

Tape 351  
NAVAJO  
Frank Apache (85)  
February 1969  
By Tom Ration  
Tape 2

Frank Apache tells  
story about horses  
and how the Navajo  
people thinks where  
horses came from

This is Frank Apache still is on his story.... and here is Frank Apache story..... I want to tell you another different story about things that I heard had happened not too long ago, it was on the same life, but it is a different story of what I have told you..... in the days of people.... in my tribe, they used to have different kinds of councilmen.... in the year of 1945 during World War II, there was a man named Huskie Coalmine..... he used to be known as one of our great leader in these days. Huskie Coalmine was the one that made alot of ideas during his councilmen..... Huskie Coalmine was from Pine Springs.... around Pine Springs... he was half breed, his father was a whiteman.... his mother was a Navajo, and Mr. Coalmine was being voted into a councilman many years ago, he had about 7 terms during his councilman and during the 7 terms he made quite a few different ideas of how our Navajo people would be living in the coming year. Huskie Coalmine went to school at Fort Defiance, Arizona. His father was a miner, his father was at Gameraco, New Mexico. It is north of Gallup about one or two miles north of Gallup,

that is why they call it Gamerco. The reason why he went into mining job was just because his last name was a miner. And with his father, they both worked in a mine. His father worked in a mine before many years ago, different kinds of mine and then finally they ran into a Navajo woman and there was where Huskie Coalmine was born... and Huskie Coalmine was raised as a very smart boy. He had done alot of things in his past year.... and then finally he was elected for a councilman for his tribe.... During this time education was very scarce among us Indians.... Most of the Indian, Navajo Indian, were not very highly educated, but Mr. Huskie went to different kinds of schools. He went to Chilloco, Oklahoma, he graduated in the 12th grade. And then when he came back he was married to the Navajo woman, and here he was elected for the Chairman. I think during his school days he had learned alot of things, that it would be good for his people, the Navajo people.... He was a mason, he learned how to, his trade was a mason. He learned how to plaster houses... and he was an electrician, he learned how to wire electrician, this was his trade. But at the same time, his people elected his for the councilman... councilman job, is a job that you have to work for your people and talk for your people in your area. The councilman has alot of things to do for his people. There are alot of different things comes in from Washington, D.C., alot of

things to do for his people, work, jobs... money to talk about... for the Navajo people to have, and even building dams in the Navajo country, drilling wells for his people. These are all the councilman's jobs, talk with his people. What the councilman says, the chairman has to deal with the councilman. And in these days, talking about Mr. John Collier, he was once the Indian commissioner during that time. And Mr. Collier's time, stock was been knock off, according to the reservation and the country. That is what they say.... but most of the people, most of the Navajo people, didn't like the idea of Mr. Collier, John Collier's idea.... They had to fight against him because he was the Indian commissioner from Washington. He had worked against Navajo reservation, I don't know why. Either he don't like them or he just want to do that. Navajo Indian people were well fixed before he ever entered the seat of commissioner in Washington, and this was where all the stock were reduced. According to the land they got. Mr. Collier says that in one, in a quarter section there should be just only 7 sheep grazing on that section, a quarter section, but that was very little. A Navajo Indian cannot live on 7 sheep. Even they used to own over 3 or 200 head of sheep, they still can't get along. Because of their closing of their children..... So this is why Mr. Coalmine was fighting against Mr. Collier.... and



he had fought pretty well with some of his partners that they was with him in the councilman. The councilman in those days, they sure work hard against Mr. Collier. Things went wrong all over the reservation, people of the Navajo reservation got very poor and went into hunger. They have never been in before, hunger was mostly all over, and never before the Navajo people had begged for any food, after Mr. Collier came into the chair in Washington as the commissioner. Today the whole Navajo people hates Mr. John Collier. We don't know where he is, maybe he might be dead, but every time when anybody says a little about ideas, they always thing about Mr. Collier, they said, the devil.... This is the way things went on in the Navajo reservation. The Navajo went hungry, they had to.... sell their sheep, sell their horses, reduce their stock, even in cattles, everywhere, all over in the Navajo reservation. That is why they don't like Mr. Collier. During the time of Mr. Collier's commissioner they can't do nothing against him because the President or whoever it is put him in the commissioner seat. Mr. Coalmine... has been back and forth to Washington about three times with some other Navajo councilman, talking about how would they ever get back to where they were before. So they tried hard, but nothing has ever been done. So, they just had to give up and then after Mr. Collier left out of commissioner, the Navajos



were so happy about that he left. They sure didn't like him at all, and the next commissioner was more better, three or four times as better as Mr. Collier..... he didn't say nothing about their stock, all he said was we want more education for our children, so that is what he done, the next commissioner, he gave us more education for our younger ones... from there on, there was more school buildings was built here and there all over the reservation. The government used to build dormitory. And then the children used to stay at the school dormitory, it was one good thing that we had... through the past year that our children had to stay at the dormitory. Some of them runs away from school, but their father and mother and our leaders want to bring back the children every time, and so the time came on, that the Navajo tribe has talked about many good things, how to work with us Indians, this was where, Mr. Coalmine came in, he gave alot of good ideas how our Navajo people should work, and should be taken care throughout the year past he was one of our great talkers, or one of our great leaders. That known what to do and he had learned alot of things like this for his people. That is why he went to higher school, everybody liked him.... Everybody was looking up to Mr. Coalmine... Here he had straightened out things with the government, that he went back to Washington himself, with his own money, out of his pocket. And this

only I think it was two times.... one trip, he made it out of his pocket, the second trip the Navajo people realized what Mr. Coalmine was doing so we had to pitch in some money for his transportation and a place to sleep and what to eat. He said if he had to stay for a certain time, and money was ready here. He talk about the oil money in Washington, he wanted to bring it out to the Navajo reservation. He wanted to bring it out to Window Rock where us Navajo people can run it the way that we want to run it because it is our money. It is the Navajo tribe's money, it came from out of the Navajo reservation.... So.... it took many years to build up so much amount of money.... this is the way the Navajo tribe started out, first it was kind of slow, and then the tribe brought some money out of Washington and build the Window Rock headquarters. Here the money start to grow... our Navajo people that are graduated out of high school and even went to a little higher school, they started to be hired into the office at Window Rock. Here everybody talks together, work together and fights together... with their language, the English language, I can't say white people. We noted that there was alot of things that it can be done... throughout the reservation, we know that there are alot of things that is needed. There are nine hundred out of a thousand Indians were poor... poor people, uneducated that lost alot of their stocks went poor, went broke just because

of Mr. Collier.... they always think that he was a bad, bad commissioner that was ever been put in the Indian commissioner. That is what alot of Navajos say against Mr. Collier. They sure don't like him. So, this is the way things went among the Navajo tribe.... during the time of Mr. Coalmine. He was one of our great Indian leaders in this day.... He sure knows how to talk.... and he sure talks pretty perfect English. This is the way Mr. Miner was in the councilman service for seven years during his time, he had asked to build dams in the Indian country, to build more better things. He built up the Window Rock. And then brought in alot of things that he changed. He was the one that talked about the new sawmill, we had an old sawmill but he talked and brought out some money, of the tribe's money to build the big mill, to cut timbers, and cut lumber for the people, from his own reservation. There were alot of things of ways that can be work among the Navajo he says. We can repay most of this money, but it is belong to our tribe. We will not give away, to some white people, you can come back to our tribe... we shall cut timbers and be brought in and be sawed into lumber and then build houses for our Navajo people that need houses. We shall get them off the dirt he said. Our new generation that are in school that knows alot about the whiteman's ways to live.... We will be ready for them about the time when they graduate, when they come back they will have a very nice place to stay..... This is the way Mr.



Coalmine talk was. This was the idea that he had with his councilmen. Everybody was on his side.... when he talks everybody was ready to make a motion for him..... There was none against Mr. Miner.... Mr. Miner says that we'll cut our own lumber that is on the reservation, we are not going to sell much outside the reservation. We know that it is money but then at the same time, half of our lumber must be sold back to our nation. Half of it can be sell out, so that is the way it happen. To us Navajo people, lumber was very cheap to us because it was our own lumber. The money that we paid back for our lumber, it goes back into the tribal fund. So it was a very good idea, what Mr. Huskie Coalmine made up. There are alot of different kinds of good ideas that he made up druing his councilman work. He wanted to bring in some more schooling, the public schools on the reservation, that he talked with big man in Washington that runs the public school. So that is why it was brought up to the Navajo reservation. There are all different kinds of public schools in our reservation today. And this is the way that our councilmen work together during the year of 1945 on up to 1950 and on up to 1960. We had some great leaders they are still in councilmen yet, because they were the ones that have been talking for us all these years. So that is what I say that Mr. Coalmine was one of our great men to talk about alot of things, that had been happening in the past year

and it is legal today, and it helped the Indian people. We had a great big lumber year today that it is sold about twice as cheaper as the one that they have in Gallup and in Albuquerque, a whole lot cheaper because the Navajo people themselves, they don't make very much money like the white people does. Here there were some more things that have been done before he died. He wanted for the Navajo people to have what they call public work. That was another name that they had for a ten day project. A ten day project was for the Navajo himself to work for his own money, they don't to give it to them for nothing. They wanted to give them the way that it would be better for them to have something to do. And I think it was a very good idea, it have all these kinds of ideas that the great Miner has to make up and work amongst us. This is what he done for us..... He brought the ten day project all over the reservation. Through all out the Navajo country, he said that it would be best to build chapter houses where the Indian themselves can talk together. They shall be split out by sections in areas, he said.... So they talked, he talked about how it can be done, there are pretty near 100 chapter houses throughout the reservation. During this time the new sawmill was built, and there was nothing but 2 x 4 lumbers.... was being sawed by the thousands. To be built with the chapter house and then all of a sud-

denly, all over the reservation the chapter houses were started out. Jobs was here and there for the Navajo people with their own money. They were getting \$1.25 an hour, for every person that needed a job for ten days, they had to work and they earn around \$100 and some odd dollars... eight hours a day, working on their chapter house. For about 3 or 4 years time, the chapter houses were set up here and there all over the Navajo reservation and then they discussed about how it would be open, like some of the rest of the house what they call open house. This was set up again and this was going to be among the medicine men to do it, then here when the chapter houses were all complete they have an open house for everybody. Every Navajo person that lives around that area of their chapter, whoever is able to help, not the poor, but the ones that is able to help, they bring in food, like meat and coffee, sugar and they set up a, they set up all these things for their people to eat free. All food was on the house, because of their good house that were built, where they could have all kinds of discussion, about how would they go about. So this was set up here and there, the medicine men comes around and gives the magic way of doing things. How the chapter would be used, in the coming generation. All these things was been all over the reservation. And the medicine man was the one that done the praying and speaking to the people and some other were invited, council-



men from different parts of the reservation were invited to come to say a little saying of what they would know about how it could be run. So this was one of the good things that had brought to the Navajo reservation, and then the Navajo tribe had made a budget for the whole chapter that they must be paid and there must be a chapter officer being elected for the chapter. All these things the councilmen and the leader had to talk about. In the day of the open house.... all these thing were being told at the time of the open house. You must start a meeting together.... and vote and elect a chapter officer whoever you think it would be best that could lead us.... in the right way. So all these things were set up here and there.... the day came of the meeting, they got together, and the councilman was the one that took the lead, how it should be done, they vote for the meeting, president, chapter officers... and the vice-chairman and the secretary, and from here on things started that way, it was a very good thing to have. Here are people in the reservation, all over, talks about things, that they want how to be done... they can discuss all things that comes up.... They can discuss things that has never been seen... restrooms were set up in the chapter house, most of these chapter houses were built near a well, water well.... and so they, so the water can be used in the chapter houses. There are alot of things that I can tell you about the chapter houses but I will tell you this much.

That is the way that my people has been running things today... what we talk about during our meetings, they can be brought up, back to Window Rock to the councilmen... where the councilmen meet. And what we wanted them to discuss are being set up for us, they got to okay or if they don't think it is not, they can discuss that over.... this is the way that the Navajo people are running the reservation. In the first start, we had more white people in the office in Window Rock, they took the leave, today, we have more educated boys and girls, that knows how to type, that knows how to do better things, and they are hired at the Window Rock office, you can go over there and see for yourself, when you go to the Navajo reservation, Navajo headquarters at Window Rock. Every place you go there will be an Indian in the other office typing.... This is the way we are running our people, this is the way we are running our own reservation, I think it is a very good idea. All these things, Mr. Huskie Coalmine had in his head. Today we remember, and we live by the way he had made up. Today we remembers of all things that he had done. He died about two years ago. So he was one of our great mans in the past year... For many years we was very hard up, things tried to straighten out for the Navajo people. It took many years to go this far, with our education. It took about 100 years I would say, when our people came back from Fort Sumners in 1868. This was the time it started for our

schooling. It took about 100 years, to where we are today. So we are very glad about our people are running their own reservation and we have our own chairman which we call the big chief, the big leader. Every four years they take turn, I don't know who they will elect this year. Sometimes we make a good election, with a good man that can take the lead but all through the past year of our election, we had some good men, that gave us more better ideal ways of living. And just lately chairman that we had, Mr. Raymond Nakaai, most of the people thinks that he is not the right one. So he has two terms already, but I don't know it looks like this year, most of his people are against him, by the way they talk about him. So I will be looking forward whatever it would be.... people of the day are living more better than they were about five up to ten years ago.... because we have more better education with our children, and now they are taking the lead of all things that comes up.... What we don't know they always tell us. They always find out ahead of us and they tell us what is right and what is wrong. That is the way we are living today. And there are more things that we can tell about with our tribe, how they are living. Like during the time of the census number that was a good thing that Mr. Coalmine had brought up. He says, we shall have a census number that we will be known who we are and where we from, he set this up..... we have numbers, what we



call census numbers..... every Indian in the reservation, that is born tonight, it should have a census number... when they decease, the census number is sent back... to Window Rock. That is the way that we are all working together. That is what I say that we had worked a great deal, that had done all these things for us, we went through high school, we went to higher education, we found all these out I think during the time when he was in school. It was a good thing that his people elect him as a councilman.... He would be in the seat of a chairman but he didn't want to himself. He wanted to be a councilman because the councilman was the one that should make ideas..... I think this is the reason why he didn't want to be a chairman. They wanted him to run for a chairman but he pleads with the people not to put him in the chairman, because he says that he had a different idea, more better than a chairman seat. So this is what he done for his people.... Today mostly all Navajo people have houses, they are still building here and there, all over the reservation. Everywhere a man can go, he finds a pretty home, a good house, a house that has a running water, but they lives separately now, they don't live in a village, what they call a village like the pueblos does.....like the old Pueblo Bonito ruin. So you can understand these pueblos were the ones that lived in Pueblo Bonito a thousand years ago, there was a few Navajo people was in the bunch too,

but not very many. All this time, they, the Navajo has different ideas for its people, every year... every four years we have to elect our new councilmen and a new chairman. This is the way we go about our people. So I don't see why that the Navajo people should hate their religions. There are about three different parties in our tribe today. One, is a church member, and the other one is what they call a peyote eater. And the other one is the old timer, the old Navajo way. So there are three different parties in our reservation among our people. The one that believes in the church, he hates the old time people, the ones that are believed in the peyote party he hates them... That is the way they hate each other today, so that is why I say there are three different parties in the Navajo reservation. They are the same amount of people. Out of 100 thousand Navajo people... that are religious in three different groups. They are just about even, on each three sides. So, but they are working together at the same time... There are some believers in church that are councilmen, they are some of the believers in peyote they are councilmen. There are some that are believers in their old way in the councilmen, but in the councilman seat they all work together. That is the way that the chairmen set that up, if they try to talk against each about three different things, there is where the trouble is, that they have a different kinds of religion.

Different kind of soul that they have. So this is the way the Navajo tribal council is running today. I don't know how long it will be like that. I don't think the whole reservation will come back into one party..... the one that are into a certain religion, they will be that way.... from here after, if they are peyote they will teach their younger ones the same way if they are the church members, they will teach their younger ones the same way, what they believe, if they are in their own ways of living, believers they will be born that way. This is the way I think of my people. They are going to keep it up from generation to generation. You watch and see.... the coming centuries or the coming year they will see about another 20 years from now it will be the same. They started out with their own way and then education started throughout the United States. There is where they picked it up when they went to school, they went to church, there is where they learned it, about the peyote, somebody brought it out from different tribe... and brought it into the Navajo reservation, this is where it started.... So one thing, thinks that the peyote is greater than the religions of church. The peyote is greater than our old way of believer so they had to join most of them, to eat peyote. And I think they made it legal now, that's what I heard among my people.... but I don't know, there is nothing that we can say against them because it is their own way of living. It



is their own way of believing everything is free to man in the United States... the United States is a free country... So there is nothing that we can do about it, this is the way that I think of the whole reservation. And at the same time, our great people, our great Navajo leaders... say that on our side of believer, of our own people, I think they will be the ones that will last longer than the ones that were separated from the Navajo people. Some of these days, the peyote religion will die away. The church believers will die away, this is what they think, this is what they say. So, I don't know, nature is the only one that knows, so I don't say nothing. I can't say nothing against them, but still we are fullblooded Navajos I always think that it should be better to keep our old religious, the ones that our great forefathers has had in the past centuries, the ones that our great forefathers have lived by, standed by for many years. They made it some way, and they had it for many years. This is what I think, of my believing. So, my friends I don't want for you to chose what I mean, but I am just telling you, I think things will go this way for the coming centuries. So this is the way our reservation is running today.... And then about two years ago, there was another different job that came up which they call OEO. In our Navajo center it is called ONEO..... and that is Oppportunity..... the Navajo Oppportunity, I think that is what it is called.... that is

why it has an "N"..... So it was a good thing to have too.... I think it is all over the country in the United States, to help poor people, to have jobs.... OEO.... Economic Opportunity is what the English people call it. Today it helped alot of our people, they built good homes, they call it home improvement. It is for our people to work. They build houses... they make good skills of work, good jobs, build good homes. It is all over the reservation now. And they give us more different ideas, which they call community aide, community aid.... is a law program which we never known before. It help us in alot of places. Before we didn't know nothing about law. There are all different kinds of laws in our whole country, now the legal aid is the one that takes the lead... showing us a better way to talk ourselves.... We can talk about our own rights, which I think it is right to talk, because we think we are free men... to talk for ourself, we are not slaves.... What ever we think it's right. We can defend ourselves in rights, and that is what we got all over the reservation now; what we call legal aid. We have got some white people that knows something about law, so we hire them and they teach us how to do it, so we are having a good law way in our hands today.... What we don't know the white lawyer has to come up against, because he is right, he knows what wrong and right is. This is the way that it is running all over the reservation now, we have what we call legal aid.

And at the same time in that Navajo Economic Opportunity, we got what they call home improvement director... that teaches how to build houses, good houses, how to set in doors, windows, and measure floors... measure all kinds of things. This is what they teach us to do. So we are very well pleased with the government that brought us all these things, with the government money. And there are alot of other things that brought, been brought up, what they call pre-school. Pre-school is a good thing for our people, for our young generation, from the beginning, which we call Head Start. Whoever made this had a good head, like Mr. Huskie Coalmine..... So today we have all these things. There is another problem we got... it is what they call, what they call recreation... a recreation is a thing to learn... for athletics, how to build up your body.... how to play good, all these things has been brought by the OEO. So that is why we think that the OEO is doing pretty good for us, in the way of life. There are alot of younger men and girls are learning all these trades, all these things..... I don't know how long it will last, but it sure helped us in the past two years already. And we have kept it we have kept up our children with what little money we earn, we have done pretty good. So OEO is one of our great workers.... And there might be alot of other things in the coming year to come... that is what I think, and our sheep and other stock are increasing every year..... I don't know



what else will come us for us in a good way. There is one thing, that most of the Navajo people don't like is that.... they like to be still ward of the government yet, because there is a reason why, alot of these Navajos want to be ward of the government yet. They want for the government to still holding on to us because they still know the way yet. Like I say, there is half of our Navajo tribe hasn't got no education. They say make a vote for self living they would be wrong, if they ever win it. They should let us live, they should let us to what we are today, for another ten or fifteen years or more.... We might have more better education and more boys and girls going to school. That is what I think of my whole tribe. I wish we could understand what we wanted to do, and furthermore what we rather have in the coming generation, we like to rebuild our own stock and there is discussion all over the reservation ~~state~~ that they don't want for any whites to, white people to make us do that. It is better for us to be like the way we are, for a few more years, and then we might be better off by then. But if they make us do it before long, we will be no good at all. It looks like we don't know how to live in the whiteman's way. Maybe some of the younger generation that went to school and graduated, I think they are the ones that wanted to do it as I say to myself, there is alot of Navajo man and woman, boys and girls are uneducated. That is what I think of my

people today, I don't know what else to say, I am pretty old now... but this is what I have got in mind, it would be better to leave them alone as long as they can until they catch each other, that won't be too long for the older people to die off that, there wouldn't be too long for the worse ones to die. So, what I say for my people, what we are today, we are trying our very best to live by the way we are I think, we should keep our old culture, and carry it on..... as long as our Navajo tribe is living. So I don't know what else to say about my people, I think they are well off, they way they are living today. If the government and others will not bother them, maybe they will be very well off people and they are learning, learning mostly every day, how to get along with themselves. They are learning very hard to live a good life, a better way of living. Some of them came back from very good schools, very good education. The ones that went to school, high school, they are now teaching others how it would be better to live on and so as I say, that things are going pretty good in our way. Long time ago it was a wrong way to go, but we work hard for this far.... that we are doing good for ourselves.... that is what I think for my people.... Our old generation had set up all these things for us and we have lived into it, up to today, that we are just living fine, and quiet..... So, my friend, I think it is a very good idea what we have learned from the white nation. What

we have went through in our school. What we have done in the past centuries in the past year. I know how our old folks had their hardships, but it was for us that they done. This is what I think about my people. Our old generation, has worked through a very hard way to bring us this far.... So, I as very well pleased with my people for what they have done for me.... So I am very greatly thank about my grandfather and my grandmother and other people that used to live that day, they have done their part, whoever made them was the one that done it.... That is what I think of it today. I have alot of different stories about things that have been in the past.... I think I have told you before that you will never believe it if I could ever tell you.... but most of my stories coming into the Navajo religious, the Navajo way of living... that is what I know of my people... that is the best they will be is better to keep their old culture, because every year we have a great ceremonial set up in Gallup. You can see the way of our doing things and the night performers. Many years ago, all those things that they have done is mostly war, religious, war dance.... the performer, they always tells about what is coming up next. So that is what we have done in the past year, there is nothing lse that I am very thankful. That most of the other Navajo in other pueblos have still keep their ceremonials and the religious way.... I don't blame them to keep it that way be-



cause they have lived by in the past centuries, their old fathers and their forefathers have lived that way, they have carried their cultures and their religion from the beginning of their time... of their people's times...and in our part.... what we tell you is not wrong I don't think, because it has been known through the past generation and it is kept secret. What you see in the ceremony of the great religious we had it for many centuries. Our people, Navajo people and other tribes has their own religious ways of doing things so whoever the powerful was that had kept us this way, and I think it is truth, like the way they are doing.... like the way you see at the ceremonial. We have it every year round and there is another one right next to it that comes with the Navajo tribe, what they call the Navajo Fair..... and I think you have read about how it has come... that is the way that it is in the past time, I will tell you another story from about the beginning of time, and so this is what my story is in this second tape.....

END OF TAPE