

Tape #189

NAVAJO

Andrea Benally and Nancy Pioche

San Juan Mission, Farmington

By Tom Davis

August 1968

Side 2

- Q. Well that was what I was wondering...why in Gallup....?  
Doesn't the Indian put up the concessions...and have  
Indian food and....
- A. Did you go to the camp?
- Q. What?
- A. The camp.
- Q. The only part that I got to...was the performers cabins that  
were through the gates...but I don't know where the Indian  
camps were....
- B. Well, down there the Indians were....they have Indian  
things....
- A. They have alot of things on sale at Window Rock Fair....
- B. You didn't go to Window Rock, it is alot better than Gallup....  
cleaner....
- Q. My idea was to get rid of those people with the carnival  
stuff....and put Indians foods in...
- B. Yes, that is a good idea....
- Q. No, really why not....this thing is suppose to be for Indians  
.....it is not suppose to be for carnival people?
- B. Well, they are invited too...but then they do, they have  
both at Window Rock.....and they even have...you even eat  
beans...and what...sometimes on certain days they have  
these feast days you know....? And everybody gets food  
....like the Navajos....the Navajos they set up the stand,  
they set up the stand and they sell fried bread and stuff  
like that and they have things up there that they set up...  
during the Ship Rock Fair....

- A. And during Shiprock Fair...you see nothing but Navajos there.... except at the carnival...in the carnival...circle...hot dogs and all around...candy apple stands...and there is those...
- B. Especially in the Yeibichai area isn't it?
- A. Yeah....the people bring their chili's and tamales...
- Q. Well this is the sort of thing that I like to see in Gallup....
- A. Well in Gallup, tamales are delicacy around there....you see a person that...selling tamales...boy it goes like that...and I don't know... I think that Navajos like hot stuff....
- B. The do...
- A. I like hot stuff...
- Q. And yet...you don't normally eat it?
- B. No, we don't normally eat it.
- A. But when we do get a chance to....man...we, some of them don't know how to make it, they don't tell you the recipe cause that is the only way that they make their living ..... I guess my mom does...cause she likes tamales....
- Q. Well you should be able to get it out of a cook book...
- A. I mean the good ones...
- B. Oh no....
- Q. There is a very good Mexican cook book, put out by a Mexican woman call Elena's Secrets of Mexican Cooking.....and it does have the recipes in it.
- A. I don't know the title....I will give you the title...in shoshone...white....in shoshone and most of this enchiladas and most of this Mexican food, is too hot...the best kind of cook is our people, they don't measure....
- Q. Yeah.
- A. They know just what to put in...like we make fried bread... we don't measure...we know when....somebody else gives us the main ingredients...and how much you are suppose to put in and we don't measure....

Q. Yeah.

A. They know just what to put in.....like we make fried bread...we don't measure...we know when....somebody else gives us the main ingredients....and how much you are suppose to put in and we don't measure....

B. Like it depends on how much flour you put in there....

A. How much people you are making it for...it depends on that... how many you are fixing it for.

Q. Yeah.

A. Isn't that it depends on how many people you are cooking for.

Q. Well if you really want to know something about Mexican cooking....talk to Java because she is very good at it... and we make our own tortillas...

A. Oh, they have some in a store. I tasted some real good tortillas....

Q. What's the matter Shoshone...?

C. I ran out of work.

Q. Wow...you ran out of work.....

A. We are just barely getting this thing done....

B. How many wives had you had?

Q. This is the second one...Java....and I have both been married before...so it is fine for both of us...

B. What?

Q. I was married to another woman and had Karen and Keven... the boy and girl.... Java was married to another man and had two young girls...and then we got married and don't have any.

B. Oh...okay...

Q. Do you know most of the tribal stories...the old stuff... that....did parents pass it on to you?

A. Yeah, but we are not suppose to tell.

- Q. I know that..just wonder if you have it.
- B. We are not supposed to tell during the summer time....  
we can tell in the winter time.....
- Q. Right...and you will pass this on to your children.
- A. We both look at each other....
- Q. No, the reason that I am curious is because I am wondering  
if being sent off to the boarding schools....had disrupted  
any of this...lost it....
- A. I don't have very many stories and besides when you were at  
home in the hogan your grandpa and people you know talk  
about it.... You had more time at home in the camp to  
mention it. Then when you go to a boarding school, you  
are gone for a whole year, almost a whole year and you know  
you hardly ever hear the story, only about once and then  
only in the winter time, they don't talk about it in the  
summer...
- B. Wasn't it, you aren't suppose to do string work in the  
summer isn't it? In the winter you can do alot....
- Q. They don't have any stories to tell in the summer, in other  
words..it isn't a group that you tell in the summer and  
another group that you tell in the winter time?
- A. No.
- B. You are not suppose to tell stories in the summer...and  
in the winter is the time to tell them...in fact my grandpa  
said about the string work....you are not suppose to do  
it in the summer, because people come...and give you rash  
and stuff like that...
- Q. Well now...by going off ot boarding school does this make  
the family not as closely knit together as they used to be...
- B. I think so, yeah.
- A. Sometimes...they are not as close I don't think....
- B. Well the kids usually when ;you take them off ot boarding  
school they all forget and you know they are either.....  
depending on their grandparents...and they don't....
- A. They don't respect them too much..like the things they  
say...they say oh that is a bunch of....

- B. And they won't take them anywhere, they are ashamed to take them anywhere....
- Q. Do you think that way?
- B. No, and the reason that I don't feel that way is because I was raised a little bit different than those reservation kids...those kids on the reservation come to the store here or something and they don't go with their mother... they are usually with another girl...at the store...it is a mile away or something like that...
- Q. It is kind of being ashamed...
- B. They are ashamed of them because that is the old traditional way and they are dressed modernly and things are a little bit....
- A. And for us...I think it is just...
- B. Me... I am proud to walk with my grandma...you know whenever she comes to town....
- Q. Is this an attitude that is deliberately given to them in school?
- A. I don't know I think that it is....they get it just like that because they don't know what is happening to them.... you know they don't know...but when they get home, they don't know how to explain it.....
- B. No, they just...they just...it just comes along with them I think....it is not the matrons or anybody that is doing it, it is then, themselves...they don't know what is happening to them....
- Q. Is there any of the attitudes in the schools...that says that if you really want to get ahead in the world you have to become educated to the whiteman ways...? And the Indian ways are bad...or the Indian ways are old-fashioned....
- A. Yeah, old fashioned...
- Q. And no longer really valid and what you need to do is be like the whiteman....
- A. Yeah, yeah. that is what we were taught.
- Q. You were really taught this?

- A. Yeah.
- Q. And then there is not effort in the school to pass on the tribal traditions to the people.
- B. Because right now the only thing that they have is, they are probably not...they don't have it at the reservation dip...the school, but they don't have anybody to go out there and teach them, to weave rugs and tell them stories and things like that...they don't have anybody like that anymore...hardly anyway...
- Q. But they used to have this, say like in the evenings or something?
- A. They had it all the time...if you went home..if you came back home..your grandpa would be at home or something and they would tell you...he had the morning...early in the morning he might mention something about the morning... long time ago that it was like this or that way in the morning he would mention it, or something like that..and that we should keep it that way...
- B. Like maybe twice in the whole year...if you just hear it once, you can't remember it...and then when you come back from school in the evening...he would mention something about the evening...stars or something you know and that way more kids would have known you know...and if you ask those kids they say, I don't know...
- A. Like in the...
- Q. Then there is no effort in the schools to pass this information on...
- A. No....that is what they say...
- B. If you go out in the world you have to become a whiteman or else you are lost....
- A. Get ahead...
- Q. Well what are they calling getting ahead...in the world...
- A. To become educated and become an educator and become a doctor...
- B. Either a doctor..well if you want to help your people you have got to be like a white man in other words....

A. But right now they are sort of changing that...because this chapter houses...have you seen the chapter houses?

Q. No.

A. The chapter houses they teach weaving and stuff like that in these chapter house...but then, I don't think that they have got anybody out at the BIA schools...or anything to tell stories like from long time ago, what they do and we don't have anybody telling stories in the winter time at the chapter houses, but then except that at meetings... should go on and stuff like that, they are teaching them now...but there isn't anybody telling stories...

Q. Let me go and help Java and then I will be right back...

END OF TAPE