

Tape # 394
NAVAJO
Oakee James
Recorded by Tom Ration
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Side One

Reading Summary of Navajo History

The story has been continued on some other tapes and the old man looks pretty tired but I think he can stand it. So, we'll give him some more water and his remembers comes back pretty fast again and he has a sweat bath this morning. So, I think he still wants to be continued until he finish. He says that he can make another 3 or 4 tapes up to the finish. So here is Mr. Oakee James as a teller of old times which they call the Navajo makes his land. On Saturday is Ration day and promptly the whole tribe comes around on the Ration times. These weekly gathers were a new thing in the Navajo life. In old days when the tribe live in scattered band the people from both sides of the mountain had rare gotten together more than one year. Legend says that they once had a great tribal ceremonial, call it the ceremonial name, which was held on important assistant. They dance were held off and on all winter and the different headman consumed in their and made speeches. These had placed it in the wild days of fighting, before the Navajo went to Fort Sumner. They were years when the scarlet band scarcely show each other Now however, they were the united tribe with land set apart in their names. In with treaty council for all. They needed some kind of tribal government the agent appointed Parecito, the of Fort Sumners as head chief. The two sub-chief were on each side of the mountain only one one the west was Ganado for the rich on man head again, settled near Ganado with his herd. On the east was Manuelito, who lived near Tohatchi, at the place called Manuelito Springs. he had few cattles for his life had been spent in fighting. His wife was in the respect the people gave him. Old man still remember how masterful he looked when he stood on the wall, on Ration's day, 6 feet, 2 inches tall and wrapped in the handsome blanket his wife wove. Everyone listening when his great voice belted out. Remember my relatives. WE have made a promise, no fight, no killing, take your food and go home to work.

The government did not insist much that Fort Sumners but seed in food. Washington was now at Indian reservation. If the Navajo find it hard starting in the new life so did Congress. Much that is good Indian tribes to supply with most of the service and no ready of getting much thousands of purchase made. Two things, however, the Navajo must have school and sheep. The Indians service had of course no education branch. The plan for some church to set up a teacher who would be paid from the government's money. That fall the protestant church sent Mrs. Carston Gaston who opened a school in one of the old fashioned adobe buildings at the Fort. The children sat on benches at long table and wrote a statement that is when any children came the Navajo had promised that their children learn papers and the government had promised a school for every 30 who called who would be introduced or some to come..... probably on either side..... involved all that this would need. The government had no idea that the Navajo were going to be scattered over 3,500 acre of reservation, So, that 30 of them would never be gotten near any one school house. The Navajo did not know that school means sitting on a bench every single day when the child might be helping his parents in the hard world starting a home. A family camping around the fort they sent one child for another. Now and then Mrs. had currently anywhere from 6 years old to 30. On some days there might be 3 in the school room on other 33 school room, under 33, but not the same one. The fact was that at this time in either live, school did not mean much to the Navajo. What they want was to get their fields planted and their homes built to weave some blankets and to trade for sheep and horses. They did not need the English or writing or figuring for any of these. What they did need was hard daily work. In every family wanted the help of all its number some day when they brought, thought of a job in the white mans world. They were once going to fit them for these that they were still far away, farther away, and farther. People came to school and by 1873 Mrs. Gaston had married and left. It was hard for the American boys of the mission times, to find the right teacher at the time and in the 10 years of the treaty there were sometimes my teacher had these.....these who came some remain more than a year or two in the dampened adobe

building, so far from any town. Before the Navajo would learn to trust any teacher she was gone in 1873. The Navajo themselves died out. The principal and two women had helpers because of some agent scrambling. Navajo leaders of early reservation days are named it Garmán Ganado Macho and was wearing the old-time costume in silver earrings and the other which had shirts and that looked much like government system. Ganado had a coat of

This is the way to dress among all around the schools Fort Defiance was so far from the home of most Navajo that few children would come from everyday, come there from everyday. So some were placed school house and persons were invited to board. This did not work much better. In 1879, 10 years after it started the school stayed with only 11 pupils. Sheep were a different matter, the treaty had promised that \$30,000 would be spent for sheep and goats to make up for those Kit Carson had killed. Every Navajo waited urgently for the fulfillment of this promise. For now there were only a few hundred sheeps on the reservation. Some people had kept a few animals all through summer days. Some had escaped Kit Carson's hiding their flocks in the mountains of Arizona and Utah. Now these refugees were coming back but they kept their flock carefully guarded in the distant place. Most Navajo had no sheep at all. They don't be discouraged says the chief on Ration day if the rope had not killed out sheep to make us surrender. Perhaps he would have killed us, it is better to lose sheep than Navajo. The waiting seems longer while the government purchasing agency look for sheep after the old New Mexico ranges. With the long strands, so good for weaving. They must all be ready at once so that no family would start it's flock ahead of another, One whole flock their own people remember was blocked and corraled near Counselor. They promised it early snowstorm, finally 14,000 sheep and 100,000 goats were purchased from the Las Lomas ranch, near Magdalena, New Mexico. Mexican herders drove them to Fort Defiance in a big flock of thousands and five hundreds. Vic Grapper, the agencies war not there to recieve them. He had died early in the year, for left on the reservation, were hard for the agencies for the Navajos. It was an army man captain Tracy Bennett who received the flock, and some of them already knew the Navajo through discription or described.

The scout was the captain whom the Navajo called the Big Dad. Stood on the wall of the adobe corral of the November in 1869, or by one of the American walked and used to be this time they were not afraid every person counted men women and children was to receive two animals. That were nine thousand five hundred Navajos to all the wanderings had come to one the wonderful news. The destruction took five days, and towards the end they had to be three sheep or two sheep and a goat and two persons, even that seems, a big belly looking down at the wild happy faces, was taught he wrote to his supervisor in Santa Fe, I had never seen such anxiously and great Parecito also stood on the wall and the words that he spoke that still rings day in Navajo mind. Now you are beginning again, take care of the sheep and that has given you as you would care for your own child, Never kill them for food if you are hungry, go after the wild animals in the wild places, or go off to find food, where your herd, if you have done this before. This few sheep must grow into flocks so that we the people can be as we once were. The people did not eat their sheep they shattered again to their own grazing ground at Ganado, and Carson and the slope off of the Lukachukai for 4 years. There again almost no more animals on this pasture, but the grass worn down by each huge flock of everyday was growing up again, everything was ready for the fresh start. Ture, it was not easy start the southwest was hurting from another one of those dry spells which go around, every so often. Almost all the summer crops dried up and all the winter the people had to transfered to Fort Defiance for provision and still they were used to hardship, they start re-building their homes and they repair the fields for another year. In May 1872, 10,000 more sheep were described, the Navajo now had a start. This was the way the Navajo peoples managed to grow their sheep out on the reservation the amount of somany flocks that had been issued among them, hwo the government had taken care of them during the returning of Fort Sumner time so the government has given them a great help to the Navajos and at the same time the Navajo had a very good land at Fort Sumner during the time of their stay at Fort Sumner they had a very good behavior of learning how it was best for them to be. So I think the Navajo itself has a very good understanding today which they

are now increasing throughout the Navajo nation and we the Navajo people had a great thankful to words of our forefathers that had done all these good things for us in the past years. So I would say that our people, the Navajo people are not as hard as they think they were, they were easy to talk to and easy to teach. So this is as far as one of the stories that I have now gone on, so I will take another story.

It is from our country which is called (NAVAJO WORD) Don't eat your sheep is a good question, so it is said in the early days, don't eat your sheep, someone once asked Chee Dodge how it was that some Navajos grew rich after they came back from Fort Sumner and while others remained poor. Well you reply, some got in a hurry and ate their sheep and some didn't. The ones that didn't got rich, and Chee was the one who didn't eat his sheep, more than that, he was perhaps the first one, Navajo to speak English and to have some understanding of what they say, and his story goes through the next story like chapter in a book which more of the people were involved. Chee was born in February 1860 before the great round of the Navajo began his father was Juan Torechen a Mexican, who had been captured by the Navajos and his mother was of the _____ Clan, a pueblo group who long ago had sent their women to the Navajos that their blood should be Navajo blood and in the rug upon his small Mexican community not far from the present seat of Silver City, New Mexico. In the course of time, he sort of adapted himself to the ways and cultures of Navajo life that he was greatly reorganizing as a trusted friend and the visitors by many of the Navajo leaders, he eagerly participated in tribal ceremonies and dance, he assumed the leadership in a hunting party and he was given highly dangerous assistance in many of the riders of white communities along the Rio Grande. In the spring of 1859 he was married the daughter of (NAVAJO NAME) and the Navajo of Clan and who had befriended him after he was captured a small military post had ordered that been arrested by the post and interpreter was needed, Juan was employed because of his knowledge of Spanish and Navajo his influence, he informed with the Navajo people that summer he influenced needed for the army and the Navajo had begun as they did so often the commandments had at the Fort needed more personal aide for the force

and perhaps he considered that the Navajos just like whites, would expect the army to have first rights to all because of it's important work so he decided to use _____ on Fort Defiance. The place was called (NAVAJO WORD) and sent word that all Navajo animals there must be removed. For many years this valley had been used by an old chief. The chief was named _____ big head, who lived near where saw mill is now and boned hair were forced to move his animals. The army sent soldiers to every horse in the valley. White-men must ask that, had, one of the penalty for disobeying the government order that the Navajo held a council of war, and then they attacked on the fort and killed the guards and carry off all the houses and they were really fine , and along with saddle guns, and ammunition, left there hogans and started going near there beyond present _____ down came the winter snow and the army would nto falter. Even Juan would not reach his friends even though his bride left in search of them. Soldiers found the young couple camping near the hunters point, in brought them back to the fort, to be held until the Navajo would be found. Juan's wife was expecting her baby but there was no place available except the jail so the young couple settle down in one corner. Spring was near, spring was on its way and the Navajos that had been hiding around returned to their homes. So they sent their scout to find out how things were at the firs ward. This scout was Many Horse, son of the chief Ganado Macho, he traced Juan to the fort and hiding some distance from there, he sent that smoke signal for him and so Juan come riding up on horseback to tell his friends that the army had decided to welcome the Navajo back. He produced many horse to remain, return to the fort with him and but he had advised he had better take off that revival and poster taken when you attack the fort and leave them behind the rock. The young chief did so, he was well recieved at the fort and promised and encouraged the Navajo to come home and keep the peace. It was in February 1860 Many Horse has told the story that he had not remember whether the dates war the 22nd the first or the 22nd. He knew that when he was with Juan, Julian, which his friends called him Juan, it was also called _____ was the scattered across one end of the rim behind the curtain the mother was resting with her new baby, Little Chee had been born, in

the summer of 1861. Fort Defiance was the boundary and Juan transferred to Fort Wingate, this was the time when the Navajos were wild riding and feeling that perhaps the soldier were leaving forever. They found Juan's horse near Fort Wingate and so then, thinking perhaps that they belonged to white image. Juan and his father-in-law followed and before they mistaked could be cleared up Juan was killed, now there was no one to interpret between the government and the Navajo, there were no more attempts at this by 1863 Kit Carson confronted on the way the Navajo who were feeling too, were willing to at Grey Mountain and the governments of Grand Canyon. Chee's mom with her baby and her father were among these who went west near the Hopi village and the part ran out of food, and no man dared to go to the village to trade for corn and since the Hopi were their deathly enemies and however they thought that some women might go there and assume peace with them and they had three women volunteer, Chee Doge's mother among them and she never came back. It was an aunt who brought Chee up she hide with him for a year on Grey Mountain and then in Grand Canyon she took him to Fort Sumner and finally back again to Fort Defiance and here they, the Indian happen which was to provide Chee Dodge with an education, more thoroughly than anyone had provided by the little days, school. This is married to a white man, this war Perry Williams, his sister is an agent. Williams took the bag into his home and gave his name of a white agent who had been allowed by the Navajo, Henry Dodge, Navajo, called the youngster Chee, red, Chee Dodge, he is to bless that he had never been to school much in his life but yet he didn't need to go to school, Everyday he heard English spoken without knowing it, he had a change to learn the whitemans habits of saving and his way of planning business. It is not kind of training that makes, that makes it naturally for people to take us new ways, When Navajos come to little day school for a few weeks or a few days they hardly got a glimpse what was needed. So they went home where they would feel useful in their 1st year of reservation life. Most of the children were out at work, helping their parents mean time, Chee Dodge was growing up to fort, ready to explain what to the Navajos when the time came. The people scattered to their homes after the sheep were given out and some herd was given again and the government

had planned that in 10 years that they would support themselves by their crops and sheep however neither the government nor the Navajos had thought that such about the thickly southwestern weather which was always been on the verge of drought. The rainfalls at best is only just enough; if some summers there were a few inch less the crops are rained, and the animals died and the people may starve, this happens more than once in the first year after summer, and after Fort Sumner. So that congress would always be having trouble, making extra operation or else the army furnish food out of it's own supplies. During these first ten years the treaty had grown, from every three years and we had heads of a family were urged in agriculture and should have \$25 worth of tools and supplies. These tools did not come for one thing some of the promises of money drastically went away in rations for another, the government was having trouble getting started in its post war life. And just as the Navajos were having trouble in theirs. Both sides had made treaties promises without a full understanding of all that would mean, their new arrangement was like a machine put together in the shop they never tried it out. It was constantly broken down at one point or another. Some Navajo stayed at Fort Defiance for all the 10 treaties each year got five dollars worth of clothing and raw material every year. The children went to school when there was a school, it is no wonder that a modern kind of village grew up around the fort and there was a type of housing and clothing appeared. There before they did anywhere else, Still new ways of life were coming into us even at the distant grazing ground and water holes and where the Navajos had gone with their sheep. They built their own homes and prepare to stay thing, Some houses were of good old fort stick type, that is when the Navajos got long poles for the frame work, Some were of short rough junipers and rocks, pulled up in dome shape both were circular shaped and a Navajo house should be if there are any ceremonies are to be held there. Often in additional a family built a new type of house on a foundation of our upright poles. Old Navajos called this four legged house and said that they never used it regularly until after the stay at Fort Sumner, Perhaps it was suggested by the adobe building at the Fort because it had it square frame of poles and

and a flat roof through all was covered with earth, in the old Navajo style, clothing was different too, busy women had little time to weave, their handsome blanket dress, of black wool with the wide red, pendelton at the top and bottom or around the middle, At this, this did not bother with such things for little girls for the 2 pieces that made up the flour sack were just the right shape and size. Most little girls dressing in these days were recorded by a black circle enclosing the word, tell-berry bags, many of the men shirts was of the same material they were government issue also, yards of unbleached muslin blue and white strips down and sometimes . Long after this old trader, says, Navajo, always bright stripes down and sometimes across them they had across them and. In there was regular clothing also, in the year 1870 the government described it, 40,000 dollars worth of shirts, costly coats and vest and maybe some garments for the women. The women don't like the coats and costumes, which were hot and tight. If they knew that at all they, they generally cut a seat out making it into kind of a legging, like they, black they like the shirts however and you can sometimes see these in very old pictures hanging over the Spanish church. The women, learned to make shirts out of the or calico, which was slightly short. Above them wore a V-neck shirt like a man or perhaps a loose garment such as Apache women today. And the Navajo were not wearing their own woolens because now they have other use for it, and in 1873 their agencies, Woolly armies suggest that might be sewn to manufacture in the west. He collected the wool by hundred weight and shipped it off in boxcars so that the Navajos got money for almost the first time in their history. However they were already trading for a good, they needed especially tools and the horsemen. The Navajo had always traded them, when they were not fighting and already their blankets were known as far as California and New Mexico and Wyoming. Now the women set down to weave and could earnest and the men loaded their few horses for a trading trip. There were plenty of trains for the trade in the southwest, the towns along the Rio Grande were filling up with Americans as well as Mexicans then. There were a fort where army officers would pay good price where they really fine blankets to send home, Hopi

and Zuni. Once the great river of the southwest, once buying most of their blankets from the Navajos. At the North were the Mormons who had been in Salt Lake since 1846 they had many little settlements scattered through Utah and had a little store at least furs across the Colorado where now there is a great modern bridge. Navajos with their pack horses often went across this fine carrying a saddle blankets for their package, they traded to the settlements of Utah and into Wyoming. They brought back seeds of corn and horses. Presently white traders heard about the Navajo wool and blanket and began to enter the reservation moving home, the Navajo called Long Whisker, they were opening stores on the prairie ground on Fort Defiance in 1869, Governor Daniels and old soldier from pre-summer days, bought him out, Daniels daughter, Mrs. Black, now kept a store near Fort Defiance and his son, now blind lives on the mesa not far away. In 1869 Stover and Couton set up a store at Wingate and many are the letters in the agencies files, ordering sacks of flour from this plan. In their last year they had a clerk named Lonzo Hubbell, almost every one in the southwest knew this name. Although the Spanish people preferred to stay down Lonzo and the Navajo says Nahkai son of old Mexican, old Mexican came to Ganado Lake in 1874 and in 1870 he moved to where the Hubbell store is now. Outside the reservation, there was near the valley brothers, near Keams Canyon in the Hopi country, little by little other began to move in the practice of these first civilians from the United States knew a great deal to the people. So far they had only seen army men living in government buildings, quarters and usually without their women. They had no idea what a white American woman might be like or how much people would train children, cook and eat. Now they watch an ox team draw up to some spot near a spring and unload ox show and nails and boxes of canned food. They saw straight watered house buildings of logs and with glass windows and iron hearthway. These were not a huge structure of a fort but something the Navajo would make for themselves. Some think it was at this very time that they began to make houses of thick assorted logs. Sawed logs instead of poles covering with barks and earth. Sometimes the logs were stood on an end as shown in some early trading post picture. Sometimes

they were laid on their side it was in the log cabin of the eastern state. The Navajos did not kept to the four-sided type of the whitemans' log house. They laid their logs in 6 or 8 sides, shaped so each side of the house would still be the center of the Indian ceremony. The traders did more than show the Navajo some new material. They helped him to a new craft. It was under their guidance many people thinks that the Navajo began to works silver and trade. No one is sure when the first silver ornaments were made by the Navajo and though the Navajos has been wearing silver since Spanish days, old Mexican was a great silver miner country and it gentlemen all the way from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Like to ornate themselves in their horses all the shiny jewelry of illustration have shown the round silver buttons which discouraged their..... like bridges there were beads, earrings, and harness when the Spanish government want favor from a Navajo chief. He would give him a whole outfit and clothing and horse tramping including silver like no other. These came to stand to the Indians for the height of grandeur, there rich men prayed for usch things and we have already seen how the peace leader had pride in the silver work and no doubt to the Navajo riders took such thing. However they would find them. They got silver from other direction also since the early 600 the white settlement in the east had been handling of silver to the Indians both in trade and as a gift to help keep the peace. This silver coin came from England and Germany and had quite different shapes from the used it by the Spanish. The town silver bracelet and the plate for old Indian, Indians long braided moved went, as the trader moved. Finally the Ute and the Comanche long time enemies of Navajo, were using them. Then the Navajo took the Ute captured. They kept his jewelry so they had grown accustomed to the eastern type of wall as these of Mexico. Still they had more time to work silver and themself. They were too busy fighting Brass and iron were different in these finished it.....the beginning for Navajo smithing. We heard how Captain Henry Dodge provided the Navajo with legends of brass wires for bracelet. Ever since his day and probably earlier they had been wasting such bracelet for himself. Brass was not meant to be heated, to be heated where it can be twist into shapes only by the

the use of the strong twist. So the Navajo had marriage to help sort out pieces of wire and twist them together to form 3/4 of the wrist. This is the shape that their bracelet today but they never got as far as making hooks and catch some specific Indian did. Iron was more desired than brass because it was needed on horse bits. The Navajo got these bits from the Spanish, however, they would and they became friendly with the Spaniards type with its figure of iron chains hanging under the horses mouth. Even before Fort Sumner's days one of their people had began to make these useful articles. This was _____ who was the blacksmith at Fort Sumner in for summer day. He was called the Navajo _____ Navajo up to this time were also elsewhere. In 1850, they learned blacksmithing from a Mexican who lived near Mt. Taylor and begin to make iron bits cut specially big. Old Smith had his experience on working before he went to Fort Sumner and apparently he kept his work there. He learned nothing about silver there. However nor did the other Navajo they were like Chee Dodge will were pinned up like a sheep in a corral. After they were returning from Fort Sumner, old smith learned silverwork so that even they sent him, I am not quite sure, when or where he taught his four sons several other Navajos. And _____ was the _____ of his men. Towards the hogan and pueblo settlement, there is now where there Knowledge sheep and horses. Lonzo held the trader at Ganado was established especially interesting in this new art. It is said that he brought a Mexican silversmith into live at the store and teach any Navajo who wanted to learn. Lonzo even imported some Mexican silver, which was soft and easily worked silver was where most of the silver in these American dollars. Half and quarter. Their equipment was established the goat skin and the even made of old buttons, where worked into log and a hammer and a rough pair of tongs made of scrap iron. Most of these can be seen in the picture sometime later. There are about 200 pictures in this type with such rough finish nothing very extravagant would be made. Most of early silver turned out simply bracelet and button hammered into shapes and sometimes soldiers still if it was set in sandstone mortar just like it was hand made with the chisel the instructions shows part for a new gun. Guns the Navajo were not receiving

There were silver buttons, tobacco, made from the whiteman's leather containing something that were tiny bells which a mother-in-law might wear. So that her son-in-law who was forbidden to speak to her, might get out of her way. These articles or hers were rough finish for the smith would polish them only with acid, or sandstone while they were looking ably for new tools and new pendelton. When these arrive later, the silver smith showed them what they would do. He were coming from every direction, in feweleries, in clothing, his housekeeping, perhaps the return slave had their part in this progress for now they beginnign to hear about the new reservation in the first American had postplanning all slave free. No one between no one knew how many, slave there was in the town in

New Mexico. For there were, never counted. However both the Indians and whites kept slaves and had done so ever since the early Spanish days. it was against the law but everyone went out in New Mexico and ARizona did belong to the United States where near 1846, 1855.....1865 goes into the west, where it lists that all the slave had been proclaimed free. The Negroes in the west were released at first, no one paid much attention to this. New Mexican in the Mexican in the west. Then alittle by little the news began to spread, Indian agents began to insist that the white people give up their Indian slavery and in Santa Fe heated his voice, the slavesy themselves heard the news and some walked away.

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