

Tape #374 (side 1)  
NAVAJO  
Chee Chee  
February 1969  
Recorded by Tom Ration  
English Tape

Stories of Youth  
History of Navajos: battles  
and government treaties

This is a story of Chee Chee, he is known as a half breed Indian. His father was a Mexican, his mother was a Navajo. He is a half breed, his father was a full blooded Mexican, but his mother was full blooded Navajo. The way he was born, his great grandfather used to live at... his grandfather came from a place where they call Pecos, New Mexico. It's near Santa Fe, New Mexico on the south side, on the east south side. His great grandfather came from Mexico, his great grandfather was born in the west side of Mexico state towards California and they went to... and they went to.... and they went to Mexico City. From Mexico City during the time in 1830 and 1820 they came out of Mexico. During the time when the railroad was going through west to California here they joined the railroad. During the time they went to Trinidad, Colorado. It's near Raton, New Mexico. His grandfather came along from there on the railroad up to Santa Fe. From Santa Fe his grandfather was married and then made a settlement at Pecos. From there on my father told me that I was born at Pecos, New Mexico. So it is quite story about my father. From there on my grandfather had re- tried and my father had to enter the railroad. While we was

living at Pecos, I was born at Pecos. It was about 76 years ago. From there on I went to school at Santa Fe School. I've learned quite alot in school and I went to school at Las Vegas. From there on my father had worked on the railroad from Santa Fe clear up to Gallup. We been back and forth all since this time and then finally, I have decided to get the railroad job too. While we was living in Gallup, I have in love with a Navajo girl, he say and this is were you came up, he told me and your mother is an Indian and I'm full blood Mexican. This is where you are a full blood, half breed, he said. Since then we lived around Gallup for quite a numbers of years. My father been working in the coal mine in Gallup at the (?). He worked for many years and then finally, my father didn't left me but he died in an accident. I was about around 16 years of age and that time I went to school a little bit not too much. I went as far as 5th grade. In these days school was not so strong, but I went to school. I've learned my little language in school, but I talk mostly Navajo. I didn't even learn how to talk Mexican. My father is a Mexican but I never did learn. Since then me and my father, me and mother moved back to Tohatchi, New Mexico. We settled down there for good. My mother relations lived there for all their life. We lived near Two Grey Hill, between Sheep Springs and Two Grey Hills in the canyon. We

still live there. I am very proud of myself because of what done for my grandchildren and my children. I had to work very hard for my living. I have done a good thing for my family before Mr. Collier had enter the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I have raised some sheep up to 600 head or more and I give them out to my children a certain amount of sheep, about 50 to 60 head of sheep. I have them out to them and this is where I say that I have done pretty good for myself and my family. I'm not worrying at all, my children wouldn't say that my father didn't done anything for me in the past life of his. They wouldn't say that because I gave them what they needed. Today I go among them, among my grandchildren too. I don't work, I will get a little money from my security during my early days. I don't get much, but I live by it with my family. My mother has passed away quite a number of years ago and she done the same thing with me. She gave me all what she had, but my father made it for us. My father was a very good man, he left our sheep for us and then from there on when he died, I took his place. I added some more sheep on top of what he made. From here I gave it to my children. So I'm not willing at all or crying for what I have done. I think I have done my part to make a little stock for my children. Most of my children, I've got two in Window Rock, I got a girl married in Phoenix. They are both working. And I have some more



grandchildren are getting ready to graduate. So what I think of myself I haven't loose out for what I have done in my earliest day. So my grandfather and my father had quite a story but most of the story I have learned from them, I have forgotten part of it. My father and my grandmother has been telling me about my mother, has told some stories about the time of her young age. She says that she was born during the time of the Long Walk, I am 76 years old now. She says that during her time she had been among some of the fights that the Utes and the Cheyenne and other pueblos have made against them. She has all kinds of stories, that part of it I have just remember a little bit. My mother says during that time when they were living at the place where they call Hascubic(?). In my time it was really to hard with what we were doing. My mother told me that it was worse the time when she was a child. During that time they had attack in between Lake Valley and Pueblo Bonito. They were living in the canyon in Pueblo Bonito and somehow or other they were found by the Ute Indians. During that time there was a Ute leader which they call Yellow Hair. He was one of the leader that takes the band of Ute around to kill Navajo people and take the things away from Navajo people. That was what my mother used to tell me. She said it was one summer morning they were living in peace, nothing to worry about. They were in the canyon, in the deep canyon and have a very good crops of corn. In



these days they never knew that this was going to be happen. Most of these Ute used to wander around the Tohatchi Mountain but somehow or other they went around Bosce Butte and then they went Pueblo Alto and then they turn around near Pueblo Bonito down into the canyon and there's where they found us. And she says that she was a little girl then, she didn't even know nothing about the war. People was running everywhere in the canyon, up the rocks and my mother and I, we went in a ditch she said. They went way down up the draw, it was kind of dark, but by the time they reached the top of the mesa there. They stayed there all night long and some of them were captured by the Ute and we was watching them to move off. We could hear them cry a long ways, but still we can't help in any way. So, I stayed quiet that night, we wouldn't dare commit a noise. The next morning, early in the morning before it gets a little bit brighter they went further on top of the mesa there and they went up the hill. They climb up the hill and up the walls and into the top of the south mesa there. From the top we watched downwards, we could see them from the top down to the bottom. Here we stayed until they moved off. They have captured all the rest of the people that was there, it was a good thing, somehow we sneak off in the arroyo and down up the creek... This is the way we were saved from the Utes. The Ute people were

very bad people, especially the Yellow Hair, their leader. He was a bad hombre, a bad man. But we got away. We watched from the top, she said and there was a time that we sure were hungry but we saw them moving off down the creek and our neighbors left there. They were captured by the Utes. They didn't even find the garden where it was. We had nobody from there that is close relation that is, was captured; we was the only one that was with the fight bunch, me and my mother. She was living with another man, my grandmother was living with another man, but that man was captured also. So, we stayed around on top until another two days when everything was quiet. So in that day we watched all over, everyday after when we eat we usually go up on top of the mesa. They took everything; they took blankets, sheep, and our goats, they left there. And there was nothing for us to do, except watch for the image. In these days, image(?) was the only thing to watch for, it was the only job we got. We used to scout around on top of the high mountain. And then from there on I notice one of the boys that he can give me a very good ideas what to do. I was sure smart then, everything that mans tell me I usually catch it and follow orders. That was the only way to be safe. My mother knew what to do. In the next three days we went back to the camp, she says. She told me that if there is anything happens, don't

go over there she said, stay away. You will not be a capture of the people(?) and so that's what I done, I kept very quiet until mother arrived back from the camp. I don't even know if anything what was happening in these days. All I know was there was a band of Indians came and killed some of our people and they took most of the children away. For a long time we was afraid to go back to, to our camp near the garden. We been keeping going back and forth to where we stay at night and we just follow orders of the other doctor. Finally, there was nobody around and we had to go back through the garden. The corn was then big corns, corn was growing fast. The days were going fast too. We never did knew anything about the capture of the people, where they went to and what they were done to. They might be killed off or they might be still alive. For a long time, say about a month's time, my mother decided to go to Tohatchi Mountain. So we make a set up to go up there by foot. The only time we'll be traveling is in the night time because in the day time it looks as though everybody is watching from all sides. So then we started. Corn was just a little bit ripe but not too much so we made some corn cakes in small pieces to carry out. So that day we made our mind up. We had to cook some corn in a cave where nobody would see the fire, but somebody might smell the fire also. We had to keep away from the fire while things are



cooking. We watched it from ways and this is the way we cook, cook the corn. It took about two days to get ready for our trip. From there on we was ready, we left the corn and everything. But they are still not very ripe yet, so we went and follow the canyon on down to the mouth of the arroyo. From there on we sneak up on to another canyon. We watched very close all over around... around the country where we would never be seen. We went on and on, going closer and closer to the mountains, until three or four days later they finally reach the mountain. And we went... and then we are faced up to the mountain and in the hills. We are mostly looking for tracks, if there was anything around there to see. Finally we went way higher up in the mountain and then we listen and look, there's nothing that we could see. We went to a high hill, from top of that we look on, listen and look for about, nearly about two or three hours. Finally we just decided to climb up higher to the top. We went higher and higher and finally we reached the top of Tohatchi Mountain. Here on the edge of the mountain we see some sheep tracks. Finally we look around and around and finally we found a hole in there. There we ... we was already seen... we was close relation that lived there... here we were safe among some other Navajo people. And we met and acquainted each other and then we told a story what happened. It was like a month

had passed already since the people were captured and took away. So that was the story about us and then finally, coming up to the mountain another little story how we came up to see them. So we told them all the story what we know of other people and ourself. And they say that there are some story that was known that was around (?) Canyon, there was some fight went on and quite a few of the Ute people was killed off there. And they think that some of our people were recaptured there. So the next day there was one of the first man went down with some story that they know about... he followed the mountain on down to Tohatchi. And then the man came back in two days later and he brought some stories that there was nothing being seen in that part of the country. And this was not the same band that went through Pueblo Benito, it was another different band because most of these band were being killed off. And then finally they had to trace it back and they had to stay about half a month, I think. From half month's time there were quite a few band that wanted to go back where the corn was, so finally they round up some good men and left there and went back to the garden where they were living. There some of them lived about within about a month. The garden was then getting better, so they stayed there until everything was right. It was kind of fall, close to the fall then. Here they stored some corn up and

then what else they had. In these days pumpkin was known too. During that time between when they got back, there was some of them had to go back to the top and find out what's going on. From here on they watch each other because corn was known in these days that was the only seed that they had. So that was the reason why they had to stay. And then finally the fall had come and start to get winter, so they decided to move back up to the mountain side where there was alot of safer places. There they mostly quite a few of them move together and stay together on account of the Indians of other tribes might help them to come around, they really stayed all winter long, nothing had happened. Finally spring came up again, time when people start to plant things. So mother and I, we decided to go back and see what we can plant. In these days we had found us a horse that we can travel with. I didn't expect that we would do good that summer. We stayed all summer long, we planted some more stuff until one day we decided to go back, to go back to the place where we used to go, to other neighbors to other friend of ours. So we went up, it took us about at least two days to reach the mountain. Then from there finally we found some more family and there was a story came up that there was some kind of other people which they call red coat and blue coat was rounding some Navajo people. So they decided to



join the group that was moving about, and so it was something middle of summer, we haven't went back to where the corn was. Finally we was getting ready to go back and there was a band of red coats came to pick us up with other groups of Navajo people. Here there was no way of going back to where the corn was and I think it just ripe out and nobody didn't took care of it. It was not so big a garden, but it's a small by the time when we reach the Wingate fort, I was talking about our garden. All this time we didn't know what to do, we were figuring running away, but then still at the same time there was no way to do it; we were sure watched by the red coats. They watched up day and night.... We was something like prisoners then. Food was different to us, like the way the food we used to eat was mostly corn food and wild grapes and wild potatoes and roots of all kinds. This is our only food these days. Then we forgot our corn. We stayed at Fort Wingate for at least a month until we start to move from there. We learned how to eat American food there. In these days they had some canned goods too and other things good to eat. Finally we started out with a group towards the west, towards the east which was before summers. We was along the Grand Canyon... Rio Grande River in about 4 or 5 days time, at least a week anyway. From there on the river was running, but we had to build boats to go across the river. Some places are not too deep; some people

had to walk across, the one that are strong enough to walk. But the ones that are not strong enough, they had to use the boat to carry them across. Here we went across in a little boat which was made out of oak trees. From there on we went around the mountain point towards Las Cruces, Magdalena and on down over the mountain towards the east. We kept on going until it took us about another week to reach Fort Summers. A week and a little over that was Tuesday when we reached Fort Summers. There was some Navajo people already there. Some of them know, some of them we don't know. There we joined the crew. First we was bashful with the people, everything was new to us. About a month's time we was very good acquainted each other. From here on everything was fine and dandy. We can visit each other everyday, talk to each other everyday. I think there was some Navajo people ran away, from there, I don't know. But us, we stayed because of the food that we have no way getting it. They were meat being brought in and 10 or 15 head of cattle being brought in from different places for us to be fed. There was everything that was done for us by the white people which gave us life to our people and we sure do thank the government that help us on all these things in every way he help us. Some of us, we realize what the government done for us, he save our life, he save our hide from other enemies. So today we think alot

about the white people, what they have done for us. I never did thought of myself that way; that I was going to live that long. I grew up in good health, I never do want to do any bad myself, I wanted to do the right thing if I can. Time went on and on. Finally it was about 4 years. During four years people has started to talk about their homeland. I think they have done well and they have learned about their time and I think it was best thing that they have for us. They have saved our life and so what we have learned from Fort Summer's time, we are now well pleased. Since then sometime I think that it was a great thing what our grandfolks had went through, but since they have acquainted with the army I think they have done right. I have some time said that one of our best friend that we have in the nations is the white people. Today we still have same people with us. Some of them that are our neighbors and some of them are our traders and some of them are leading us to a way to better ways of living. This is what I call good friendship. Today we can see the light burning in liberty. Sometimes I do say to myself and cry, "Glory in the high, the Almighty that has help us, and save our life." Some other bad things today I think, whoever need us has done right for us and today is different now. We old people has been in the hardship near us and sometimes I have to say that we are looking at them to thank them for



what they have done. Sometime when I'm alone I always talk to myself about our old grandmother and grandfather. They have told all kinds of different stories which they have done in their past years. I used to remember the time that the first train that I saw, it was in Gallup. I was surprised that this thing can move around like horse, but I still believe. So that's why I think, my friends, that some of our old people have the way of hardshipness to come through all this here and at the same time, I would like to say that sometimes I talk to myself while I was laying down. I always say and talk about my great forefathers. Here in so this is the story of a life in Fort Summer's time. The folks stayed over there for four good years. They stayed until 1868. This is part of the story that the old ladies has to say. There are alot of other good stories that are known in Fort Summers that I'll tell you just a little of that story, what happened. These days they were two kinds of church religious over there, it was Catholic and Protestant. They was the only two people knew that they were the ones living there. Here the Protestant and the priest had to made up stories or tell the story of Jesus. Quite a few has joined the church at the time when the Fort Summers people came back. So what I should say about my people is they have learned the ways to life, and so this is part of a story that we have told from Fort Summers time. People

came back in happiness. They were all here in Fort Summers we had lived very peaceful for good years finally there was, people was trying to talk about going back to Fort Defiance, to their own homeland. They been talking about if for months. Is there any way that they can go back to their good old homeland? Finally the headman of the Fort Summers wrote to Washington D.C. Here they talk about if it would be okay, but the United States government told them that they should go more further east to Oklahoma to fix them a place for the reservation, but most of them don't want to go because they have love their homeland around Tohatchi, Fort Defiance, Black Mountain, Lukachukai and Chinle, Canyon de Chelley, Ganado, throughout all these areas and on to Shiprock, Tuba City, Utah, they didn't want to leave that country. So they all had to cry for it to go back. Finally the government make agreement, they said to send them back home. If we ever do start another bad things, this time they going to send us to Oklahoma. From there the Navajo behaved themselves. They learned a better of all these things and they had to talk about it, it is better to live a good way which the government has taught us what to do. So they have learned their way out for four years and at the same time they have learned how to plant, they have learned how to take care of things and the government has taught them to raise better crops, better corn. They were taught to

tan it in a fast way, a buckskin and other things. So this is the way the life went on with the Navajo people. First they didn't like it, they been kept there until they like it. There were alot of things to learn this life, so time went on until a letter came back from Washington and they were to talk about going back to Fort Defiance. There they had to first find a man that can interpret the treaty. Finally, there was a man found who was full blooded Navajo and he talked pretty well Navajo. So one day the treaty was set up to talk. There was four good days going on for the treaty and finally, the agreement came to the point that they shall do what the government tells them to do. They shall send their children to school. This was all the things that has been taught them and then Jesus Arviso was placed to interpret. He was full blooded Mexican, but he talked perfect Navajo. He grew up in the Navajo nation. Jesus Arviso was captured by the Apache Indians and then he was traded for a black horse. The Apache took the horse and the Navajo took the kid. So finally the treaty was set up. The agreement was made and was signed by Parecito and Manuelito. We still have a statue of the great Navajo leader, Manuelito. He was one of the great warriors in early days. And three or four days people was happy... they have a big celegration that night, big pow wow and there they come up in groups. Wagon was not know then, that had those great



wooden wheel that a big old ox used to pull them out. So they were started to move back. It took them about pretty near a week to reach the Rio Grande River again. Here, they came back to Rio Grande and crossed the Rio Grande. From there on they were (?) .... This was the time when they were coming back from Fort Summers, back to their old homeland and then there was no place where they could cross again, so they had to build some more boat look-like that could carry them across, and they all went across. It took them pretty near all day to do all of these things. Then the next morning they were ready to leave again to their own homeland. They were on their way again, they been traveling for about three days to reach Fort Wingate. The day was when they started from Rio Grande they went to, they went as far as Swanee, that day. Swanee is between Albuquerque and Grants or else Laguna. From Swanee the next morning they took off again. They were on the road from Swanee to... they pass Acoma near the Black Lava beds. They stayed again that night. The next morning from the lava beds they went as far as top of the world. That is three days. From top of the world they made it on to Fort Wingate. That was the time Fort Wingate was set up. There at Fort Wingate they stayed about one week. They have sent word to Fort Defiance about the move of the people from Fort Summers. So when word came back from there, they move on.

It took them all day from Fort Wingate to.... Fort Wingate to reach Fort Defiance. There they stayed for at least another half month and they been sending them back to places where they want to go, and while they were at Fort Wingate they have... the government has been issuing out alot of things to the people there, like hoes, ropes, shovels, anything that people can use. And so that's the way the Navajo been spreaded out again. They were turned loose to where they want to go and finally, about one year later, there was some of them came back saying that they are doing fine out through the country. They had to keep up with the red coat, they behave themself. Nobody don't want to go nowhere. There was different kinds of law men sent to, sent throughout the Navajo reservation. All this time they been doing this for quite a while. Finally, they got to where they learn all these things. In spite, a number of the Navajo was raising corn then throughout the country. Most of the corn that has been raised was in Canyon de Chelley because the reason why it is plant in that area is because during the time of the Fort Summer's time in Fort Summers they have learned quite a bit about planting and corn and how to use it. Here, the red coat was among the Navajos for many years until the Indians have a settlement with the Bureau..... Finally they got to learn a way of having good stock of corn in the winter.

From here on it is spread out through the Navajo nation. Most of the corn seed was being brought up from Canyon de Chelley and people had scattered all over like the corn. And so this is the story of a man named by Chee Chee. He says that he gets some more stories but we let him rest for awhile cause of his age. While he is in Fort Sumners he learned all of this trade by raising good kind of corn. During this time my folks went up to my brother's place. There was just a very few people that has thinked that the general that used to be at Fort Sumners still comes during the time of the treaty. So this is what I'm telling you today that I have a very little story known from the Long Walk. This is what it was and I am going to tell you a little about Jesus Arviso. Jesus Arviso was captured when he was a little boy. This is the way that Navajo people had been transferred from the Long Walk from Fort Sumners back to their home reservation. There are quite a different numbers of story that's been set up in the past time, during the time of the treaty back to Fort Defiance. Since then the Navajo people have well known of their country as manner of stockmen that they have learned how to raise stocks. These things that has been taught in Fort Summer's time most of the Navajo people had very good learning and behavior. So when they got back to the reservation they made it their trade and they made it their living. Corn was known as a fact of



eating part in their days. They learned how to raise corn in all different ways. Before that they have already known all these things.... Flour was known a new way of life, so was coffee and sugar. Clothing was very scarcely set up by the government. From there on the Navajo people themselves, they have learned a way to live right and up to-day it took them about 100 years to get more better than they were in 1868. In the way of people, Navajo people that mostly quite a few of the Anglos thinks that the Navajo people looks like they are pretty smart people. As they been taught once and then they never forget. They keep on, on the same road until they reach what they have today. Today we have more younger generation that has very good education as they know that it is better for them. During the treaties of the Navajos and the government, education was set up between the government and the Navajo. Today it is known that the Navajo kept their work in education part. As we know of today that Navajo people has well acquainted with white people in other nationalities throughout the world. Most of the Navajo people are known as a good warrior in a place like they go across ocean. They have a number of Navajo boys that has been in the service for many years in the battlefield. They know that they can do things that the white man don't do. So I think the

Navajo nation has a very good idea by living up to its state in 1969. So people thinks that between 1868 and 1969 is about 100 years today. So we are very glad and happy about the government has done for us through the past year. So I will be keeping continuing on my next record. So, I sure do thank you for listening to me for this long and excuse me for my education.

END OF TAPE