care of itself.⁵¹ It resulted, also, from the competition of other traders and of urban merchants; the trader found that, to retain his customers, he had to keep them in debt.⁵² Few traders apparently suffered grave financial setbacks from this system, for they had several advantages. Sometimes the agent could be induced to make a lagging creditor pay.⁵³ More often, the credit had been secured by some item of pawn that the Indian valued highly.⁵⁴ Many early traders seem to have advanced large

51. Even where Indians received cash annuities, the credit system prevailed. See testimony of William R. Little, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong. 2nd sess. (1888-89), 187. Clark Wissler observed that the minute an Indian received money, he hastened to spend it. It was like an exchange of gifts. He gave the trader money, something no Indian could use, and got something in return that every Indian could use. Indian Cavalcade, 103.

52. See, for example, Report of Agent C. S. McNichols, Colorado River Agency, Ariz., Aug. 8, 1898, Report of the CIA, 1898, 114; Report of Agent C. W. Crouse, Pima Agency, Ariz., Aug. 1, 1892, ibid., 1892, 215; Report of Acting Agent H. B. Freeman, Lt. Col., 5th Infantry, Osage Agency, I. T., Oct. 2, 1896, ibid., 1896, 261.

53. Wissler, Indian Cavalcade, 104-5.

54. See, for example, Report of Agent S. S. Patterson, Navajo Agency, Ariz., Aug. 23, 1887, Report of the CIA, 1887, 256.

amounts of unsecured credit and to have been rewarded by ultimate payment.⁵⁵ The knowledge that further credit would be denied if he failed to pay undoubtedly spurred the Indian to keep his credit rating in good standing.⁵⁶

Character and Life of the Trader

If the mechanics of the trade taxed the patience and ingenuity of the trader, they were nothing compared with the roles other than storekeeper that he was called upon to play in the native community. A former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with long experience in Indian matters,⁵⁷ detailed a few of these:

The trader is usually the only person around an agency who keeps any considerable amount of ready cash in hand, or has close connections with the outside world of business. He not only sells goods, but is liable to be at various times a banker, pawnbroker, postmaster, tailor, butcher, advertising agent, undertaker, liveryman, or hotel-keeper. There are few parts in the drama of reservation life which a trader of the

55. The Sacs and Foxes, over a six month period about 1882, built up \$6,000 in debts with trader William Little. When annuities were paid he collected all but \$40 of the amount. See Little's testimony, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 187.

56. Navajo traders today grant extensive unsecured credit against future income, using prominently the threat of credit suspension to encourage payment. William Y. Adams, Shonto: A Study of the Role of The Trader in a Modern Navajo Community (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Ariz., 1958), II, 300 et seq.

57. Francis E. Leupp, The Indian and His Problem (New York, 1910), 188-89.

older generation has not been called upon to play, and the stock character in his repertory is that of Everybody's Friend. . . If one of the children fell ill, and there were no physicians at hand, the trader would manage to concoct a dose to hold the trouble in control till better advice could be procured.

Commissioner Leupp might also have mentioned the trader's roles as counselor to the Indians in every facet of their relations with the outside world, as interpreter of the strange customs of the white man, as arbiter of disputes among the Indians, as intermediary between the Government and its wards, indeed, as the source of all wisdom concerning the new way of life the white man was forcing on the Indians.

In providing these services, the trader was not necessarily motivated by humanitarian sentiments. Although he took pride in his influence on the Indians, his was still a businessman's creed. One finds evidence of it in reminiscences of most of the reputable traders, but it was clearly expressed by J. H. Moore, who traded with the Navajos at Crystal, New Mexico:

Not the least part of my satisfaction in what has been accomplished, is the greatly increased prosperity and better conditions of life that has come to the people among whom I live and work, as their earning power has grown. But, I am no philanthropist and must disclaim any philanthropic motives for my part in it. I saw, or at least believed that I saw,

58. J. H. Moore, The Navajo (Crystal, N. Mex., 1911), 3. This is an advertising brochure. For similar sentiments expressed by Moore, see Edgar K. Miller, "The Indian and the Trader," Indian School Journal, VII, 8 (June, 1907), Part I of two parts.

in their dormant skill and patience a business opportunity, provided they could be aroused, encouraged and led on to do their best; and a market for their product [blankets] could be established. It seemed my one best business proposition at that time and I played it, realizing, that if I would prosper myself I must help my workers to prosper too--if they prospered, that I would come in for a share with them at least.

The admittedly scant source material dealing with the reservation trade yields many examples of honest, intelligent, high-minded traders who, like Moore, combined a sound business philosophy with a genuine desire to improve the condition of the Indian. John N. Florer, "Johnny Shinkah" to the Osages, became the friend and counselor to whom they "turned for advice and help in time of trouble."⁵⁹ Trader Phillip W. Lewis, according to the agent at Fort Peck, Montana, "is superintendent of the Indian sabbath-school held every Sunday morning at the school building, and manifests a deep interest in the education and welfare of the children."⁶⁰ John P. Hemphill and John L. Woy, traders at Darlington, I. T., also assisted at the local mission church, and constantly encouraged the Cheyennes and Arapahos to put their children in school.⁶¹ Herbert Welsh, crusading secretary of the Indian Right Association, pronounced the wife of the trader at

59. Frank F. Finney, "John N. Florer, Pioneer Osage Trader," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIII, 2 (Summer, 1955), 142-45.

60. Report of the CIA, 1887, 228.

61. Testimony of Dr. John F. De Bra, May 10, 1887, "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 249-269.

Porcupine Creek, on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota, "the strongest civilizing force in this locality." With the agent's cooperation, she maintained a home for aged Sioux women adjacent to the trading post.⁶² Commissioner Leupp cited the example of a trader who combined missionary zeal with a sound business approach:⁶³

He lived in an ell of the store building, and used to leave the door of his living quarters ajar, so that the Indians could peep in and see what uses he made of his simple appliances of toilet and table. After he had sufficiently piqued them to emulation, he refused to sell them a set of cups and saucers unless they would buy a table to set them on. He kept bright mattresses and comforters for sale, but he would not sell one to an Indian who did not buy also a cot to hold them. Thus by degrees he lifted his customers off the ground and got them into an approach, at least, to decent household habits. Pretty soon he set up a sewing machine; and any squaw who would buy sensible goods for her own clothing and that of her children, he would teach how to use the machine, so that she could come there and make up her dress patterns. . . .

This unique blend of philanthropy and business acumen elevated the trader to a commanding position in the native community. Because of it, he often enjoyed greater power over the Indians than the agent. He, not the agent, played the paternalistic role, not by the choice of either but by decree of the Indian. The agent was usually a rather austere, aloof individual who did not always treat his charges with the kindness and indulgence they encountered at the trading post. Besides,

62. Herbert Welsh, Civilization Among the Sioux Indians: Report of a Visit to Some of the Sioux Reservations of South Dakota and Nebraska (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1893), 47.

63. Leupp, The Indian and his Problem, 190-91.

agents came and went, while the trader might stay for a generation. And all Indians, observed Leupp, "have a great preference for what is permanent over what is transitory."⁶⁴ "It is the trader, not the Indian Bureau," concluded a study of Navajo trading, "whose role represents the epitome of paternalism in Navajo-White relations. He, if anyone, deserves the epithet of 'White Father.'"⁶⁵

Often the trader's commanding position worked in reverse. Not only was he, to the Indians, spokesman for the white world, but also, to the white world, spokesman for the Indians. His professional equipment included knowledge of the language and knowledge of the people, both as individuals and as a tribe. Thus government officials and other whites having business with the Indians frequently found it necessary to conduct it through the intermediary of the trader. The channels through which his influence could be manifested were infinite.⁶⁶

But there were many unscrupulous traders, too. No less influential with the Indians, they used their influence for selfish ends and with no regard for its effect on the Indians, or on Indian-white relations. The trader at San Carlos Agency, Arizona, lost his license in 1877 because he kept a boarding house where "hard cases" lived.⁶⁷ The

64. Ibid., 191.

65. Adams, Shonto, II, 526.

66. Cf. Ibid. II, 378.

67. Ralph H. Ogle, "Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848-1886," New Mexico Historical Review, XV, 3 (July, 1940), 280.

Blackfeet agent in 1873 reported that, within the previous three years, over six hundred barrels of whiskey, "of the most poisonous quality," had been traded to his charges, twenty-five percent of whom he estimated had died of its effects.⁶⁸ Captain J. E. Grossman, U.S. Army, appointed acting agent to the Pimas and Maricopas of Arizona in 1869, found the Indians completely under the pernicious influence of the traders, who actively and effectively obstructed his reform measures for a year before they could be checked.⁶⁹ Although unprincipled traders were a small minority, of little consequence after the early years of the reservation system, their activities have tended to obscure the genuine achievements of respectable traders.

The life of the reservation trader probably has no parallel in United States history. The nonmaterial rewards were great indeed, for, much as the medieval peasant depended on the lord of the manor, so the inhabitants of the trader's little kingdom looked to him for help, advice, and explanation of mysteries. Many traders went a step farther, and surrounded themselves with material comforts that, in the West of 1890, seem entirely incongruous. Visitors were often amazed to find, many miles from the railroad, a home displaying books, paintings, fine furniture, china, silver, native servants, even plumbing, and a cultured

68. Report of Agent W. T. Ensign, Sept. 1, 1873, Report of the CIA, 1873, 252.

69. Grossman's Report, Sept. 1, 1870, ibid., 1870, 121-122.

host who could intelligently discuss topics current in Park Avenue drawing rooms. One has but to enter, today, the sprawling adobe home of John Lorenzo Hubbell, with its walls covered with paintings and lined with crowded bookcases, to appreciate the richness of such a life. True, this life was probably not representative, and gained added prominence from its contrast with the local scene; yet it was widespread enough to be more than the exception.⁷⁰

These generalizations, of course, give the impression of a composite, or stereotyped, trader who might be found on any reservation. It is therefore necessary to emphasize that no such phenomenon existed. The trader, his style of living, his character, and his influence differed from post to post. The foregoing characteristics, however, were common enough to typify the reservation trader.

The Significance of the Reservation Trader

To reach definite and authoritative conclusions on the significance in American history of the reservation trader is not possible here. No scholarly study of the topic has been found, and available published source materials are inadequate. The characteristics of trade and

⁷⁰ For examples other than Hubbell, see Leo Crane, Indians of the Enchanted Desert (Boston 1927), 50-52; Finney, "John N. Florer, Pioneer Gage Trader," 142-45; Maynard Dixon, "Arizona in 1900," Arizona Highways, XVIII, 2 (February, 1942); and Theodore Roosevelt, "Across the Navajo Desert," The Outlook, Vol. 105 (October 11, 1913), 312-313. These conditions appear to have been much more prevalent on the Navajo Reservation than elsewhere.

traders differed widely from reservation to reservation, as did tribal cultures, governmental policies, geographical conditions, and a host of other factors determining the significance of the trader. Although the importance of the trader on the Navajo Reservation can be established on good authority (see Part II), a sound evaluation of the trader's importance on a national scale would require study, in scattered manuscript collections, of the trade pattern on each reservation and, finally, comparison of the results for purposes of generalization. Although this procedure has not been possible here, the available evidence nevertheless suggests certain ways in which the trader was historically significant. The conclusions that follow, however, must be considered tentative.

The trader's outstanding claim to significance perhaps lies in the realm of cultural anthropology, although specialists in this field have been singularly negligent in drawing broad conclusions from the many case studies of the trader's cultural influence on particular tribes. Only one synthesis of these findings, and that couched as hypothesis, has been found. As background for an exhaustive study of the cultural role of Shonto Trading Post in a modern Navajo community, William Y. Adams examined studies of European trade relations with native groups all over the world. Nearly all European penetrations of primitive areas, he found, were spearheaded by traders, who immediately established trade relations with the natives. As a distinct institution, the trader survived only where, as in the American West, environmental

conditions precluded intensive agriculture and the natives were protected from dispossession by governmental edict. In such areas the trader became the key figure in the aboriginal economy, and brought his greatest influence to bear on patterns of native subsistence and material culture. "The replacement of aboriginal material culture by items of European manufacture," observed Adams, "is easily and widely recognized, and can be laid to the door of the trader with little fear of contradiction."⁷¹

The reservation trader of United States history seems to fit generally into this broad framework. Indeed, he enjoyed particularly favorable conditions for changing the material culture of the Indians. As has been shown, he spoke the native tongue, knew his customers personally, and occupied a position of great prestige and authority in the community. Above all, unlike his roving predecessors, he lived in a fixed location near a particular group of the Indians, and thus was able to make his influence continuously felt over a long period of time. The degree to which the material culture of the American Indians altered during the early reservation years has already been noted (see pp.14-16). The trader, of course, must share some of the credit for these changes with other whites on the reservation. But because he occupied the best position from which to influence material culture, and because his financial interest lay in so doing, to him must be assigned the major responsibility for the transition. The conclusion

71. Adams, Shonto, II, 359.

seems warranted, then, that the trader, above all other whites, induced, sustained, and expanded native desire for, and later dependence on, items of white manufacture.

Much more difficult to define are the incidental effects of the changed material culture on the structure of nonmaterial culture.

Discussing this factor, Adams wrote:⁷²

All of the other purported effects [besides change in material culture] of entrepreneurs upon aboriginal life have been indirect and often accidental ones, resulting from changes in material culture and subsistence patterns. They are developments which may well have been as unexpected by the trader as by the tribal group itself. They have included, for example, the breakdown of traditional status systems resulting from substitution of cheap manufactured goods for prestige items of native manufacture; and the disintegration of native authority through the removal of its economic sanctions. Most significantly, they have included the intensification of conflict between tribal groups through the introduction of firearms. . . .

In the absence of anthropological studies of the trader's influence on each reservation, it is impossible to carry this line of inquiry further here. But it should be noted as an additional factor in the trader's role as a medium of acculturation.

Aside from his anthropological significance, the trader's historical significance may be analyzed in terms of his contribution to the Indian's new way of life, and his aid, generally accidental or unintentional, in furthering the policy objectives of the Government. Probably the greatest service to the Indian stemmed from the change in material culture

72. Ibid., 529-30.

discussed above. The trader played the dominant part in replacing the aboriginal economy, which the reservation had destroyed, with an economy linked to the white world and adjusted to the realities of reservation life. Perhaps it was not the best solution, but it worked. Often it proved the decisive factor in saving the Indian from hunger and want.⁷³

Much of the trader's influence with the Indians he gained from performance of a host of subsidiary services to members of the community. He provided these services because it was good business, because he felt a paternalistic responsibility for his clientele, because the Indians looked to him for their performance, and because there was simply no one else to do them. He interpreted the mysteries of the white world, he advised and counseled in matters of personal behavior, he mediated disputes, he gave medical assistance, he buried the dead, he translated incoming letters and wrote outgoing letters, he interceded with white officials when his customers got into trouble, and in general, as indicated before, he presided over the community as the benevolent,

73. When the annual buffalo hunt of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes proved unsuccessful in 1878, the trader imported buffalo hides and paid the Indians to tan them. "This help," reported Agent John D. Miles, "has been of material assistance to the Indians in supplementing a reduced and insufficient ration, and the Indians have appreciated the opportunity the trader has afforded them to earn this money." Report of the CIA, 1878, 55.

yet sometimes stern, Great White Father.⁷⁴ These services deserve serious consideration in assessing the trader's significance.

The Indians looked to the trading post not only as a source of material wants, but also as a kind of newspaper. Here they learned the latest features of governmental policy and other news from the outside world of particular interest to them. As the one place on the reservation consistently and frequently visited by the members of a community, it served, also, as an important social center.

The Indians soon found the store an ideal place for loafing [recalled Clark Wissler]. Young men and boys loitered around outside the door, rarely speaking a word, but staring stolidly. Their elders loafed inside. Most any day a row of middleaged Indian men could be seen sitting on the floor of the store, their backs to the wooden counter, a large pipe passing back and forth as they listened to a monologue by one of their number. Here not only were the old times lived again, but criticisms leveled at the Government, at white ways, and at the short-comings of their own people. As all the world over, the younger generation came in for denunciation because of their leanings toward ultra-modern customs. Yet humor and mischief prevailed.⁷⁵

The trader's influence on the Indians placed him in an advantageous position to aid or obstruct the attainment of governmental policy objectives. "A small trader who can give them a few pounds of tobacco

74. The trader still performs these functions on the Navajo Reservation. See Part II, pp. 75-76. Agents of the Hudson's Bay Company hold almost precisely the same relationship to the Indians of Northwest Canada today. See R. H. G. Bonnycastle, "The Role of the Trader in Indian Affairs," in C. T. Loram and T. F. McIlwraith (eds.), The North American Indian Today (Toronto, 1943), 72.

75. Wissler, Indian Cavalcade, 101-102.

and make it up in profits on something else," complained the Minnesota Superintendent in 1850, "has more influence over them than the agent clothed with all the authority of the Government but who has nothing to give them."⁷⁶ That this influence could be effectively brought to bear in opposition to official measures Captain Grossman discovered in 1869 (see p. 34). More often, however, the trader was the willing right hand of the agent, and by counsel to the Indians as well as an occasional bit of sagacious advice to the agent,⁷⁷ facilitated the task of the Government. Beginning with President Grant's Peace Policy in 1869 and extending well into the twentieth century, Indian policy had two basic objectives: to control the Indians and to "civilize" them. The trader was an important contributor, positive or negative, to the success of this policy.

Control of his charges was one of the agent's most troublesome problems. Stirred up by real or imagined grievances, the Indians periodically threatened to stampede from the reservation, or at least to shatter the calm of reservation life with angry demonstrations.

76. Report of Superintendent Alexander Ramsey, Oct. 21, 1859, in Will G. Robinson (ed.), "Digest of Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," South Dakota Historical Society, Collections, XXVI (1952), 512.

77. Leo Crane, as a new agent at one of the Navajo subagencies, was called upon to officiate at an Indian funeral. He started to forbid the mourners from killing a horse on the dead man's grave, but the trader, wise in Navajo ways, warned him that such interference with native custom would have unfortunate consequences. Crane took the trader's advice. Crane, Indians of the Painted Desert, 127-29.

Sometimes the trader himself inspired these incidents, but usually he marshalled his influence behind order and compliance with official directives. His value as an agency of control stemmed primarily from the Indian's dependence upon the merchandise available at the store. A little reflection over the prospect of doing without the accustomed bounty of the trading post usually sufficed to cool the ardor of malcontents. Commissioner Leupp recognized the trader's importance when he wrote that "In past days when the uppermost thought in the Government's mind was to keep the Indian quiet, the trader was often a mighty power for peace. The wilder tribesmen had little conception of his business methods; but they knew that somehow, and from somewhere, he contrived always to be supplied with bacon and flour, beans and canned foods, and that as long as they kept in his good graces they would not be allowed to starve."⁷⁸

The Indian Bureau found its second policy objective--civilization of the Indian--much more difficult to reach than the first. Its efforts were usually misguided and often farcical, because the policy makers were delving into matters beyond their comprehension. Nevertheless, some progress was made, not surprisingly in the realm of activity dominated by the trader. Anthropologists agree that, in culture contact situations, material culture is much less resistant to change than nonmaterial culture.⁷⁹ The material culture of the

78. Leupp, The Indian and his Problem, 188-89.

79. Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Navajos in the Machine Age," in Irwin T. Sanders et. al., Societies Around the World (New York, 1953), I, 203.

American Indians did in fact change drastically, primarily through the instrumentality of the trader. The degree to which nonmaterial culture changed differed from tribe to tribe, depending on a host of cultural and environmental factors. Among the Navajos it remained virtually unassailable until World War II; among the Civilized Tribes it underwent basic changes in the early reservation days. It may be generalized, however, that the most significant advance--with some tribes the only significant advance--towards the Government's goal of civilizing the Indians occurred on the material level of culture, and that the trader deserved more credit than other contact agents for this advance.

In summary, the trader was one of the most necessary and influential institutions of the reservation system. He gave the Indian a new and workable economy and played a key role in its operation. He revolutionized the Indian's material culture, and thus secured him to the white world with bonds that facilitated official control. He performed noncommercial services that eased the Indian's transition to the new life. He was spokesman for the white world, a more effective missionary than the denominational missionary, "unconsciously," observed Wissler, "far and away the best preacher of the new life."⁸⁰

80. Indian Cavalcade, 112. For comparison with religious missionaries, see also statement of trader J. B. Moore in Edgar K. Miller, "The Indian and the Trader," Indian School Journal, VII, 8 (June, 1907), 19-20.

PART II

THE NAVAJO TRADE

The Navajo Reservation offered ideal conditions for the emergence of a type of trader and a pattern of trade most nearly approaching the stereotype described in Part I. The Navajos were an adaptable people, and effortlessly incorporated into their scheme of life the technological innovations introduced by the traders. They produced goods, moreover, that were easily marketed in the white world. Thus the Navajo economy was readily joined to the white economy--through the medium of the trader. The size and isolation of the Navajo Reservation also affected the trade. So vast was it that, until as late as the 1930's, government officials had very little personal contact with the Indians, leaving the trader as the most important, often the only, white man in a given native community. So insulated by geographical conditions was the Navajo country that white settlement by-passed it, leaving relatively untouched until after World War II the social and economic patterns established at the beginning of the reservation period.

There was, finally, another, less tangible factor that encouraged highly organized trade. In 1864, after many decades of unrestrained raiding upon Mexicans, Americans, and other Indian tribes, the Navajos were conquered by a military force under Colonel Kit Carson. Four terrible years of exile at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, crushed the independence, self-confidence, and morale of the Navajo people. They returned to their

homes in northwestern New Mexico and northern Arizona in 1868, a beaten people determined, at any cost, to avoid another experience like Fort Sumner. Like other tribes, the Navajos had been defeated; unlike other tribes, they had also been subjugated. They harbored no illusions (as did, for example, the Sioux) that the day of liberation would come. As a result, they were receptive to commercial relations with the whites, and to the primacy in their lives of the white man, i.e., the trader.¹ In the reservation period of Navajo history, wrote Ruth Underhill, "the influence of the traders can hardly be overestimated."²

The Early Traders

Trade was nothing new to the Navajos. Barter with other tribes--Hopi, Ute, Pueblo--forms a prominent place in their earliest recorded history.³ Later, in Spanish times, they assembled once a year at Taos, New Mexico, to exchange slaves--captives taken from other tribes--for

1. Charles A. Amsden, "The Navajo Exile at Bosque Redondo," New Mexico Historical Review, VIII, 1 (January, 1933). For a penetrating analysis of the effect of Fort Sumner on the Navajos, see the same author's Navaho Weaving: Its Technic and History, 2nd ed. (Albuquerque, 1940), 168-69.

2. Ruth Underhill, The Navajo (Norman, 1956), 179.

3. See W. W. Hill, "Navajo Trading and Trading Ritual: A Study of Cultural Dynamics," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, IV, 4 (Winter, 1948), 371-396.

Spanish horses.⁴ During the Mexican period, trading caravans occasionally made their way to the pueblo of Zuni, and thence into the Navajo country. From the west, during the 1850's, came the Mormons. Their missionaries penetrated even the Navajo country, though mainly in search of Hopi converts. (The Hopi villages were situated in the middle of the Navajo country.) Mormon colonists followed, and settled in the deserts northwest of the Colorado River. After a few skirmishes, the Navajos found trading more profitable than raiding, and Navajo blankets soon had a market in Salt Lake City.⁵

The Mormons, in fact, established one of the earliest trading posts among the Navajos after the return from Fort Sumner. In 1872, John D. Lee, fleeing the law because of his complicity in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, established Lee's Ferry in Marble Canyon of the Colorado River. He may have traded with the Navajos during his brief residence there, for they made frequent use of his ferry. In 1874, after Lee's departure, the Mormons set up a trading post devoted exclusively to the Navajo trade. Old Navajos in the 1930's recalled riding to Lee's Ferry to barter blankets and silverwork for horses, flour, and syrup.⁶

4. Underhill, op. cit. 54-55.

5. Richard Van Valkenburgh, A Short History of the Navajo People (Window Rock, Ariz., 1938), 42-43.

6. Ibid., 43-44. Amsden, Navaho Weaving, 173. Juanita Brooks, "Lee's Ferry at Lonely Dell," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXV, 4 (October, 1957), 283-295.

Many trading posts in the western part of the Navajo country are still operated by descendants of these Mormon pioneers.

At this early date the Navajo Reservation, as defined by the treaty of 1868, lay far to the east of Lee's Ferry. It consisted of a relatively small block of land straddling the northern part of the Arizona-New Mexico boundary. Beginning in 1878, successive executive orders enlarged the reservation and pushed its border west to the Colorado River. Navajo communities were scattered the length of this land, but in the early years most of the tribe lived in the east. The agency was located at the former military post of Fort Defiance, and here the first traders made their appearance.

The first trading post opened at Fort Defiance shortly after establishment of the agency in 1868. Owned by a man named Neale, it apparently was primarily a sutler's store that catered to the trade of resident whites. In 1869, Neale sold out to Anson C. Damon, whose clerk, "Old Man" William Leonard, later operated a post at Ganado.⁷ Damon soon found that there were profits in trading with the Indians. In 1871, Agent Willy Arny persuaded some Navajos to sell their wool to the store. He even hired ox-teams with Mexican drivers to haul the wool to Albuquerque for shipment to eastern carpet factories. The experiment was a success; the foundation of Navajo trading had been laid.⁸

7. Van Valkenburgh, Short History of the Navajo, 37-38, 44.

8. Underhill, The Navajo, 181.

During the 1870's, the Navajos entered willingly into the game of trading, for annuity issues proved inadequate, and the point of issue, Fort Defiance, required a long journey for many families. Some of the people traded at the sutler's store of Stover and Coddington at Fort Wingate, the military post that the Army had built on the southeast corner of the reservation to keep watch on the Navajos. Still others traded at Ganado, where old Ganado Mucho (Many Cattle), an influential chief, had settled with many of his followers. Charles Crary in 1871 opened a store in the valley of Pueblo Colorado Wash two miles east of present Ganado. In 1874 or 1875 "Old Man" Leonard came from Fort Defiance and established a trading post three miles west of Ganado. About the same time John Lorenzo Hubbell (Don Lorenzo), who had clerked for Stover and Coddington at Fort Wingate and had managed their store at Manuelito's camp, built a stone and log post near Ganado Lake. In 1878 he bought out William Leonard and moved to the site where he traded for the rest of his life.⁹

Farther west, another important trading center, catering to both Navajo and Hopi trade, grew up at a site later named Keam's Canyon. Sometime during the 1870's, Billy Dodd, brother of the first agent

9. Richard F. Van Valkenburgh, Dine Bikeyah [Navajo's Country] (Fort Defiance, Ariz., 1941), 64. Van Valkenburgh, Short History of The Navajos, 45-46. LeCharles G. Eckel, "History of Ganado," Museum Notes, VI, 10 (April, 1934), 48-49. Mrs. Eckel is a granddaughter of John L. Hubbell.

to the Navajos, opened a trading post here. In 1880 Thomas Varker Keam, an Englishman, moved to the canyon that still bears his name. He had been employed as Spanish interpreter at Fort Defiance in 1872, and had served as acting agent during the summer of that year. For the next eight years he had traded near the agency while actively but unsuccessfully seeking appointment as agent.¹⁰ By 1884 he had built four or five stone buildings in his canyon and had established a successful trade with the Hopis and Navajos. After his death in 1904, his property was operated by Lorenzo Hubbell, Jr., son of Don Lorenzo, and later by Joseph Schmedding.¹¹

The success of the early trading posts, combined with the completion of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (later the Santa Fe), brought an influx of traders to the Navajo country during the decade of the 1880's. Some applied for licenses and went into business on the reservation. Others established stores off the reservation, where no license was required. Some of the more important posts begun in this decade were at Tsaile, Manuelito, Crystal, Chinlee, and Washington Pass. By 1885 there were two posts at the agency, one operated by S. G. Reeder

10. Frank D. Reeve, "The Government and the Navajo, 1878-1883," New Mexico Historical Review, XVI, 3 (July, 1941), 275-312 passim. Report of the CIA, 1872, 302-303.

11. Van Valkenburgh, History of the Navajo, 44-45; Dine Bikeyah, 83. Herbert Welsh, Report of a Visit to the Navajo, Pueblo, and Hualapais Indians of New Mexico and Arizona (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1885), 33. Stewart Culin, "Thomas Varker Keam" [Obit.], American Anthropologist, VII (n.s.), 1 (January-March, 1905), 171-72, Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 319.

and B. F. Hyatt, the other by W. R. Fales.¹² Other prominent men who became traders in these years were Stephen E. Aldrich, Archibald S. Sweetland, J. W. Bennett, Samuel E. Day, and Clinton N. Cotton.¹³ Although many traders found the life too demanding and retired to other occupations, many more stayed. Navajo trading came to have a stability and continuity unexcelled by trading on other reservations. Even today it is largely controlled by the old families that got their start in the 1880's.¹⁴

In 1887 there were six licensed traders on the reservation.¹⁵ By 1890 there were nine on the reservation and thirty more surrounding it on all sides.¹⁶ The number increased in the 1890's. During these years the Wetherills became traders. Richard Wetherill, assisting the Hyde Exploring Expedition in the excavation of Pueblo Bonito, in 1898 established a trading post in Chaco Canyon. Later he managed a chain of posts owned by the Hyde Expedition. Other Wetherills also became

12. "Indian Traderships," Senate Report No. 2707, 50th Cong., 2nd sess. (1888-89), 175.

13. Van Valkenburgh, Dine Bikeyah, 39, 47, 89, 90, 161, 165. Frank D. Reeve, "The Government and the Navajo, 1883-1888," New Mexico Historical Review, XVIII, 1 (January, 1943), 42-43.

14. Cf. Adams, Shonto, I, 229-230.

15. Report of Agent S. S. Patterson, Aug. 23, 1887, Report of the CIA, 1887, 256.

16. Report of Agent C. E. Vandever, Aug. 22, 1890, ibid., 1890, 162. Underhill, The Navajos, 182.

traders. Among them, "Hosteen John" and his wife Louisa left the deepest mark on the country and the people. First operating a post at Ojo Alamo, they later, in 1906, built the famous store at remote Kayenta.¹⁷ J. B. Moore arrived at Crystal about 1897 and there started the post destined to have an important influence on Navajo weaving.¹⁸ In 1898 Sam Day opened a store at the mouth of Canyon de Chelly. It passed through a succession of owners and finally, in 1919, was bought by L. H. "Cozy" McSparron, who named it the Thunderbird.¹⁹

Unlike the business on other reservations, the Navajo trade continued to thrive and expand in the twentieth century. By 1943, probably the peak of the trade, there were 146 trading posts on or near the reservation, of which ninety-five were licensed by the Government.²⁰

In the years following World War II, the conditions that had insulated the Navajo country from the outside world and encouraged the Indian's dependence on the trader began to change. For one thing, many young men had served in the military forces. They returned from

17. For a history of the trading activities of the Wetherills, see Frank McKnitt, Richard Wetherill: Anasazi (Albuquerque, 1957); and Frances Gillmor and Louisa W. Wetherill, Traders to the Navajos: The Story of the Wetherills of Kayenta, 2nd ed. (Albuquerque, 1952).

18. Moore, The Navajo; Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part I, 13.

19. Interview, Archeologist Sally Van Valkenburgh, National Park Service, with L. H. McSparron, Oct. 10, 1958.

20. Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton, The Navaho (Cambridge, 1946), 38.

the war with a knowledge of, and to some extent a preference for, the ways of the white man. For another, large-scale exploitation of oil, gas, and uranium deposits brought many whites and much money to the Navajo country. Finally, and most significant, light farm trucks virtually replaced the horse and wagon as a means of transportation. With this new mobility, the Indians could now go to town and do much of their buying at the chain stores. The future of the trader, and of the Navajos, is still in doubt. But one thing is clear. The old order is on its way out.²¹

Character of the Navajo Trader

The Navajo trader seems to have taken more seriously than traders elsewhere his role as spokesman for the new life, to have acquired a deeper personal interest in his customers, and to have developed a more acute sense of responsibility for their welfare. This attitude probably stemmed in part from the vastness of the reservation, in part from the scarcity of other whites among the Navajos, and in part from the long tenure of most of the traders.

As on other reservations, the Indians expected the trader to be the source of all wisdom and strength. Generally, the Navajo trader stepped into this paternalistic role with ease. And if his strength and wisdom occasionally left something to be desired, he nevertheless

21. Cf. Underhill, The Navajo, Chs. 18-20.

played his part with confidence and relish. "Out here in this country," recalled Don Lorenzo Hubbell, "the Indian trader is everything from merchant to father confessor, justice of the peace, judge, jury, court of appeals, chief medicine man, and de facto czar of the domain over which he presides."²²

The Navajo trader's motivation, too, remained essentially that of other traders. His prime object was to make money, but he understood that, for him to prosper, the Navajos must prosper. He took pride in the higher standard of living and greater material comfort that his activities brought to the Indians. "I will make a candid disclaimer of any intentional philanthropy," summed up J. B. Moore, but "manifestly, my only hope for success lies in aiding and bettering the conditions in my settlement by every means possible and to the utmost of my ability."²³

With a few unhappy exceptions, the Navajo traders were honest and fair in their dealings with the Indians. Joseph Schmedding, who worked for Richard Wetherill at Chaco Canyon before buying the Keam's Canyon trading post from Lorenzo Hubbell, Jr., described Richard Wetherill in terms that applied also to such men as Don Lorenzo Hubbell, Thomas V.

22. John Lorenzo Hubbell (as told to John Edwin Hogg), "Fifty Years an Indian Trader," Touring Topics, XII, 12 (December, 1930), 24.

23. Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part I, 19.

Keam, J. B. Moore, and John Wetherill.²⁴ Richard, he said, was

a keen bargainer, a typical "Yankee horse trader," but always and painstakingly fair. He knew every trick of the trade, besides several others of his own invention. No use trying to hoodwink him--he knew the answers before the questions were put. Of course, he possessed intimate knowledge of values, but over and above that he was a master psychologist. That, perhaps, more than the actual trading knowledge and experience, was the reason for his success.

. . . every trading transaction was a battle of wits, but none was allowed to have recourse to unfair means, to cheat, falsify weights, or in any other manner take advantage of the illiteracy of the Indians. Fair play was the rule of the game and each deal had to leave a pleasant taste in the mouth of everybody concerned. The Indians were our hosts as lawful occupants of the reservation. They were our good neighbors, and we wanted them to be more than that; we desired their friendship.

The Navajo Reservation was (and to an extent still is) a great expanse of wilderness in which scattered hogans were the sole signs of habitation. The trading post was the only bit of civilization within miles, and the trader by necessity became a hotel-keeper. But he was more than that. He was a gracious and entertaining host who derived great pleasure and little profit (he seldom accepted payment) from this unsolicited role. Ordinary travelers as well as eminent explorers, artists, writers, and scientists enjoyed the atmosphere and hospitality of the trading post, and many remembered in print their stay in the trader's household.²⁵

24. Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 306-307.

25. See, for example, Welsh, Visit to the Navajo, Pueblo, and Hualapais Indians, 33; Dixon, "Arizona in 1900," 40; Roosevelt, "Across the Navajo Desert," 309-317; Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 335-336; Culin, "Thomas Varker Keam," 171-172.

Another and related duty also fell to the trader. He knew more about the land and the people than any other white. As guide and expert on native customs, he performed valuable services and gave useful information to students of geography, ethnology, and archeology. The Wetherills not only guided archeologists to remote prehistoric ruins, but discovered the great cliff palaces of Mesa Verde. John Wetherill in 1909 led Dr. Byron Cummings to Rainbow Bridge. J. L. Hubbell was one of the first (if not the first) white men to view the Hopi Snake Dance, and he subsequently took many eminent students, including Theodore Roosevelt, to see the mysterious rites. Thomas V. Keam assembled large collections of antiquities that later found their way into the Berlin and Peabody Museums as well as the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.²⁶

The country and the Indians thus developed a unique brand of man to preside over the trading post and its surrounding community. In the literature of Navajo trading, the picture drawn above of the trader recurs time and again with surprising unanimity. If the stereotyped trader ever existed, he found his way to the Navajo country.

26. McKnitt, Richard Wetherill, passim. Gillmor, Traders to the Navajos, Ch. X. Obituary of John Wetherill, Desert Magazine, VIII, 3 (January, 1945), 12. Crane, Indians of the Painted Desert, 148. Culin, "Thomas Varker Keam," 172.

Character of the Trade

The trading post, wrote Ruth Underhill, "was to the Navajo what a world's fair might be to a modern American."²⁷ The physical plant alone must have made a deep impression on the Navajo, who knew no structure larger than his tiny hogan. Although some of the pioneer traders opened shop in tents,²⁸ the typical trading post that sprang up throughout the Navajo country in the 1880's and 1890's was more enduring. Some were of lumber, but adobe and stone prevailed. Some combined the store, wareroom, blanket room, office, and living quarters in one building. Others had separate buildings for each use, together with a sizeable barn and a multiplicity of small utility buildings. A hogan, the entrance facing east, stood nearby for the accommodation of overnight customers. The trader insured that it was fully equipped with cooking utensils.

The interior of the post continued the world's fair motif. Here was a wondrous assortment of goods undreamed in the days before Fort Sumner. Sacks of flour, crates of coffee, and quantities of other merchandise crammed the warehouse. Brightly labeled cans, tobacco, candy, hardware, calico, and leather goods lined the shelves of the

27. Underhill, The Navajo, 184.

28. Herbert Welsh described a trading tent operated in Washington Pass in 1884 by Elias Clark and Charles Hubbell, brother of Don Lorenzo Hubbell. Visit to the Navajo, Pueblo, and Hualapais Indians, 22.

storeroom. To discourage pilfering, a wide aisle and high counters three feet wide separated the laden shelves from the prospective purchaser.²⁹ In the adjoining office would be found a rolltop desk and possibly a typewriter, filing cabinets, and rows of letter boxes and ledgers--"everything," one writer observed at J. B. Moore's post, "you would expect to find in a model office of the Masonic Building, Chicago."³⁰ Varicolored blankets in piles, bales, and draped around the walls, filled the blanket room (or building). The trader's home, although the Indian rarely gained admittance, contrasted sharply with the desert wastes. It was usually comfortably furnished, and picturesquely decorated with Navajo craftwork. After artists began coming in large numbers, many homes also displayed original paintings of local scenes left by appreciative artists who had enjoyed the trader's hospitality.³¹

More to the point, at the trading post the Navajo might obtain the white man's goods, to some of which he had been introduced at Fort Sumner. Sugar, flour, and coffee, issue items during the exile, headed the list. The Indians discovered that the trader's canned peaches were larger and sweeter than the variety they had once grown in Canyon de Chelly, and they developed a taste for other canned foods too. Pocket

29. Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 327. Erna Fergusson, Our Southwest (New York, 1946), 215.

30. Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part I, 12.

31. See, for example, Dixon, "Arizona in 1900," 40.

knives were especially valued. The men bought unbleached muslin from which to make pantaloons and, later, brightly colored calico for shirts. Velveteen and calico found special favor with the women. After completion of the railroad across Arizona, larger items could be profitably freighted from the station at Manuelito. Wagons, plows, scrapers, hoes, and wheelbarrows appeared outside the hogan, cookstoves inside.³² Don Lorenzo Hubbell, C. N. Cotton, and the C. H. Algert Company saw that the celebrated Navajo blanket, so important to the trade, was too heavy and stiff for a garment or bed-wrap. They brought in consignments of soft Pendleton blankets colored in designs they knew were pleasing to the Navajos. The experiment succeeded. Other trading posts adopted the custom, and American blankets soon came into common use throughout the reservation.³³ By 1900 these and hundreds of other American manufactured items had found their way from the trading post into Navajo life.

Although the Navajos did not begin to taste prosperity until the oil, gas, and uranium boom following World War II, they had sufficient resources to develop, with the aid and encouragement of the trader, a stable economy. Anything the Navajo produced he could exchange at the trading post for the merchandise to which he had grown accustomed.

32. Underhill, The Navajo, 184-85. Fergusson, Our Southwest, 215.

33. George Wharton James, Indian Blankets and their Makers (Chicago, 1927), 160-161.

Long before Fort Sumner, the Navajo had counted his wealth in sheep. The great flocks originated in raids on Pueblo Indians and Spanish ranchers, and by 1846 numbered an estimated 500,000 head. Stripped of this wealth by Kit Carson's campaigns, the Navajos set to rebuilding their flocks following the return from Fort Sumner.³⁴ After Agent Army had shown the way to both Navajo and trader (see p. 47), the sheep swiftly became the tribe's most valuable economic asset. By 1890, although the returns to individual Indians were not large, sheep had become big business. During that year, reported the agent, the Navajos had marketed 12,000 sheep and 1,370,000 pounds of wool through the various traders.³⁵ Sheep still form the basis of the Navajo economy.

The Navajos also herded large numbers of goats. The men hunted wild cats, mountain lions, and other animals, and tanned the pelts. Many families planted patches of corn. And in years when the pinyon trees yielded bounteous crops, everyone turned out to gather nuts. These products, too, the Navajos brought to the trading post. In 1890, besides the sheep and wool, the Indians sold 29,000 pelts (principally sheep but probably including goatskins and the pelts of wild animals), 117,000 pounds of pinyon nuts, and 1,110,000 pounds of corn.³⁶

34. Katharine Luomala, Navaho Life of Yesterday and Today (Berkeley: National Park Service, 1938), 56-63.

35. Report of Agent C. E. Vandever, Aug. 22, 1890, Report of the CIA, 1890, 162. Navajo population in this year numbered between 14,000 and 15,000 persons.

36. Ibid., See also Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 329.

Also in 1890, the Indians received \$24,000 for the famed Navajo blanket. This product was not important primarily for its high return to the weaver, for she received little more than five cents an hour for her labor. It was important, rather, as almost the sole source of income that did not depend on a seasonal cycle. The blanket could be woven and sold at any time during the year.³⁷

The blanket trade antedated the trader by many years, for in the Mexican period products of the Navajo loom were items of barter with other tribes and with Europeans. But the years following the return from Fort Sumner revolutionized the trade as well as the blankets. These years, said Amsden, "witnessed the gradual transformation of the blanket, an article of clothing for the Indian, into a rug, an article of furniture for the American."³⁸ In this transformation the trader played the key role. From the economic standpoint, his influence was positive; from the artistic standpoint, negative.

Although the Navajos were profiting from the sale of blankets to the Mormons as early as 1873,³⁹ not until the middle 1880's, after traders had become numerous enough to make their influence felt, did the blankets emerge as a significant source of income. John Lorenzo

37. B. Youngblood, "Navajo Trading," in Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States: Hearings before a Subcommittee of The Committee of Indian Affairs United States Senate, 55th Cong. 1 sess., Pt. 34 (1937), 18042.

38. Navaho Weaving, 171.

39. Report of Agent J. D. Gould, Sept. 3, 1873, Report of the CIA, 1873, 274.

Hubbell and Clinton N. Cotton, partners in the Ganado store, are generally conceded credit for fathering the blanket trade. Recognizing that a large eastern market might be created, they spurred the weavers to greater effort and bought all the blankets they could produce.⁴⁰ Other traders followed suit, the eastern market developed as Hubbell and Cotton predicted, and by the turn of the century \$50,000 worth of blankets passed through Gallup in one year. The figure jumped⁴¹ to \$500,000 in 1913, to \$750,000 in 1923, and to \$1 million in 1931. The weaver worked long and hard. A large, well-designed blanket took from two to three months to complete. Depending on tightness and fineness of the yarn, cleanliness of the wool, color scheme, individuality of design, and closeness of weave, it brought between \$4 and \$100 from the trader.⁴² But the weaver's family now had a year-round source of income. The trader profited, too, not only on sale of the blanket but on merchandise the weaver had bought with the proceeds of her labor. Later, he made a third profit on dyes and yarn sold the weaver for the blanket.⁴³

In this third profit lay the trader's influence on the design and quality of blankets--an influence that produced, in the judgment

40. James, Indian Blankets, 47-50. Amsden, Navaho Weaving, 179.

41. Amsden, op. cit., 182.

42. Report of the CIA, 1887, quoted in ibid., 180-181.

43. Amsden, op. cit., 179.

of most experts, the artistic nadir of Navajo weaving. So great was demand that the traders, to speed production, introduced aniline dye and cotton warp. Released from the color limitations of the native vegetable dyes, the Navajo woman turned out garish blankets that contrasted unfavorably with the soft, natural colors of the past. Released from the labor of making wool warp, she turned out blankets quickly and cheaply. She also grew careless. "Rushed to complete her task, for which she knew she would get a small price, the weaver spun her dirty, greasy, poorly-carded, imperfectly-dyed wool into the loosest, thickest, and coarsest kind of yarn, and then hastily and indifferently wove it--upon the cheap and flimsy cotton warp--in poor designs, with a loose stitch, the sooner to get it into the trader's hands and secure her pay."⁴⁴ The system of paying for blankets by the pound added a further incentive to carelessness.

The artistic monstrosities of this period, however, gave way, shortly after the turn of the century, to a revival of the old form. Better educated, the public began to demand better quality. Such traders as Hubbell, Moore, Wetherill, and, later, L. H. McSparron, backed by such large wholesalers as Fred Harvey and Company, encouraged a return to the use of native wool and vegetable dyes. As art, the Navajo blanket again came into its own.⁴⁵ Aside from artistic values,

44. James, op. cit., 47-50. See also Amsden, op. cit., 182-187.

45. James, op. cit., 52-53. Cf. Amsden, op. cit., Ch. XV.

however, the Navajo loom, from the beginning of the reservation period, was an important economic asset to the Indians, and its product one of the most significant items in the trade.

Another craft of economic importance that evolved under the trader's tutelage was Navajo silverwork. Unlike the blanket industry, the Navajos had not worked silver before Fort Sumner. But they were adept borrowers, and in the years after returning from exile they learned the craft from Mexican teachers. One authority says that a Navajo named "Old Smith" in 1872 persuaded a Mexican friend to teach him the art, and that he passed it on to his four sons.⁴⁶ Whatever its origins, it was the trader who saw its possibilities. Clinton N. Cotton, while telegraph operator at Manuelito, New Mexico, had become interested in silverwork. After buying an interest in the post at Ganado, he and Lorenzo Hubbell brought "Thick Lipped Mexican," as the Navajos named him, and other Mexican silversmiths from Cubero, New Mexico, to Ganado. There they taught the local Indians how to turn Mexican pesos into silver jewelry.⁴⁷ The art spread throughout the eastern part of the reservation, and silverwork became an important item of both pawn and trade. From the trader the silversmith obtained his tools as well as the silver and stone settings. To the trader the smith took his completed jewelry. As blankets were

46. Underhill, The Navajo, 157-58.

47. Van Valkenburgh, Dine Bikeyah, 64.

valued by the pound, so silverwork was paid for by the ounce, a custom that encouraged hasty work. A few traders recognized the fallacy of this system, however, and paid by the piece, adding a premium for high quality work.⁴⁸

Silver jewelry played an important part in the economics of the trade, for operations of the trading post were founded almost entirely on credit. All Navajo products except blankets and silver were marketed seasonally, and the trader had to advance merchandise against anticipated income from wool, lambs, corn, and pinyon nuts. If any trader had refused, the Indian would have gone to another. Although traders in recent years have increasingly resorted to the use of unsecured credit, the early traders required collateral against all credit.⁴⁹ Anything of value to the Indian could be pawned. Silverwork--concha belts, bracelets, rings--led all other items, but saddles, bridles, and rifles were also to be found in every trader's pawn closet.

The intrinsic value of the pawn plus the owner's credit rating determined the amount of cash or credit advanced. Rarely did the amount equal intrinsic value, for the trader might find, after months of waiting, that he had actually bought the object. As a spur to store sales, he usually allowed more on pawn if taken out in trade. Although the

48. John Adair, The Navajo and Pueblo Silversmiths (Norman, 1944), 113-114. McKnitt, Richard Wetherill, 184.

49. Adams, Shonto, II, 301.

regulations that governed licensed trading forbade the trader from charging interest, it did permit him to sell an unredeemed pawn after six months. No trader did so. Some, in fact, held pawn as long as five, ten, or even fifteen years. A trader who made haste to dispose of overdue pawn soon found his clientele doing business at another trading post.⁵⁰

One agent, in 1887, attempted to suppress the practice of pawn but with no success.⁵¹ Without it, trade was impossible.

The pawn business is a necessity to the Indians [said John Lorenzo Hubbell] for the reason that it is the only source of credit with them; all other attempt to establish a credit business with them has proved a disastrous venture, to which I will attest. . . .

. . . There is no money really to the Indian trader in the pawn business, but it is a source of security for what he lets the Indian have, and naturally helps increase his business. There is no Indian trader who would not prefer a cash transaction in its place--but that is an impossibility. On the other hand, there is no Indian trader who would not prefer a pledge in preference to a book account.⁵²

The risks of extensive credit operation, together with high freight rates, justified the trader's high retail prices. According to one study of trading post economics, gross sales probably differed little from those of general stores elsewhere. But since the trader

50. Adair, op. cit., 108-110. Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 82. Dane and Mary Coolidge, The Navajo Indians (Boston, 1930), 67-69.

51. Report of Agent S. S. Patterson, Aug. 23, 1887, Report of the CIA, 1887, 256.

52. Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part II, 16-17.

paid no rent, had a low salary and wage account, and paid no taxes, he realized a higher net profit than his counterparts in town.⁵³

Because almost all of his sales were on credit, the trader, in turn, obtained his stock from the wholesaler on credit. As the network of trading posts expanded, wholesale houses sprang up along the railroad at Gallup, Winslow, Holbrook, and Flagstaff. These concerns not only specialized in supplying merchandise demanded by the Navajos, but also in seeking and supplying eastern markets for Navajo products. Like the trader, the wholesaler, or "merc," had to operate almost entirely on credit, a practice that enabled him to charge somewhat higher prices than conventional wholesalers. Throughout the year, the trader drew his stock from the wholesaler. Once a year, he took the accumulated rugs, wool, and lambs to the wholesaler in payment of account. Thus the wholesaler was the financial backbone of the Navajo trade.⁵⁴

Negotiation for credit was, for both trader and Indian, an established part of Navajo trading ritual. Rigidly adhered to, this ritual demanded many unique qualities of a trader. It required, above all, patience. The Indian prolonged trading as much as possible, usually consuming an entire day, sometimes staying overnight and continuing

53. Youngblood, "Navajo Trading," 18108.

54. Ibid., 18105. Adams, op. cit., I, 266. Schmedding, op. cit., 323.

into the next day. He spent much time visiting with friends and relatives. He insisted upon carefully inspecting and considering every item on the shelves, and mentally balancing needs against resources.⁵⁵ He was very brand conscious. The trader had to carry only one brand in each line, for, regardless of price, the Indian would buy only that brand. For years it was Arbuckle coffee, or Bull Durham tobacco.⁵⁶ One trader took a heavy loss because he stocked Carnation evaporated milk. The Indians, eyeing the picture of a flower on the label, decided that it was not milk at all.⁵⁷

That the Navajos were sharp bargainers, every trader agrees. Said J. B. Moore:⁵⁸

There is no other business in the world where the law of "Caveat Emptor" applies so rigidly as in dealing with Navajo Indians. They are ever on the lookout for an opportunity to best a white person, and would rather have one dollar gained in this way than any five they have earned. Even though it profits them nothing to beat their trader--and in the case of the older and experienced traders it rarely does--the temptation to try to do so, and keep trying, is something they cannot resist, and it must be admitted . . . that they not infrequently succeed in besting us.

55. Kluckhohn and Leighton, The Navaho, 38. Underhill, The Navajo, 180.

56. Schmedding, op. cit., 321.

57. Underhill, op. cit., 185.

58. Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part I, 16. See also Coolidge and Coolidge, The Navajo Indians, 67, and Crane, Indians of the Painted Desert, 225.

As time and distance meant nothing to the Navajos, they were able to play one trader against another with ease. They were perfectly willing to travel great distances, by-passing several stores enroute, to patronize a post where the trader's prices appeared more advantageous or his personality more agreeable.⁵⁹

In the early days, no money circulated. The trader paid for blankets and wool (after checking the sacks for pebbles or sand) in statements of credit good for merchandise at the store. This practice had its disadvantages. "We fooled him," recalled an old Navajo. "We used the paper and traced the writing and used the paper over and over that way."⁶⁰ The traders then devised trade money, brass coins stamped with the name of the trading post and the amount of cash value. "Seco," as these chips were termed, was more difficult to counterfeit. Later, the Indian Bureau decreed that cash had to be used. The Indians refused to use paper money. Besides instinctively distrusting it, they could not distinguish between different denominations. Silver came into universal use, although credit slips, more closely controlled, continued in vogue also.⁶¹ When trading with silver, the Indian bought one article, paid for it, received his change, then bought another article and paid for it, and continued this tedious process until the money (and the trader) had been exhausted.

59. Coolidge and Coolidge, op. cit., 67.

60. Van Valkenburgh, Short History of the Navajos, 45.

61. Underhill, op. cit., 182-83. Schmedding, op. cit., 330.

As a matter of course, the trader was expected to provide all sorts of extras to retain the good will of his customers. He dispensed little gifts of candy or coffee, saw to it in winter that the stove was well fired, kept a pail of water and a dipper near the entrance, and provided a box, nailed to the counter, full of smoking tobacco, cigarette papers, and matches. Outside, he built a substantial hogan where overnight guests might stay, had it blessed by a medicine man, and kept it stocked with cooking utensils and fire wood.⁶²

The characteristics of trade among the Navajos did not differ essentially from those among other tribes. The special conditions found on the Navajo reservation made trade and the trader more important to the people than elsewhere, and caused the character of the trade to remain largely unchanged long after it had changed elsewhere. These facts should not obscure the basic identity between the Navajo trade and the trade on other reservations. In physical appearance and method of operation, the Navajo trading post today, with some adaptation to modern conditions, portrays the character of the reservation trade of the late nineteenth century.

The Significance of the Navajo Trader

It has been shown that the characteristics of trade throughout the reservation system emerged, with some modifications dictated by the

62. Underhill, op. cit., 180. Schmedding, op. cit., 332.

size and lack of concentration of the population, on the Navajo Reservation. It has also been shown, perhaps less clearly, that the life and character of the Navajo trader closely resembled the life and character of traders elsewhere. So, too, the Navajo trader's historical significance rests upon much the same basis as the significance of his counterpart on other reservations.

As the principal link between the Navajo and white worlds, the trader presided over the transition in Navajo material culture that took place roughly between 1870 and 1920. These were years, according to one writer, "of intense readjustment for the whole society; adjustment to reservation life and white control, to the pressure of white religion and white morality, to white food, clothing, tools, and techniques. The white man's food, clothing, tools, and associated techniques, are, on the whole, eagerly accepted, and incorporated into Navaho culture with amazing rapidity and success, without radically or fundamentally changing the core of Navaho life or thought."⁶³ The flow of white goods from the trading post into Navajo life during these years was enormous. It significantly raised the Navajo standard of living, and profoundly altered the Navajo material culture.⁶⁴

63. Walter Dyke, A Navajo Autobiography, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology No. 8 (New York, 1947), 169-70. This work, the autobiography of Old Mexican, together with the same author's autobiography of Left Handed (Son of Old Man Hat: A Navajo Autobiography [New York, 1938]) span these critical years, and amply portray Navajo reaction to, and acceptance of, white technological innovations.

64. Adams, Shonto, I, 278; II, 422-23, 463, 523. See also Kluckhohn, "The Navajos in the Machine Age," 199-203.

The Navajo agent in 1890 recognized the advances already made in
this process:⁶⁵

The tribe is in a very interesting stage of transition, and clearly one of very material progress. The crude artisans among them have adopted many modern tools and discarded their old primitive appliances. The women still cling to the traditional methods of spinning and weaving, but in their cooking the ordinary utensils of civilization are forcing the crude pottery vessels and basketry into disuse. For the cumbrous wooden hoes and planting sticks, modern implements have been substituted. The proximity of trading posts has greatly altered their native costumes and modified many of the earlier barbaric traits, and also affords them good markets for their wool, peltry, woven fabrics, and other products. Bright calicoes and Mexican straw hats are their ordinary summer attire, and they take kindly to our comfortable heavy garments in cold weather. Firearms have almost entirely superseded the primitive weapons, and silver ornaments of their own manufacture are worn instead of copper and brass.

By 1920 the Navajo material culture of pre-reservation days had been almost totally submerged. In its place had sprung a material culture basically American of the late nineteenth century. Above all others, the trader had wrought this change.

Most students of the Navajos agree that their nonmaterial culture remained almost completely untouched by white beliefs and practices until after World War II. Despite intensive missionary work by several denominations, the Navajos held persistently to their religious and

⁶⁵. Report of Agent C. E. Vandever, Aug. 22, 1890, Report of the CIA, 1890, 164.

moral beliefs, and to their social organization.⁶⁶ That the trader did not use his great influence to change the old values is not surprising. Consciously or unconsciously, in fact, most traders opposed any changes in this field, because assimilation of Navajo by white culture would have undermined their paramount position. "As a contact agency," concluded Adams, "the trader has been able to divert and restrict the impact of American upon Navajo culture largely to economic and material channels which would benefit the store, while minimizing or forestalling any more general assimilation or acculturation which would weaken Navajo dependence upon him."⁶⁷ That the trader's reasoning was valid is indicated by the dark future of the modern trading post as a profitable business.

Not only a new material culture, but also a new economy evolved under the influence of the trader. In the 1880's and 1890's, he encouraged and guided the transition from a subsistence economy to a market economy. Although an agent first recognized the commercial possibilities of sheep and wool, the trader provided the market that made sheep-herding economically rewarding. The trader foresaw the

66. See especially Gladys A. Reichard, Social Life of the Navajo Indians, Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, III (New York, 1928), 158-59; Gladys A. Reichard, "The Navajo and Christianity," American Anthropologist, LI (N.S.), 1 (January-March, 1949), 66-71; Underhill, The Navajo, 227; Kluckhohn, "Navajos in the Machine Age," 99-203; and Dyk, A Navaho Autobiography, 169-70.

67. Adams, Shonto, II, 518.

possibilities of Navajo craftwork. Without his encouragement and guidance, and his success at creating an American market, it is doubtful that blankets and silverwork would ever have amounted to a significant source of income. Thus the trader led in developing an economy that facilitated adjustment to reservation life, and then served as the indispensable middle-man in its operation.

In his influence on Navajo material culture and economy lay the trader's contribution to Indian policy. As has been asserted, the twin objectives of Indian policy were to control and to civilize the Indians. The only advance registered in civilizing the Navajos lay in the area of material culture, and the trader led all others in influencing material progress. Control was never a great problem with the Navajos, so shattering had the Fort Sumner episode proved. But it is still possible that the Navajo's economic adjustment prevented discontent from reaching violent proportions. Incidents did occasionally disturb official routine, and the trader was then to be found trying to smooth over the misunderstanding.⁶⁸

Although the trader's contribution to governmental policy objectives was intangible, his knowledge of the language and the people proved invaluable to the agent in the routine of daily administration. A contrast between the agent and the trader in Indian life has already

⁶⁸. See, for example, Gillmor and Wetherill, Traders to the Navajos, Ch. IX.

been drawn. Ruth Underhill carried the contrast a step farther. "We are reminded," she wrote, "of the ancient situation in Japan, when the emperor was too sacred to have any contact with his people. It was his prime minister, the shogun, who guided the nation while the sovereign remained in godlike isolation. The trader was the Navajo's shogun, and it is no exaggeration to say that he guided the People's development for some thirty or forty years."⁶⁹ In later years, when numerous officials descended on the reservation, the trader's assistance in contacting the people proved indispensable. An irrigation specialist, for example, usually could not build a dam without the trader's help in securing the cooperation of the community, in recruiting a labor force, in interpreting instructions, indeed in locating the source of water.⁷⁰ The trading post, too, was the agent's only effective medium of mass communication. Notices of changes or innovations in governmental policy of interest to the Indians were posted on the store bulletin board. To the trader fell the task of explaining, and perhaps justifying, the always incomprehensible doings of "Wasindon." Still later, as non-governmental agencies off the reservation increasingly found occasion to deal with the Navajos, the trader was called upon to act as intermediary. Indeed, he was usually the only one in the community who knew where a particular family might be living at the moment.⁷¹

69. The Navajos, 181-82.

70. Coolidge and Coolidge, The Navajo Indians, 68-69.

71. Adams, Shonto, II, 371-78.

In almost every Navajo community, the trading post had been in operation for twenty or thirty years before any other whites established residence. The Indians from the first looked upon it as a friend, while usually greeting later white arrivals with suspicion or indifference. They grew dependent upon the store for help in all matters that touched on the new way of life and in all relations with the outside world. This dependence, moreover, persisted after other Americans had settled in their midst.⁷²

To the Navajos, the trading post was thus not only a mercantile business and a bank, but also, as we have seen, an information and communication agency. The trader not only served the community as spokesman for the white world, but served the white world as spokesman for the Indian community. He was, in addition, the Navajos' protector, for he was expected to reconcile any conflict between Indian ways and conditions of the white world.⁷³ He was their counselor, advising on business and personal affairs, including marital difficulties, family feuds, and a host of other problems that arose in daily life.⁷⁴ He was their general factotum, giving medical help, burying the dead (Navajos deeply fear the dead), arranging Christmas parties, distributing gifts, recording vital statistics--in short, giving direct assistance in

72. Ibid., II, 456.

73. Ibid., I, 141; II, 380-83.

74. Youngblood, Navajo Trading, 18042. Kluckhohn and Leighton, The Navaho, 79.

every matter where the white man was supposed to have special knowledge or skill.⁷⁵ His store, finally, served as the local community center, where the Indians gathered to exchange gossip, discuss governmental policy, and indulge in horseplay.⁷⁶

Yes [reminisced Joseph Schmedding], the trader's life is not just standing behind a store counter and selling merchandise at exorbitant prices to untutored savages, as some people seem to believe. It embodies many other phases; but from whatever angle it is viewed, the trader sees life in capital letters. There is fun and pleasure and profit, to be sure, but also pathos, misery, and tragedy. The trader has to be an adaptable person--he is called upon to face many situations that never trouble one off the reservation. At all times he must be self-reliant; there simply is no one else to whom he can delegate unpleasant and dangerous tasks. Unless he is willing, ready, and qualified to do his share, and to accept the responsibilities, he had better look for some less exacting calling.⁷⁷

75. Adams, op. cit., II, 383-84. Schmedding, Cowboy and Indian Trader, 343-46. Coolidge and Coolidge, The Navajo Indians, 67-68.

76. Kluckhohn and Leighton, op. cit., 38. Coolidge and Coolidge, op. cit., 67. Adams, op. cit., II, 388-89.

77. Schmedding, op. cit., 346.

PART III
THE HUBBELL TRADING POST

The history of the Hubbell Trading Post at Ganado, Arizona, portrays in capsule form the pattern of Navajo trade. Its physical appearance today preserves a picture of the Navajo trading post of yesterday. And the life of its first proprietor conveys, perhaps too grandly to be strictly typical, the life, character, and influence of the early Navajo trader. John Lorenzo Hubbell--"the King of Northern Arizona,"¹ "the last and greatest of the Patriarchs and Princes of the Frontier"² --was beyond question the dean of Navajo traders.

John Lorenzo Hubbell

John Lorenzo Hubbell, "Old Mexican" or "Double Glasses" to the Navajos, "Don Lorenzo" to the whites, was born at Pajarito, New Mexico, on November 27, 1853. His father, James L. "Santiago" Hubbell, a Connecticut Yankee, had come to New Mexico as a Santa Fe trader in 1848. His mother, Julianita Gutierrez, traced her ancestry to Spanish pioneers of New Mexico.³ Largely self-educated, John Lorenzo clerked

1. Agnes Laut, Through Our Unknown Southwest (New York, 1915), 126.

2. Charles F. Lummis, Mesa, Canyon, and Pueblo (New York, 1925), 182.

3. Walter Hubbell, History of the Hubbell Family Containing Genealogical Records of the Ancestors and Descendants of Richard Hubbell from A.D. 1086 to A.D. 1915, 2nd ed. (New York, 1915), 161-62, 171. During the 1850's James Hubbell pioneered in freighting ore from the mines of southern Arizona to Kansas City. At the outbreak of the Civil War he raised a company of New Mexico volunteers and served as its captain. He died in 1885 at the age of 64.

for a year in the Albuquerque post office, then set out in 1870 to find adventure in the West. For three or four years, he wandered about northern Arizona and southeastern Utah. He became familiar with the life, customs, and language of the native inhabitants--Navajos, Paiutes, Hopis, and Utes. At Lee's Ferry, in 1872, he met John D. Lee, and at Kanab, Utah, worked for a time in a Mormon trading post. Some Paiute Indians saved his life, and earned for the whole Indian race his undying gratitude. Later, Hubbell accomplished the remarkable feat of swimming the treacherous Colorado River.⁴ He gained more experience at Indian trading as clerk for Stover and Coddington at Fort Wingate, and served briefly in 1874 as Spanish interpreter for the Navajo Agency at Fort Defiance.⁵ Finally, as we have seen (p. 48), he opened a trading post of his own east of Ganado, and about 1878, after buying out William Leonard, settled at the famous post west of Ganado. Here he traded for over half a century.

Hubbell purchased from Leonard a substantial building constructed of upright logs and adobe. This served as both trading post and living quarters. Leonard had named his post Pueblo Colorado (Red Town) after an Indian ruin northeast of the store. To avoid confusion with the

4. Hubbell and Hogg, "Forty Years an Indian Trader," 24-25.

5. Record of Annuity Goods Issued at Fort Defiance, Ariz., May 6, 1874; photostat from National Archives in Hubbell Papers at Ganado.

town in Colorado, Hubbell changed the name to Ganado, after the old Navajo chief, Ganado Mucho, who had settled in the valley.⁶

Under the homestead laws Hubbell claimed 160 acres of land around the post. At the time, this property lay outside the reservation boundaries. In 1880, an executive order enlarged the reservation, and he found himself surrounded by reservation lands. For many years the validity of his title remained in doubt. He made several trips to Washington, and finally, in 1900, Congress passed a special bill to legalize the claim. According to Hubbell, this bill reached President William McKinley's desk on the day he was assassinated, and one of the first acts of the new President, Theodore Roosevelt, was to sign it.⁷ Thus today the 160 acres owned by the heirs of Don Lorenzo form the only block of patented land within the Navajo Reservation. Since he traded on private land throughout his career, Hubbell never had to apply for a license from the Indian Bureau. He believed it good business, however, to operate within the framework of government regulation, and, like other licensed traders, obtained a license and periodically renewed it.

After establishing himself at the old Leonard post, Don Lorenzo in 1879 married Lena Rubi. Like his mother, his wife was descended

6. Eckel, "History of Ganado," 49.

7. "Rights of Settlers on the Navajo Reservation, Arizona," House Report No. 411, 56th Cong., 1st sess. (1900). Hubbell and Hogg, "Forty Years an Indian Trader," 26.

from Spanish colonists who migrated to New Mexico in the sixteenth century. The couple had four children, Lorenzo, Jr., Roman, Barbara, and Adele. The two sons also became Indian traders. As the family began to grow, the Hubbells spent only the summer months at Ganado. During the winter they moved to St. John's, Arizona, where the children could attend school. When the present large post and rambling house were finished in 1900, they began spending the entire year at Ganado.⁸

Early in the 1880's Hubbell apparently formed a partnership with a man named Pillsbury.⁹ This lasted but a short time, for in 1884 Clinton N. Cotton, former telegraph operator at Manuelito, bought a share in the store at Ganado. While Hubbell operated the post, Cotton remained in Gallup to market the Indian wares and to purchase merchandise for the post. The partners dissolved the association in 1894, and Cotton opened a wholesale house in Gallup.¹⁰

During the decade of this partnership, Hubbell and Cotton, more than any other traders, launched Navajo craftwork as a profitable industry. At Cotton's suggestion, they brought Mexican silversmiths to Ganado to teach the Navajos how to make silver jewelry (see p. 63).

8. Eckel, op. cit., 49. Hubbell and Hogg, op. cit., 26.

9. Herbert Welsh mentioned his visit, in the spring of 1884, to the trading post of Hubbell and Pillsbury at Ganado. Report of a Visit to the Navajo, Pueblo, and Hualapais Indians of New Mexico and Arizona, 32. Ledger books for this period in the Hubbell papers point to some sort of business relation between Hubbell and Pillsbury.

10. Eckel, op. cit., 49. Van Valkenburgh, Diné Bikiyah, 64.

They appreciated the economic potential of the Navajo loom, and beginning in 1885 encouraged weavers to increase their output. Probably, too, they shared responsibility with other traders for the steady decline in artistic quality that began at this time. One authority asserts that Cotton heartily favored the use of aniline dyes, which had been introduced by B. F. Hyatt of Fort Defiance, while Hubbell held out, unsuccessfully, for continued use of vegetable dyes.¹¹ In the front rank of those leading the revival of the art early in the twentieth century stood Hubbell. James assessed his role in the evolution of the blanket industry in the following words.¹²

Few men have ever held so honored and rare a position in the esteem of the Navajos and in relation to the blanket industry as does John Lorenzo Hubbell. . . . Indeed, it would be as impossible to write truthfully and comprehensively of the history of the Navajo blanket and leave out Mr. Hubbell's relation to it, as it would be to give the history of the phonograph and leave out the name of Edison. . . . Mr. Hubbell . . . saw the art deteriorate and then

11. James, Indian Blankets and their Makers, 47-50.

12. Ibid., 203-205. See also, pp. 52-53, 125. For other evaluations, see Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part II, 14-16; Harriet Mayfield, "Great Southwest Pioneer Passed on," The Santa Fe Magazine, XXV, 2 (January, 1931), 29-33; Erna Fergusson, Our Southwest (New York, 1946), 217; Amsden, Navaho Weaving, 189-90, 193. Almost every source on Navajo Weaving repeats the story of the oil and water-color rug designs that Hubbell used as patterns from which customers could choose and weavers could work. Mrs. Roman J. Hubbell, Don Lorenzo's daughter-in-law and present proprietor of the Hubbell Trading Post, denies that he ever attached any particular importance to this notable collection of designs, which still adorns the rug room at the post. She believes that they were painted throughout the years by visiting artists and left as tokens of appreciation for Hubbell's hospitality, and that he never used them as a tool of the trade.

set himself to work to stem the tide of ignorance and carelessness which bid fair speedily to wreck what his far-seeing vision knew might be a means of great wealth to an industrious and struggling people. He spoke the Navaho language fluently, lived in the very heart of the reservation and was in daily contact with some of the most progressive men and women of the tribe. He took them into his office and talked with them, one by one. As rapidly as was possible he eliminated the use of cotton warp, showing the weavers that, while its substitution for the wool warps saved them much time, it made the blanket so much inferior that he could not pay anything like the same price for it. Then he eliminated certain dyes from his trade. He refused to keep the colors that the Indians used so recklessly when they had once broken loose from the old traditions of pure colors. Then, slowly but surely, he discouraged the use of Germantown yarn, and urged the thorough cleaning and scouring, carding, spinning, and dyeing of their own wool. During all this time he was urging the weavers to higher endeavor, and giving special privileges and favors to those who showed not only skill and originality of design, but general acquiescence in his endeavors to improve the art. The final result has been that now [1927] he has gathered around him by far the finest set of weavers on the whole reservation. . . . Then, too, he has learned from practical experience, what designs of pure Navaho origin please the most exacting patrons, and these he has had copied in oil or water-colors, and they line the walls of his office by the score.

About the turn of the century, with the help of his two sons and nephew, Hubbell began to build a trading empire on the Navajo Reservation. Lorenzo, Jr., bought Thomas V. Keam's post at Keam's Canyon, later moving to Oraibi, one of the Hopi towns. Other Hubbell posts opened at Government Dam, Cornfields, Cedar Springs, Nozalin, Steamboat, Chinlee, and elsewhere. A Hubbell wholesale house was established in Winslow, Arizona, to market Indian products and supply the stores. After Don Lorenzo's death in 1930, his sons carried on, although the number of Hubbell posts decreased. In 1949, when there were about

one hundred Navajo trading posts, seven Hubbell stores claimed one-seventh of the total Navajo trade. Now, the Ganado post is the last vestige of the Hubbell empire.¹³

Throughout his years as a trader, Don Lorenzo actively participated in politics. His two terms as sheriff of Apache County, beginning in 1882, brought many adventures. Texas cattlemen invaded the sheep country of Apache County and precipitated a bloody war. Hubbell backed the sheepmen, and at the close of the war, he recalled, "I'd been shot at from ambush no less than a dozen times, and my home had been converted into a veritable fort. For one solid year not a member of my family went to bed except behind doors and windows barricaded with mattresses or sand bags."¹⁴ His career as sheriff inspired at least two novels.¹⁵

In 1893 Hubbell was elected to the Council of the Arizona Territorial Legislature. In 1912 he represented Apache County in the Senate of the first state legislature, and for several years served as

13. Frank C. Lockwood, "John Lorenzo Hubbell: Navajo Indian Trader," in More Arizona Characters, University of Arizona Bulletin No. 6 (Tucson, 1942), 68. Dickson Hartwell, "White Brother of the Navajos," Colliers, April 30, 1949, 64.

14. Hubbell and Hogg, "Forty Years an Indian Trader," 27.

15. Hamlin Garland, "Hubbell: Sheriff of Apache County," McClure's Magazine, XVIII (February, 1902); and Dane Coolidge, Lorenzo the Magnificent: The Riders from Texas (New York, 1925). According to Frank C. Lockwood, Hamlin Garland first bestowed on Hubbell the sobriquet "Lorenzo the Magnificent." Lockwood, "John Lorenzo Hubbell," 74.

Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee.¹⁶ In 1914 the Republicans chose Don Lorenzo as candidate for United States Senator. But it was a Democratic year, the Republican Party was badly divided, and incumbent Marcus Smith won easily.¹⁷ Thereafter, although maintaining a lively interest in politics, Hubbell held no more elective offices.

Observers of the Navajo scene agree that Hubbell had few peers among Navajo traders. "There is no doubt," recalled Herman Schweitzer of the Harvey Company's Indian Department, "that Mr. Hubbell was the premier Indian trader of them all."¹⁸ In Navajoland, said Frank C. Lockwood, "he was the first and greatest. His position was almost baronial, and he became a patriarchal figure whose mild and beneficent influence was exercised everywhere among both the Hopi and Navajo tribes."¹⁹ "What the chief factors of the Hudson's Bay Company used to be to the Indians of the North," concluded another writer, "Lorenzo Hubbell has been to the Indians of the desert--friend, guard, counselor,

16. Hubbell, History of the Hubbell Family, 23. Jo Conners (comp.), Who's Who in Arizona (Tucson, 1913), I, 722-24.

17. James H. McClintock, Arizona: Prehistoric, Aboriginal, Pioneer, Modern (3 v., Chicago, 1910), II, 380. Isaac Barth, "The Prince of Pioneers," St. John's (Ariz.) Observer, July 10, 1937.

18. Mayfield, "Great Southwest Pioneer," 29-33.

19. Lockwood, "John Lorenzo Hubbell," 57.

with a strong hand to punish when they required it, but a stronger hand to befriend when help was needed."²⁰

He carried the trader's paternalistic role to an extreme. Early in his career he earned a reputation among the Navajos for great wisdom and strength. They swiftly discovered, after an episode in which he twisted the ears of a bully and faced down an angry mob, that he could not be intimidated. They discovered, too, his gentler nature. A smallpox epidemic swept the reservation about 1886. Don Lorenzo worked night and day caring for the sick, dead, and dying. His immunity stemmed from a boyhood bout with the disease, but the Indians ascribed it to a higher power.²¹ Throughout the years, he stood always ready to ride (in later years in a stripped-down Model-T) to a hogan where medical help was needed. His own home often served as hospital for ailing Navajos. No Indian went hungry if Don Lorenzo knew of him. "Don't let any Indian starve to death," he instructed Cozy McSparron.²² The Navajos came to look upon Hubbell with awe, and his influence grew steadily year by year. Increasingly, they brought their problems to him, and his advice, strengthened by a knowledge of the Navajo language and psychology, covered matters ranging from weaving techniques to marital difficulties. "It was because he was just and honest and humane," said Lockwood, "that he held this unquestioned supremacy."²³

20. Laut, Through our Unknown Southwest, 126.

21. Hubbell and Hogg, op. cit., 28-29, 51.

22. Lockwood, op. cit., 70

23. Ibid., 57.

Yet he was still, above all, a businessman. As a trader, he formed the same business philosophy that guided his counterparts throughout the reservation system. He expressed his creed in an interview in 1907:²⁴

The first duty of an Indian trader, in my belief, is to look after the material welfare of his neighbors; to advise them to produce that which their natural inclinations and talent best adapts them; to treat them honestly and insist upon getting the same treatment from them; . . . to find a market for their products and vigilantly watch that they keep improving in the production of same, and advise them which commands the best price. This does not mean that the trader should forget that he is to see that he makes a fair profit for himself, for whatever would injure him would naturally injure those with whom he comes in contact.

It is abundantly clear that Don Lorenzo followed this creed. Scrupulous honesty characterized all of his dealings with the Indians. He gave full value and often more. "Pay the limit on everything you buy," he told an assistant, "and I will back you up." On perishables he himself took the risk of spoilage.²⁵ His role in increasing production of native products and in bringing greater prosperity to the people has been described.

At the same time, he did not neglect his own material welfare. That he had a large income is apparent, for he and his family lived a

24. Miller, "Indian and Trader," Part II, 17.

25. Dorothy Challis Mott, "Don Lorenzo Hubbell of Ganado," Arizona Historical Review, IV, 1 (April, 1931), 50. Lockwood, op. cit. 70.

comfortable life, and he entertained on a lavish scale. Nearly everyone who passed through Ganado stopped at the Hubbell Trading Post. At times, as many as forty guests grouped around the table in his immense dining room. On one occasion, three hundred Indians feasted at his home. Writers and scientists gathered, not only to enjoy the famed hospitality, but also to learn from an authoritative source about the subjects they were investigating. A lover of art, Don Lorenzo gained special pleasure from entertaining artists, and the great collection of paintings now at Ganado demonstrates their appreciation. "I've spent tens of thousands of dollars feeding and entertaining people," reminisced Hubbell, "and never charged a cent. I've entertained presidents, artists, archeologists, ethnologists, writers, army officers, and government officials."²⁶ The role of host he enjoyed probably more than any other.

That he was motivated by an ambition for even great profits also seems evident from the rapid and successful expansion of his trade network. Robert E. Karigan, one of his associates, pictured him as brilliant, shrewd, and ambitious to control the Navajo trade. Cozy McSparron added that the ambition stemmed from a desire to have

26. Hubbell and Hogg, op. cit., 29, 51. See also, Van Valkenburgh, Diné Bikiyah, 64; and Mott, "Don Lorenzo Hubbell of Ganado," 49. Lockwood listed among his guests Generals Nelson A. Miles and Hugh L. Scott, writers Lew Wallace, Charles Lummis, Hamlin Garland, Mary Roberts Rinehart, scientists J. Walter Fewkes, Stewart Culin, Adolph Bandelier, Sylvanus Morley, and, of course, Theodore Roosevelt, who enjoyed a great romp at Ganado in 1912.

enough money to give things away, to make people happy, and, above all, to take care of the Indians who depended upon him.²⁷

In appearance and manner, Hubbell represented the dignity and grace of his Spanish forebears. He was, wrote one of his guests, "a fine type of the courtly Spanish-American gentleman with Castillian blue eyes and black, beetling brows and gray hair; with a courtliness that keeps you guessing as to how much more gracious the next courtesy can be than the last, and a funny anecdote to cap every climax."²⁸ He neither smoked nor drank, and, after a particularly heavy loss, gave up gambling.²⁹ A devout Roman Catholic, he nevertheless induced the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to choose Ganado for a mission site, then took the first missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bierkemper, into his home for a year while the mission was under construction.³⁰ Aside from his appreciation of art, he read widely, and assembled a large library of richly bound books on history, the classics, and science. He subscribed to many newspapers from all over the country, and kept himself abreast of events in the outside world.³¹

27. Lockwood, op. cit., 68-69.

28. Laut, Through Our Unknown Southwest, 126-27.

29. Hubbell and Hogg, op. cit., 26-27.

30. Florence C. Means, Sagebrush Surgeon (New York, 1955), 33-35.

31. Lockwood, op. cit., 75.

Don Lorenzo's career as a trader spanned critical years for the Navajo tribe. He came to the reservation when the people, Fort Sumner fresh in their minds, were groping for an adjustment to reservation life. More than any other white man, perhaps, he helped them find an adjustment. His death, on November 12, 1930, was mourned by the Navajos probably more than the passing of any other white man in their experience. He was buried on Hubbell Hill, overlooking the trading post, next to his wife and his friend of years, Many Horses. After the burial ceremonies, while the funeral party stood around the great fireplace in the living room, an old Indian is said to have expressed the sentiments of the tribe in these words:

You wear out your shoes, you buy another pair;
When the food is all gone, you buy more;
You gather melons, and more will grow on the vine;
You grind corn and make bread, which you eat;
And next year you have plenty of corn.
But my friend Lorenzo is gone, and none to take his place.³²

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Significance of the Hubbell Trading Post

There is little question that the Hubbell Trading Post was the most important single trading post in the history of Navajo trading. This distinction rests, first, upon its unbroken history of eighty years. It is now the oldest continuously operated business, not only on the reservation, but in northern Arizona. With an uninterrupted chain of ownership, it enjoyed a rare opportunity to maintain a

32.Quoted in Mott, "Don Lorenzo Hubbell of Ganado," 51.

uniformly high reputation for fairness and paternalism. The distinction rests, too, upon its position as parent to the chain of Hubbell enterprises that blanketed the reservation, for its policies were the policies of all Hubbell posts.

The distinction rests, finally, upon the position of leadership achieved by Don Lorenzo Hubbell. One of the first traders on the reservation, he influenced the character of trade and traders for over fifty years. He saw and participated in the evolution of a native economy adapted to the conditions of the reservation, and in the transition in native material culture that occurred between 1870 and 1920. The origin and development of Navajo craftwork as a profitable industry owe more to his vision and guidance than to any other factor. Unlike most other traders, Don Lorenzo's influence was not confined to the Indian community in which he lived. It manifested itself through the entire network of Hubbell posts, and reached large areas of the reservation. Several generations of Navajos have therefore benefitted from the deep responsibility for their welfare and progress that he acquired and inculcated in his employees.

The significance of the Hubbell Trading Post lies also in its preservation today of the trading post of yesterday. There have been few changes since the present post and house were built about 1900. The long stone trading post, with its wareroom, storeroom, office, and blanket room, looks much as it did in Don Lorenzo's time, and much as other Navajo trading posts looked. The original massive counters still

dominate the storeroom. Office furniture is that of half a century ago. Ancient firearms, Indian craftwork, paintings, and rugs adorn the rug room. The rambling adobe hacienda in which Don Lorenzo lived and entertained retains all of its old charm and atmosphere. The walls of the long living room and the bedrooms are covered with art work, photographs, and Indian artifacts. Shelves laden with books line the walls. Navajo rugs lie everywhere. The old home conveys more vividly than words the manner in which Don Lorenzo and other early traders lived. The barn and utility buildings, mostly of stone, round out the complete picture of the old-time trading post. Better than anywhere else on the Navajo Reservation today, one can grasp at the Hubbell Trading Post the pattern of the Navajo trade, the type of man who conducted it, and the kind of life he led.³³

The Art and Ethnological Collections

A description and partial inventory of these collections appears in the report of Mr. Steen and Mr. Wing. The Indian artifacts collected by Hubbell throughout his career as a trader form, according to Mr. Steen, "an extraordinarily important sampling of Indian crafts of the period 1880-1930." Not confined to the Navajo and Hopi tribes,

33. Complete photographic coverage of the Hubbell Trading Post, both interior and exterior, is contained in the area investigation report of Regional Archeologist Charlie R. Steen and Superintendent Kittridge A. Wing, submitted by the Region Three Office in February, 1958.

the ethnological collection represents tribes of the entire West, both historic and prehistoric. It consists of hundreds of baskets, hunting sticks, bows, shields, quivers, pottery, head-dresses, bead-work, and articles of clothing. These artifacts hang on the walls of the various rooms of the house and in the rug room of the trading post. The baskets are attached in solid rows to the ceilings between the vigas.

The art collection is even more notable. It represents the gratitude of numerous artists who enjoyed Don Lorenzo's hospitality. Judged by dates on the paintings, the collection began early in the 1890's. From then on, nearly every artist who painted Southwestern Indians and landscape appears to have stayed with the Hubbells and left a canvas or two to decorate the Hubbell home. It is impossible here to reach a monetary estimate of their value, and probably no two art experts would agree on an appraisal. Mrs. Hubbell's present business manager, Mr. William Curry, Santa Fe artist, gave his opinion that the collection would probably bring, at auction, about \$50,000. Leo Crane, long-time Navajo agent, told Lockwood it was worth \$50,000 or \$60,000, and Joseph Emerson Smith valued it at \$100,000.³⁴

Although its monetary value cannot be assessed here, it is possible, by short sketches of the better known painters whose work it contains, to convey a rough appreciation of its extent and importance.

34. Lockwood, "John Lorenzo Hubbell," 77.

E. A. Burbank (1858-1949), one of the most prolific portrayers of Indians, seems to have been Hubbell's closest artist friend, and did much of his work at Ganado. His fame rests chiefly on Indian portrait studies. He presented Hubbell with approximately 170 of his famous "Red Head" sepia portraits of Indian types, together with about fifteen oils. The "Red Heads" cover the bedroom walls of the Hubbell residence.³⁵

Charles Schreyvogel (1861-1912) came to be regarded, after the death of Frederic Remington in 1909, as the leading illustrator of the West. Cavalrymen in action were his favorite subject. He made no impression on the world of art until 1899, when "My Bunkie" catapulted him to fame overnight. A later success was "Custer's Demand."³⁶ Schreyvogel apparently visited Hubbell in 1893, when he spent a summer in southeastern Colorado and made several side-trips to Arizona and New Mexico. A crayon drawing of a cavalryman fording a stream was his gift to Don Lorenzo. Later, he mailed him a large print, personally inscribed, of "My Bunkie." These are the only Schreyvogel works that have been discovered at Ganado.

Maynard Dixon (1875-1946), in his early career earned fame as a magazine and book illustrator. About 1920, he gave up illustrating and turned to painting. He became well known for his interpretations

35. Robert Taft, Artists and Illustrators of the Old West, 1850-1890 (New York, 1953), 354 n5. Arthur N. Hosking (comp.), The Artists Year Book (Chicago, 1905), 27. Lockwood, op. cit., 77.

36. Taft, op. cit., 226-231. Hosking, op. cit., 175.

of Southwestern landscape scenes. He probably visited the Hubbell Trading Post on numerous occasions around 1900. A large oil of a Navajo weaver, painted by Dixon, hangs on the east wall of the Hubbell living room.³⁷

William R. Leigh (1866- ?) also got his start as a magazine illustrator, working principally for Scribner's in the late 1890's. His talents ranged from landscapes to Indian and ranch scenes, and drew wide comparison with the work of Remington. His depiction of the Custer Battle was judged by Taft to be the best of many attempts at that subject. Among his works at Hubbell Trading Post are two oils, one of an Indian hunter, another of a Hopi woman, both dated 1912.³⁸

Albert L. Groll (1866 - ?) won wide acclaim and several prizes for his landscape scenes in the deserts of Arizona and California. He is represented at Ganado by a large oil landscape and a charcoal sketch of Hubbell Hill.³⁹

37. Taft, op. cit., 240-41. Michigan State Library, Biographical Sketches of American Artists (Lansing, 1924), 98-99. Dixon, "Arizona in 1900," 17-18, 40. Raymond Carlson, "Maynard Dixon," Arizona Highways, XVIII, 2 (February, 1942), 16. Arthur Miller, Maynard Dixon, Painter of the West (Tucson, 1945).

38. Taft, op. cit., 241-42. Eugen Neuhaus, The History and Ideals of American Art (Stanford, Calif., 1913), 324. Michigan State Library, op. cit., 186-87.

39. Hosking, op. cit., 77. Michigan State Library, op. cit., 135-36.

Joseph J. Mora (1875 - ?) was well known both for book illustrations and for animals in oil. He has three water colors at Ganado--Hubbell post at Oraibi (1906), Hopi girl in wedding costume (1905), and a young Navajo man on horseback.⁴⁰

W. E. Rollins (? - 1951) was active in founding the Santa Fe art colony early in the twentieth century, and was known chiefly for his Southwestern Indian scenes. Several works are displayed at the Hubbell post, including a seascape, two oils of Hopi village scenes, and an oil of an Indian camp scene.⁴¹

Other artists represented in the collection are John W. Norton, Cassady Davis, H. B. Judy, and Karl Moon. The list is not exhaustive. It includes only those names appearing on Mr. Steen's partial inventory that could be readily found in sources locally available. There are, in addition, many fine paintings that bear no identifying signature, as well as paintings in storage that have not been examined in the course of this investigation. The collection also includes the large number of oil and water color rug designs illustrating early Navajo weaving patterns, and many photographs of early Indian scenes that are valuable for ethnological study.

The art and ethnological collections undoubtedly possess considerable intrinsic value. But they have an additional value as exhibits

40. Hosking, op. cit., 135.

41. Taft, op. cit., 381 n23.

to interpret Navajo and Hopi life of a past era. Even that portion of the collection that is not germane to this story or to the story of Navajo trading serves an important, though intangible, function. It is part of the life of one Navajo trader, and helps to make up the indefinable, yet important, atmosphere of the Hubbell Trading Post of yesterday.

The Hubbell Papers

Not as conspicuous as the art and ethnological collections, but of great value to the story of Navajo trading, are the Hubbell papers. Approximately 250 cubic feet of papers are stored in some 100 crates, boxes, and trunks in the wareroom of the trading post, in the barn, and on a porch behind the house. The collection consists chiefly of ledger books, day books, business correspondence, cancelled checks, invoices, pawn tickets, and bills of sale. Apparently no scrap of paper, not even the daily cash register tape, has been destroyed. Most of the records cover operations of the Ganado post between about 1883 and 1930, although there are probably a few papers dealing with earlier years. The remainder, about one-third of the collection, stored on the porch of the house, were brought from the Winslow office and relate to the entire network of Hubbell enterprises.

Surprisingly, little correspondence of a strictly personal or autobiographical nature was discovered. J. L. Hubbell was a man with many friends and, if he wrote few personal letters, surely he received

many. Since he kept all of his business papers, he probably kept personal correspondence too. It is possible, therefore, that additional papers lie in some unknown corner of the Hubbell post or house.

Over the weekend of November 21-24, 1958, the writer and an assistant examined the Hubbell papers. We found them badly disorganized, laden with quantities of Arizona sand, and in some places suffering from the attacks of rodents. We concluded, however, that not only could most of them be salvaged, but that, properly organized and studied, they would yield a treasure of information about Navajo trading. For a study of the pattern of the Navajo trade, in fact, they are probably the most valuable single collection now in existence.

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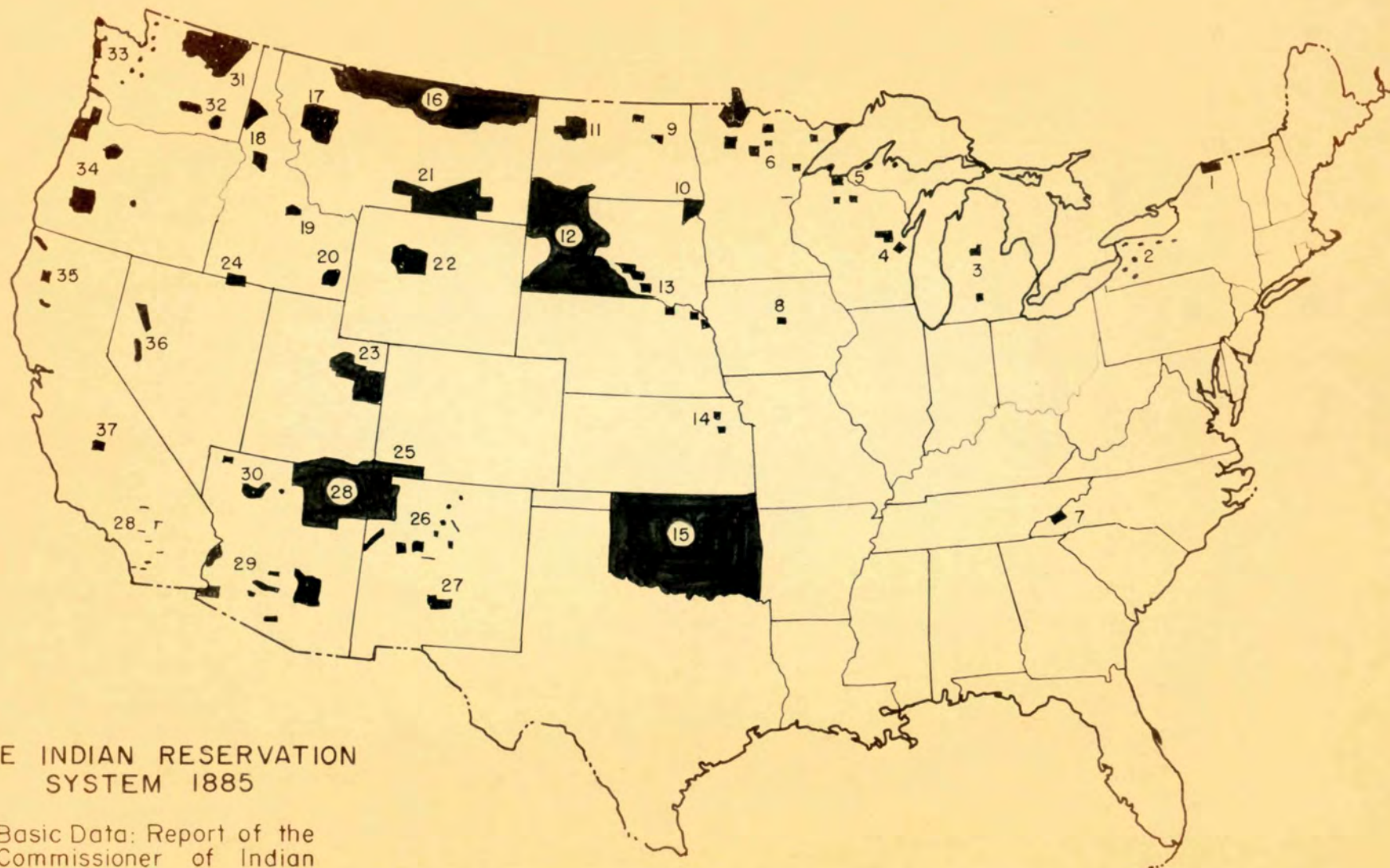
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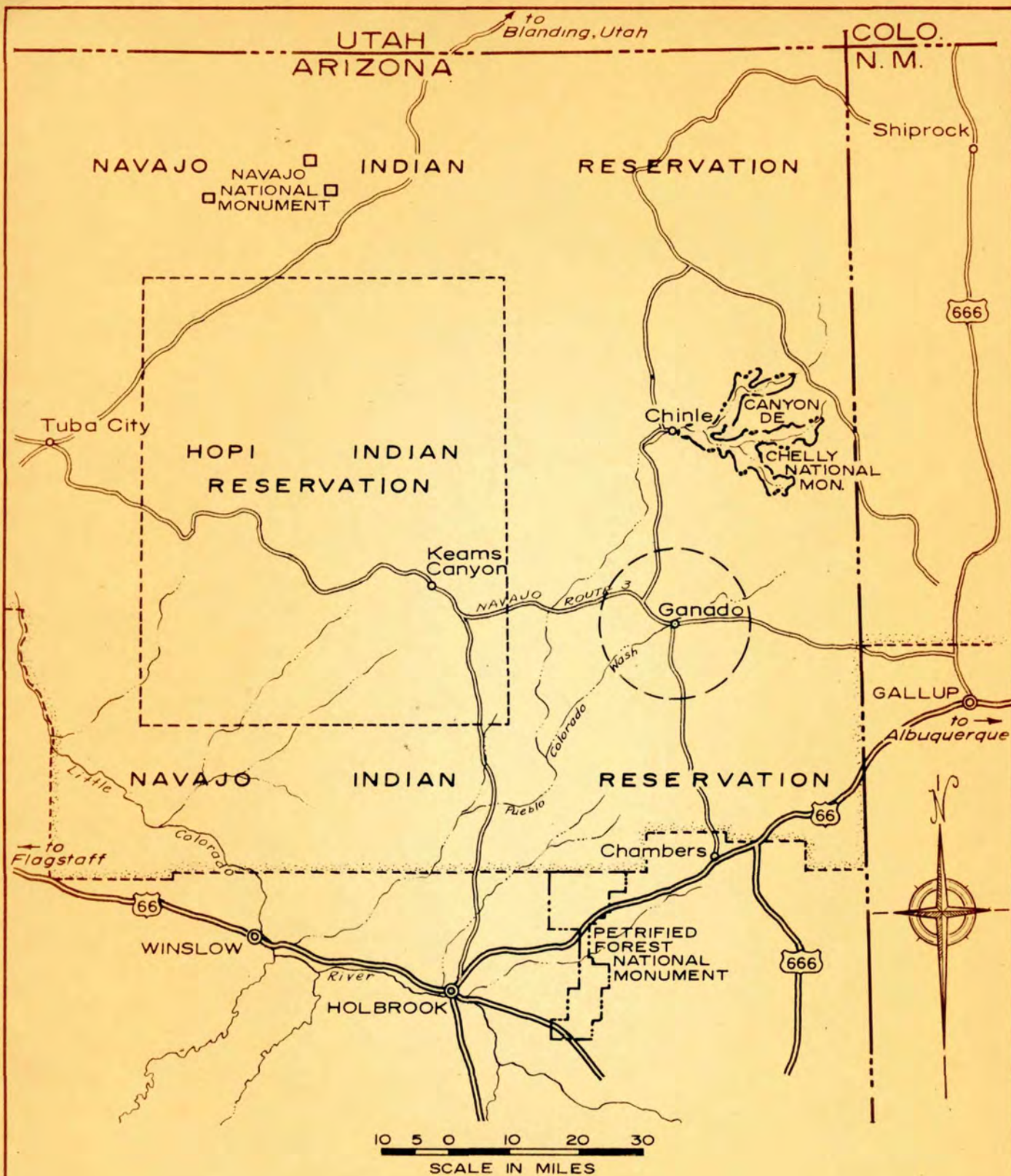
Key to Map of the Reservation System, 1885

1. St. Regis
2. Tuscarora, Tonawanda, Onondaga, Oneida, Oil Spring, Allegany, Cattaraugus.
3. Pottawatomie of Huron, Isabella
4. Oneida, Menomonee
5. L'Anse, Ontonagon, La Pointe, Red Cliff, Lac Court Oreille, Lac de Flambeau.
6. Grand Portage, Vermillion Lake, Bois Forte, Deer Creek, Red Lake, Winnibigoshish Leech Lake, Fon Du Lac, Mille Lac, White Earth.
7. Qualla
8. Sac & Fox
9. Turtle Mountain, Devil's Lake
10. Lake Traverse
11. Fort Berthold
12. Sioux
13. Old Winnebago, Crow Creek, Yankton, Ponca, Niobrara, Winnebago, Omaha.
14. Sac, Fox & Iowa, Kickapoo, Pottawatomie.
15. Indian Territory: Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Osage, Chickasaw, Seminole, Cheyenne & Arapaho, Kiowa & Comanche, Wichita, Pottawattomie, Kickapoo, Iowa, Pawnee, Otoe & Missouri, Ponca, Tonkawa, Kansas, Chilocco.
16. Gros Ventre, Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet, River Crow.
17. Jocko
18. Coeur d'Alene, Lapwai
19. Lemhi
20. Fort Hall
21. Crow, Northern Cheyenne
22. Wind River
23. Uintah, Uncompaghre
24. Duck Valley
25. Ute
26. Pueblo
27. Mescalero
28. Navajo, Hopi
29. White Mountain, Papago, Gila Bend, Gila River, Salt River, Colorado River, Yuma.
30. Hualpai, Suppai, Moapa River
31. Colville, Columbia, Spokane.
32. Yakima, Umatilla
33. Coastal tribes
34. Siletz, Grande Ronde, Warm Spring, Klamath, Malheur.
35. Klamath River, Hoopa Valley, Round Valley.
36. Pyramid Lake, Walker River
37. Tule River
38. Mission Indians



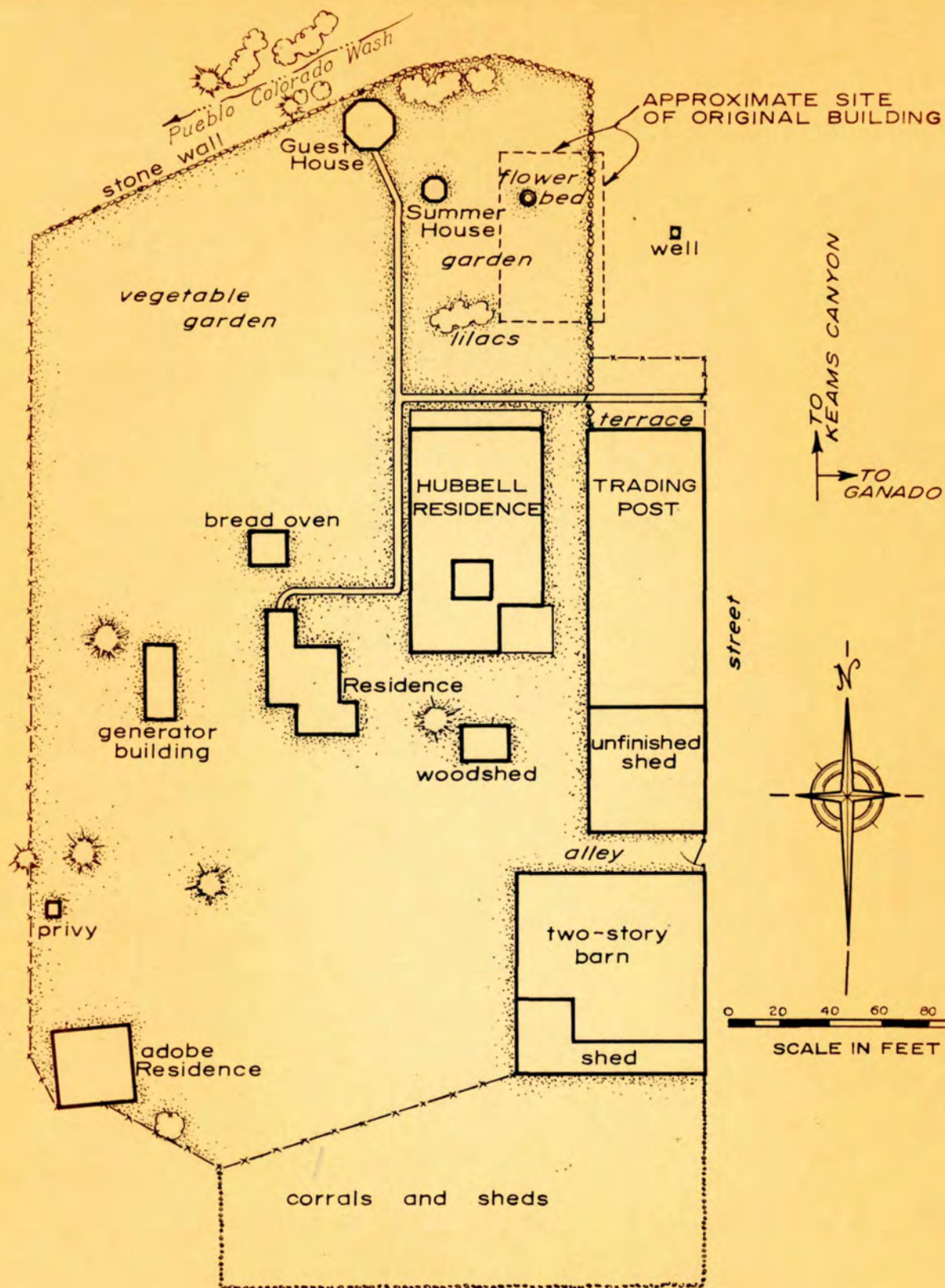
THE INDIAN RESERVATION
SYSTEM 1885

Basic Data: Report of the
Commissioner of Indian
Affairs, 1885

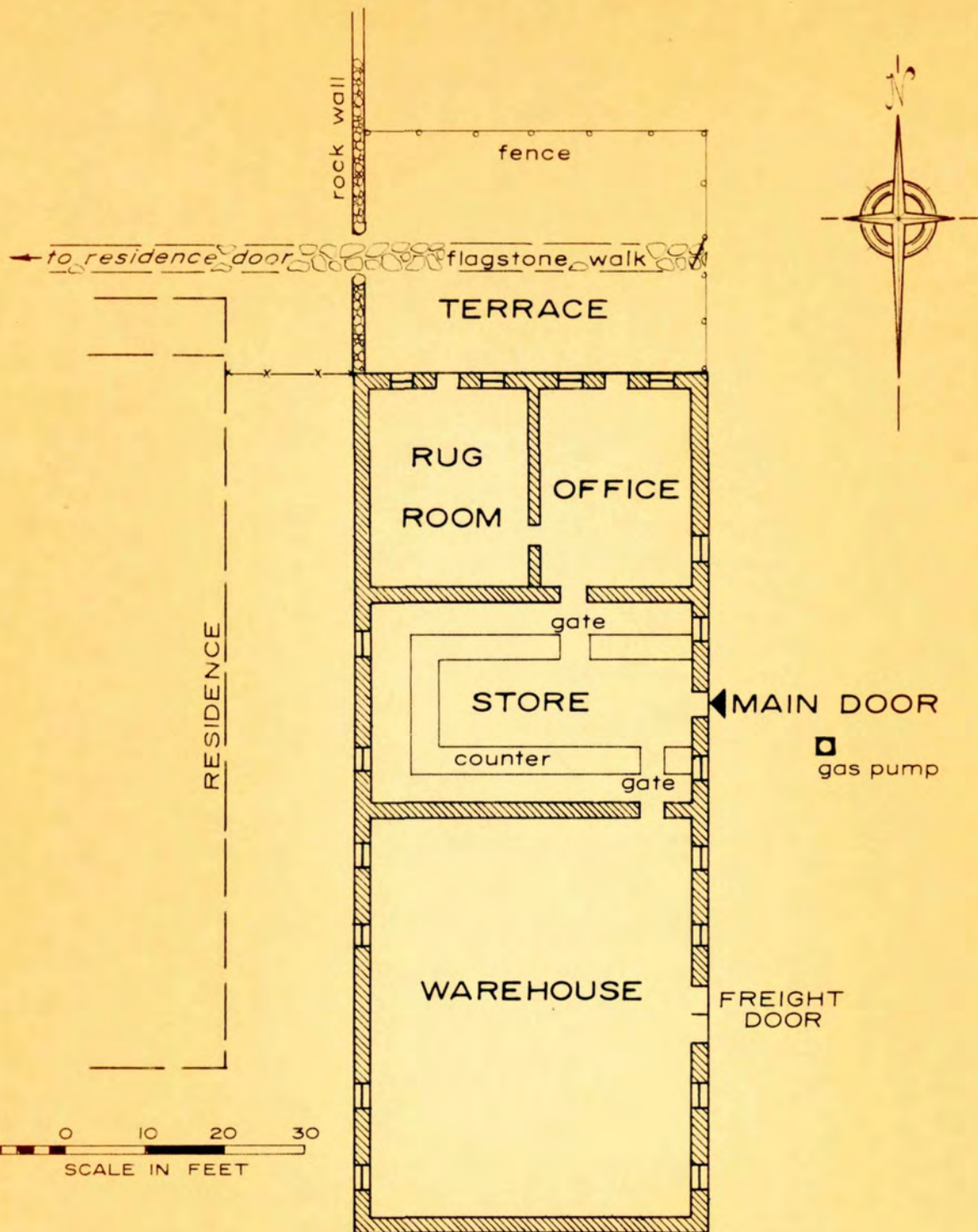


VICINITY MAP

J.L.HUBBELL TRADING POST
ARIZONA

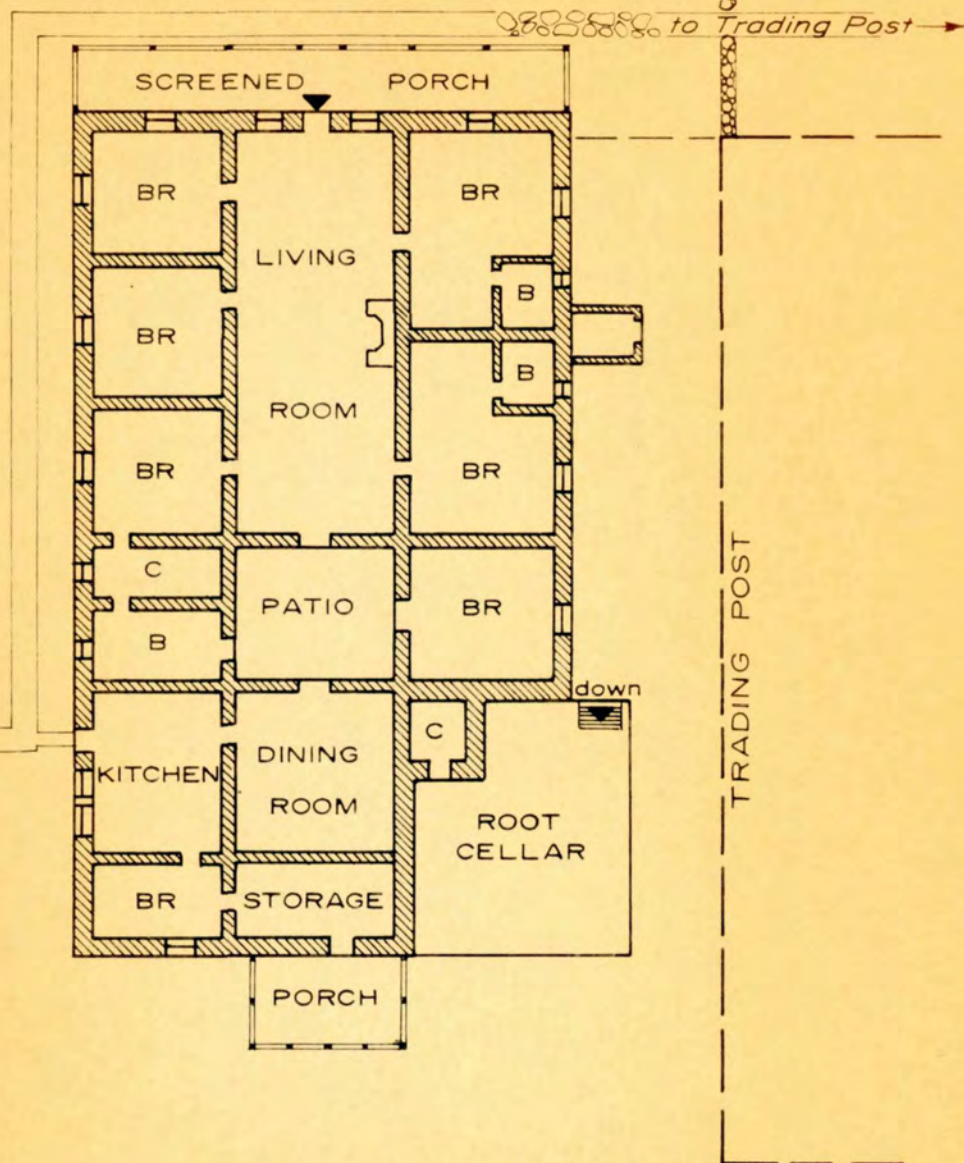


BUILDINGS & GROUNDS LAYOUT
J.L. HUBBELL TRADING POST
ARIZONA



J.L. HUBBELL TRADING POST

GANADO, ARIZONA

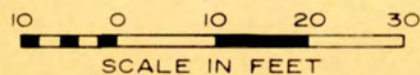


LEGEND

BR BEDROOM

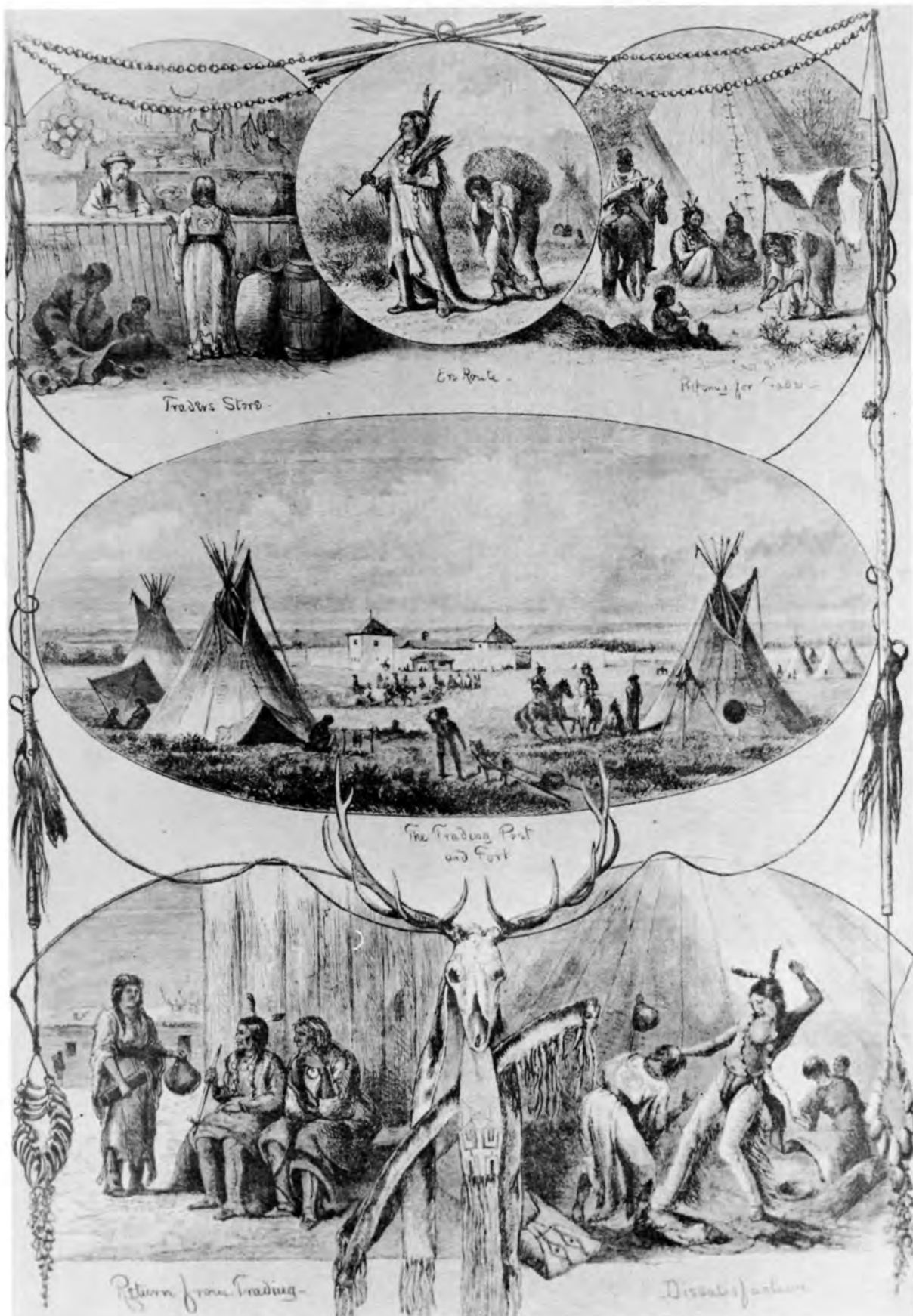
B BATH

C CLOSET

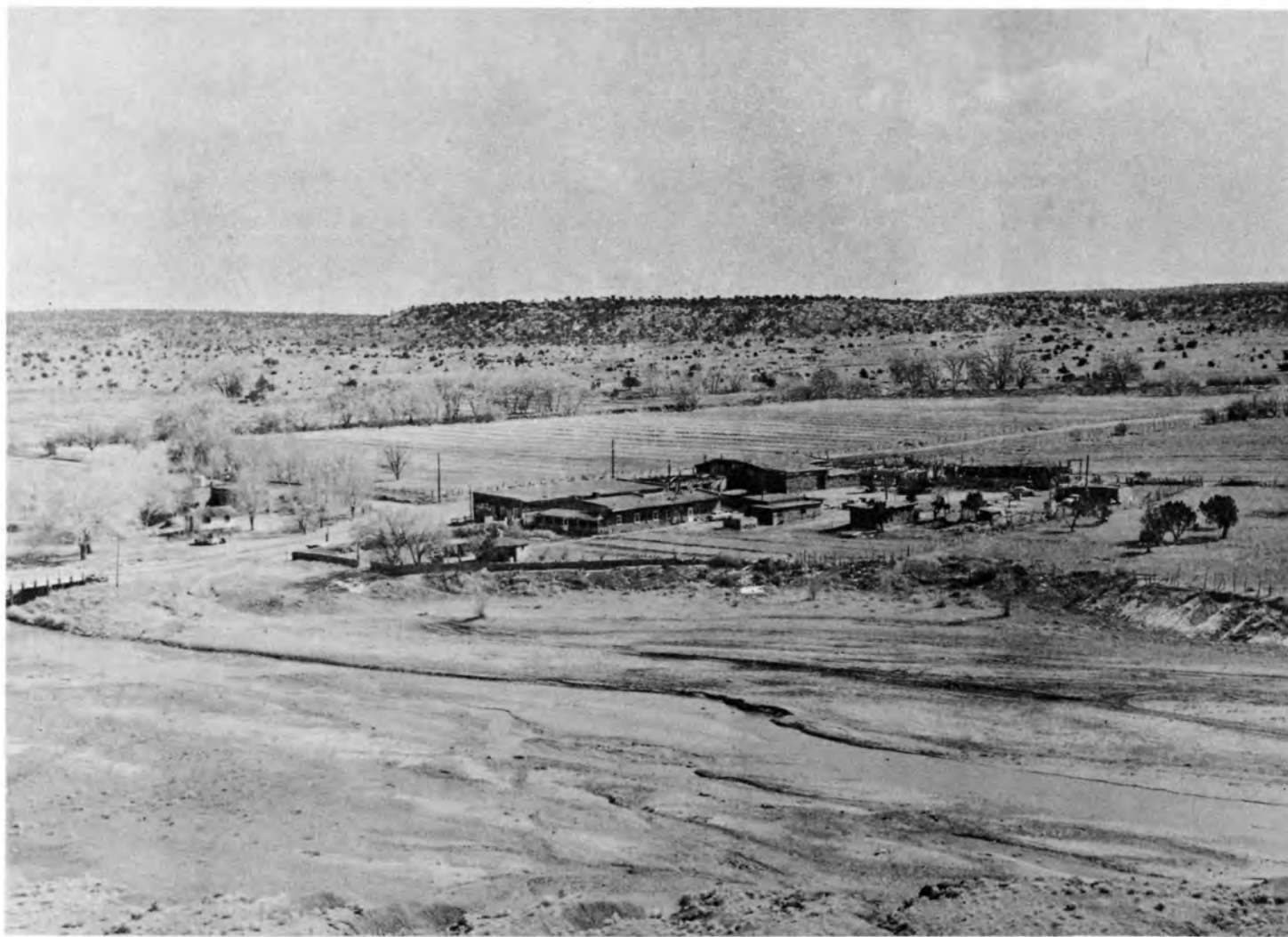


HUBBELL RESIDENCE

GANADO, ARIZONA

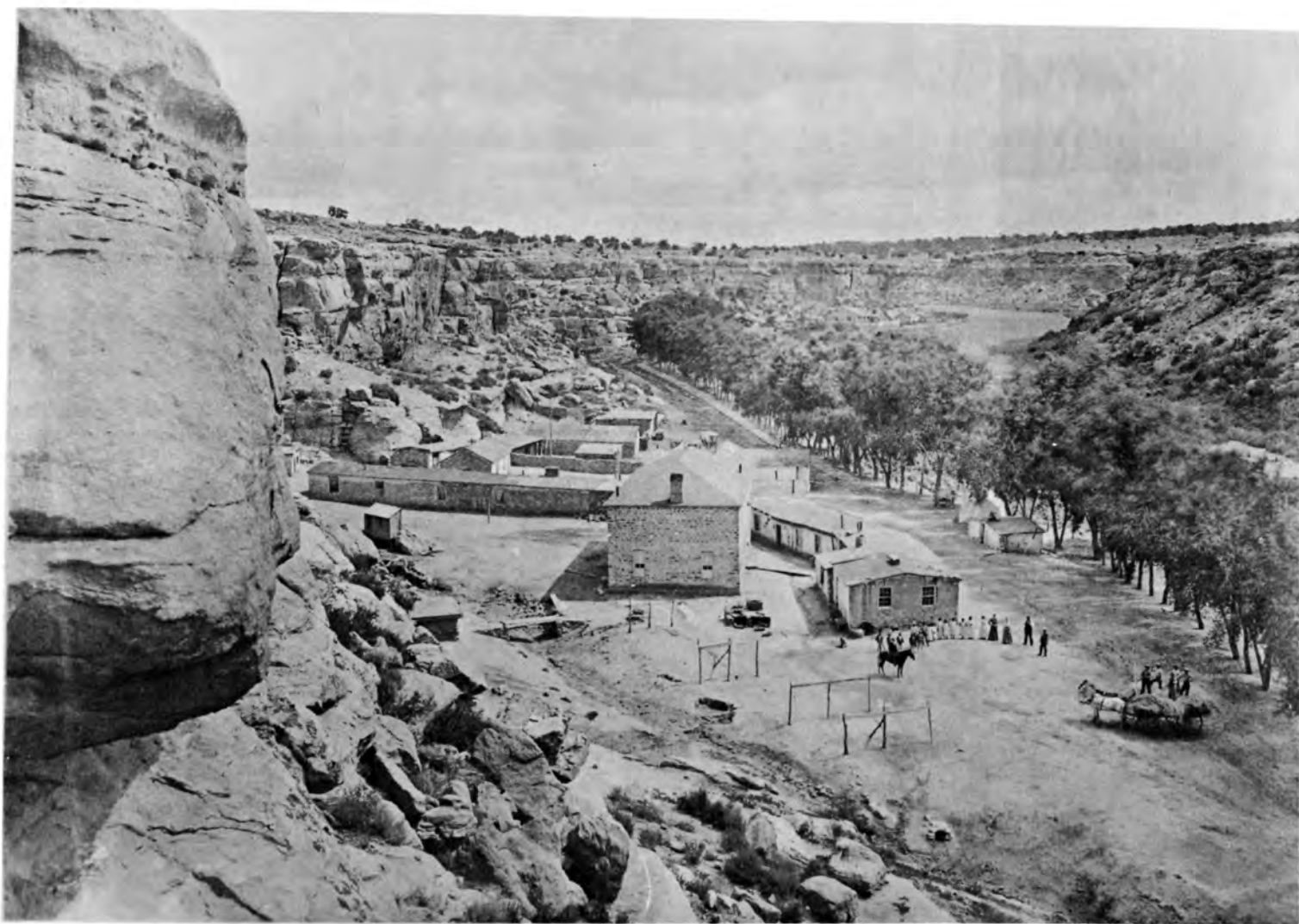


INDIAN TRADING
 Harper's Weekly, date unknown
 Denver Public Library Western Collection



HUBBELL TRADING POST
National Park Service Photo, 1958

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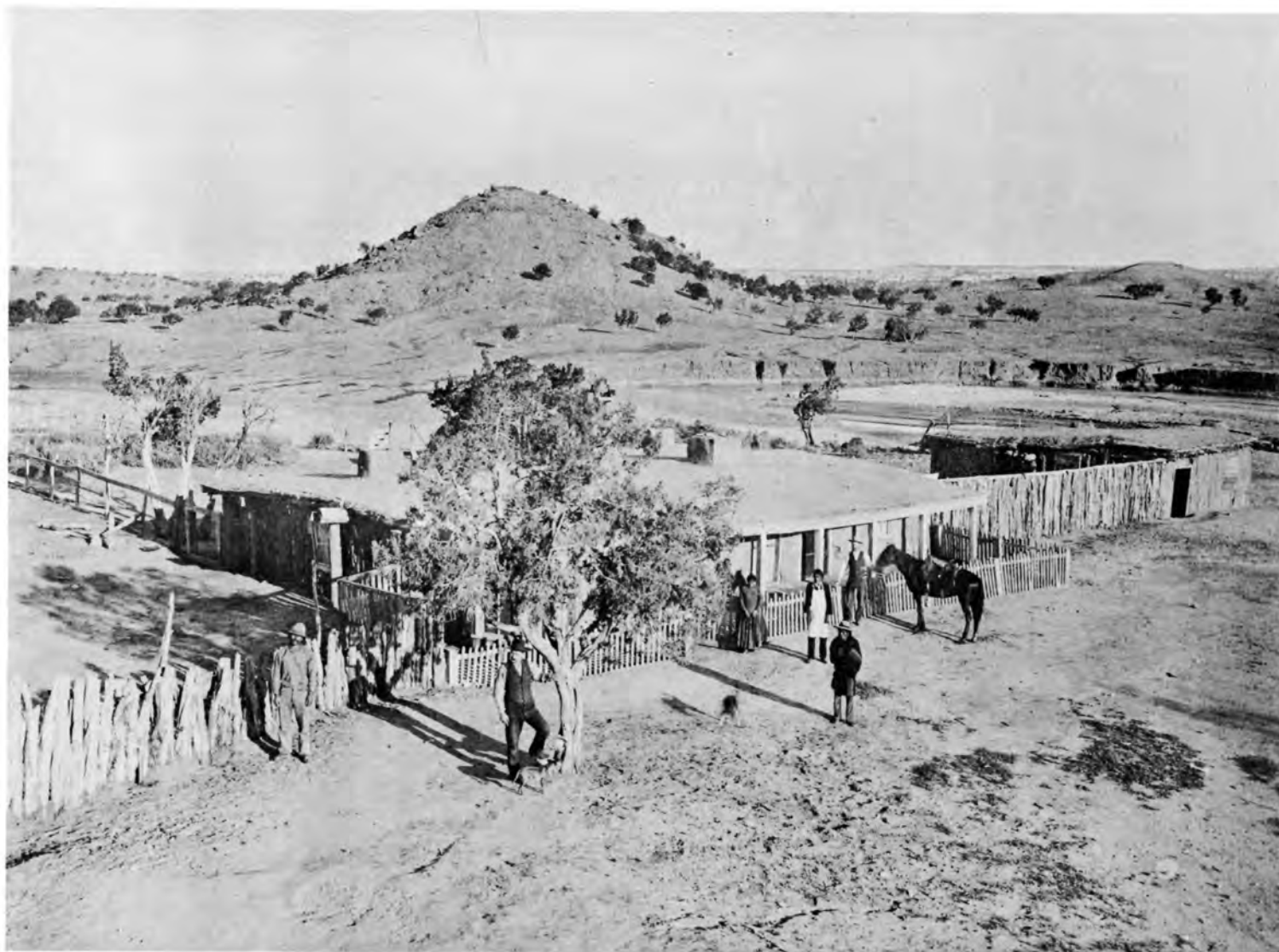


KEAM'S CANYON TRADING POST
Photo by Ben Wittick, about 1895
Courtesy Laboratory of Anthropology
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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SAM DAY'S TRADING POST AT CANYON DE CHELLY
Later operated by L. H. ("Cozy") McSparron as the
Thunderbird, this post is still actively engaged in
the Navajo trade. It is located adjacent to head-
quarters of Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Photo
by Ben Wittick, about 1900. Courtesy Laboratory of
Anthropology



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THE FIRST HUBBELL TRADING POST

Built by William Leonard about 1874, this log and adobe structure was bought by Hubbell about 1878 and served as his trading post until 1900. It was torn down shortly after erection of the larger post. J. L. Hubbell standing under tree. Photo by Ben Wittick, about 1895. Courtesy Laboratory of Anthropology.

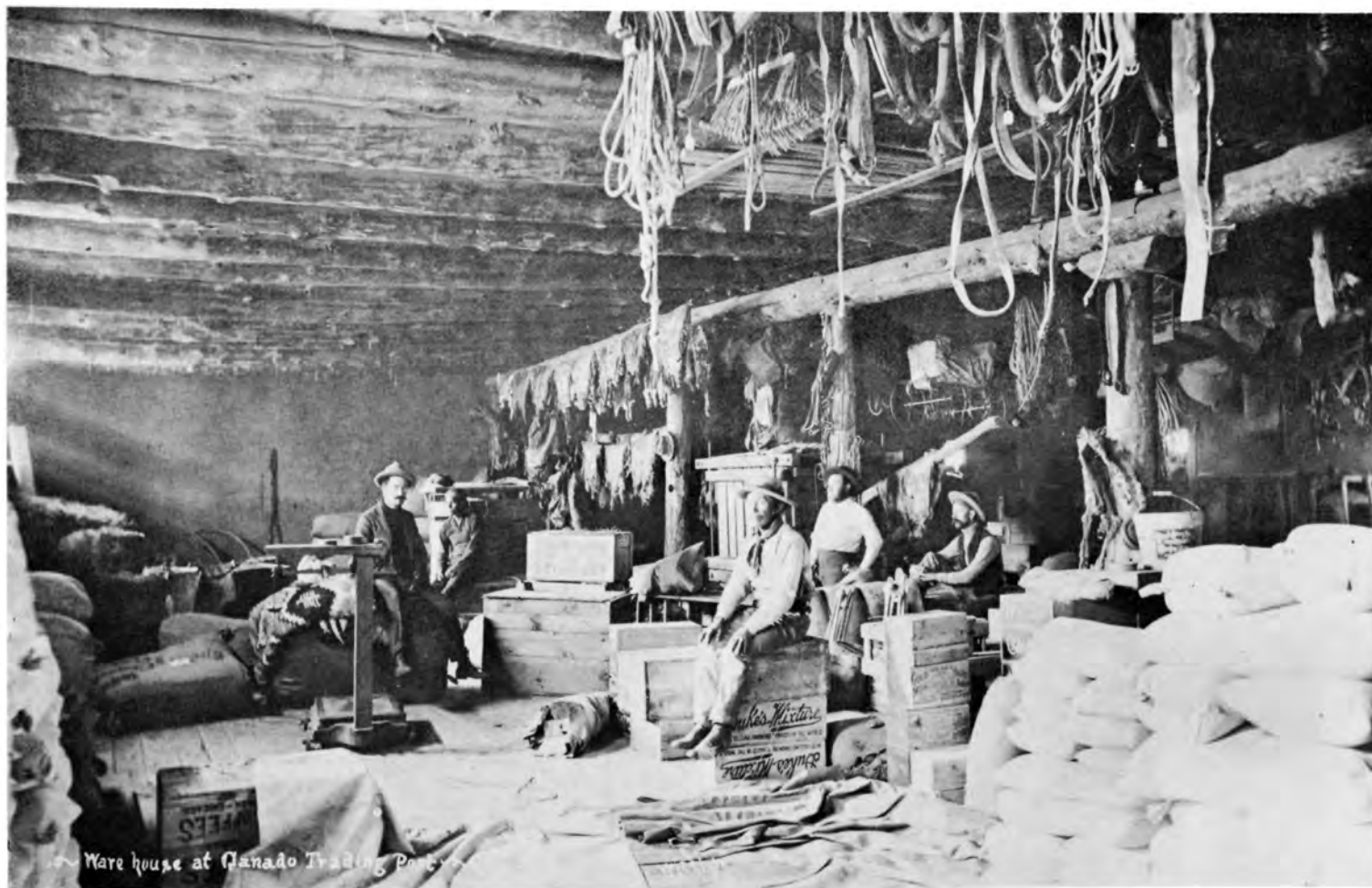


JOHN L. HUBBELL TRADING FOR A NAVAJO BLANKET
Hubbell Trading Post in Background

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Photo by Ben Wittick, about 1905

Courtesy Laboratory of Anthropology



WAREHOUSE AT THE HUBBELL TRADING POST, ABOUT 1905

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Photo by Ben Wittick, courtesy Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe, New Mexico



JOHN LORENZO HUBBELL IN HIS HOME AT GANADO
Photo by Ben Wittick, about 1900
Courtesy Laboratory of Anthropology
Santa Fe, New Mexico

