

Speed 1 7/8 ips

AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

University of New Mexico

Tape Number: 19 # 780 Side One

Tribe: Navajo

Informant: H1

Informant's home address: NW of Tuba City

Band or Clan: Bitter water

Date and location of interview: Feb 15, 1971

Field Worker: Martin D. Topper

Date of transcription: March 5, 1971

Contents: Side 1.,

- A. Healing a wounded sheep.
- B. Fixing the wagon.
- C. Building the lamb pens.
- D. dyeing wool.

Side 2. A Carding wool

B. Spinning wool

C. Fixing road.

Evaluation of Interview: D. Washing clothes.

~~E. Making blueberry~~

E. Making home brew.

Future Prospects:

Tape #780  
Navajo  
Informant #1  
Northwest of Tuba City, Arizona  
Interviewer - Martin D. Topper  
Feb. 15, 1971  
Tape 19, Side 1

Alright this is tape.....does this tape sound like it is going too slow or is the machine on, I don't know. Well we will see... Okay this is tape 19, side 1.... Okay, the speed on this is one and seven eights....we made a mistake and started out a little faster.....

- Q. Alright, I am going to list the topics that we are going to work on....and why don't we ask him just first of all the, kerosene on the sheep, ask him why he does that....? Just to start out with, just ask him...
- A. Navajo language.....  
That is so that he will heal up....
- Q. Do they always do that with sheep like that, when they are attacked by dogs or things like that?
- A. Navajo language..... Yes.
- Q. That is the end of that, huh? Ask him to describe it.....
- A. Navajo language.....  
Not all the time but if the dogs chew on them.....  
Navajo language..... It is not all the time that it happens.
- Q. Ask him to give a little description of what he did, okay? Yeah, just ask him to describe a little bit....
- A. Navajo language.....
- Q. Alright, what did he say?

- A. He said just like when you put that kerosene on it, he said that you won't get infection, that way and they don't get a big sore or anything....it closes off the blood vessels, right there, right then..... it doesn't bleed anymore when it closes off the blood vessels...and then.... he said after it does that, then the meat, it doesn't dry up too, that part doesn't fester because it is kept moist by the kerosene and then.....that is all he said.
- Q. That is all he said.....? Did he give you the steps in how he does it?
- A. No, when a dog or somebody comes and bites it like that.... if a horse or any kind of an animal that could happen to a dog too he said.... he jumps over something, a wire or a nail... something like that, he says then he puts the, that on him he said....and then or a horse that jumps over a fence or something like that.... he told me a story about his younger days.
- Q. So he would just pour it on the animal then?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. You really don't have to use anything you just pour it on...
- A.
- Q. Alright.....there are alot of other topics that we can talk about....ask him about when he fixes his wagon, he never talked about that, like the things that could go wrong with the wagon you know.....
- A. How you get the parts for it....
- Q. Yeah, how you would get the parts for it and ask him first of all what kind of repairs that he would make on his wagon when he had a wagon, okay...?
- A. Navajo language....
- Q. Okay what did he say?
- A. The part where it breaks the easiest, is the chain you know.....

- Q. Yeah, which chain...
- A. Any chain, the one that hooks up the wagon to the horse and pulls..... the horses....all around here and they wear out faster when you tug on it really fast..... and the horse....this one way, how they break easy and he says, another way is that it wears down and it wears down too much, and you can't get a new chain all the time and he says that he gets wires and wraps them down all the time.....
- Q. He winds a piece of wire, like a string.....
- A. He wraps it around and around and around.....it and you ought to look at his old wagon there and the chain is about that big and there is a wire, a great big old thing.....
- Q. He takes a piece of wire and just splices like a tape, splices the chain with wire...
- A. And the wire is kind of tied together.....put it around...alot of times.....
- Q. So the first step would be to get some wire right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So you have two choices, right and one would be to buy a new one, right? But he rarely buys a new chain... right? And the second choice is to splice the chain right? ..... which goes on one, you get some wire, what kind of wire is, coat hanger wire or.....?
- A. Just wire.....
- Q. Any kind of wire that you could find.
- A. Baleing
- Q. And then what does he do?
- A. He takes the harness itself.....
- Q. What does he do.... He gets the wire and what does he do, put it between the two links and then he wraps it around...

- A. He wraps it around with it and...
- Q. Alright...
- A. Navajo language.....
- Q. Alright but he connects the two and then he wraps it around, right?
- A. Yeah, he said that the harness too, around the neck part; the two of them that go up like that two sticks like....
- Q. The horse collar....?
- A. Yeah, it is part of the horse collar.....and goes up like that and then there is suppose to be a leather across the harness to hold it together.....
- Q. Does the stitch break or does the leather.....?
- A. He usually gets the leather, or a good string, or a wire, and ties it together.
- Q. Get leather, string or wire.....?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And then what does he do?
- A. Tie it.....
- Q. Tie these two poles together...?
- A. They are about 6" apart.
- Q. Yeah, but he makes the connection?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And he does it, how, by just wrapping...?
- A. Yeah.....
- Q. Okay.....
- A. That is about all he told me and then I asked him about flat tires.....

- Q. Alright....
- A. He didn't tell me about the modern tires, but he told me about the wagon wheels he used to use in the past.
- Q. Alright what does he do when the wagon wheels break down?
- A. When it is really hot and the sun gets really hot, that the metal rim expands and it feels like it is going to fall off and he said that every time that it expands like that, he puts it in fire, the main rim, he puts it in fire....that is an old old wagon wheel out there, I am going to show you.....
- Q. He puts the rim in fire and then what does he do then?
- A. Then he makes it grow larger...and then he will get some new wood you know and make it kind of large, make it longer....all those .... cut them all the same place, put them all like that....and then the original place....
- Q. You mean new spokes...?
- A. No, wooden spokes.... and then he will put the rim back over it.
- Q. Does he make the wheel part too?
- A. No.
- Q. Just the new spokes?
- A. Yeah.....he makes new spokes, and after he makes the new spoke he will have some pliers.....get pliers and get that red hot thing....and he lifts that red hot thing and flip it over the spokes....and makes it nice and tight on it....and then he will lift it up and then he will have a long like tank of water in ....sort of and he'll roll the wheel around in that thing.....
- Q. He has the spokes on....right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And then he soaks the whole wheel in water right? And it makes it fit right?

- A. Yes...
- Q. Okay...what else did he say.....
- A. Then you roll that thing in the fire and then when that thing....
- Q. He rolls it in fire after he soaks it?
- A. No that, he soaks it water and then it shrinks back to it's normal size and then it is nice and tight and then you have got a brand new wheel....and you start all over again....
- Q. Did he say anything else?
- A. No.....those are the only problems with the wagon...
- Q. On the wagon...okay...most of these things that I have left...ask him about when the lambs come in, ask him about building lamb pens okay...you know these little pens for the lambs....ask him about those okay....?
- A. Ask him how he builds it?
- Q. Yeah...
- A. Oh no....alright...
- Q. Do you think that he would be angry?
- A. Something like it....
- Q. Oh, he won't like it?
- A. Shall I go ahead and ask him?
- Q. If he will get angry.....?
- A. He won't get angry, but he will just kind of make fun of us.....
- Q. Okay, go ahead and ask us.... I want him to tell me about something when the lambs come in..... cause we haven't talked about building the pens at all, we don't have anything on it on tape, you know..... so ask him about it.....
- A. About when the lambs come in?

- Q. Yeah, tell him that I want to have it on tape, how he builds the lamb pen and how he puts the lambs into the pen.....
- A. Navajo language.....
- Q. Okay, go ahead, ask him how he builds the lamb pen.....
- A. Navajo language.....  
I asked him how he builds it and instead he told me what he builds it for.....
- Q. So tell me why he builds it....go ahead....
- A. First he said....that when they are born you know, some of them, some of the sheep out there..... that are kind of skinny and getting old and they don't want to have anything to do with their babies and they have them, they don't like them...and they chase them away....they bite them, kick at them and push them away with their nose and things like that and they won't let them eat off of them. Those ones you have to catch, and they have to have a place for them and so they put them in the pens, and they put them in the pens and they will finally know what that is for and finally they will start nursing their young, by themselves, without having to be tied up in the pen with the young so it could nurse off of their mothers...and some of them they just never learn....
- Q. And so they just tie them up huh?
- A. And then...or if they are having trouble trying to get to their young....or their young won't go to the mother or the mother won't go to the young, then that way too....then they have to put them in the pens too so they will know to go. And then some of them they don't, they never do nurse their young, and anyway some of the mother and stuff like that and so the lambs like that you pick them up yourself and have to nurse them by yourself...and that is when the pet sheep and the pet goats come in....
- Q. That is how Cindy came about, huh?
- A. Yeah....that is how we got some of our pet sheep down there....and then he has got pretty soon.... you have to buy that stuff there, and then nurse it, with the nursing chow or the bottle.



- Q. You use the bottle or the Purina nursing chow.
- A. You mix the nursing chow in a can and then you put it in the bottle and then you let him drink out of the bottle....or the ones that know how to drink out of a can you can just put it out there and let him drink....  
..... Navajo language..... What kind of a coat did I have on yesterday?
- Q. Yesterday? You had your own coat on didn't you?
- A. I had dad's on didn't I? I had dad's green jacket on didn't I.
- Q. Yeah, you did, why? I thought you wore your other coat...why, what did they ask you?
- A. What coat I had on yesterday....and then that is about it.....
- Q. Okay, ask him step by step how he builds the thing..
- A. Navajo language.....  
He said you think about the corral, you don't, well you could design it, he said that you just think about it anyway that you want it, and do it....and then you just think about it and anyway you want to do it and if you want to make it easier, you buy some hinges and make swinging door's and then that way you don't have to carry the sheep over the fence then, and then that way it is easier for him and grandma....any size you want to make it, you don't want it too big though, they the mother could get away from the young.....
- Q. Alright.
- A. Just enough room for them to get around.
- Q. Okay...
- A. It would be approximately one yard square...or four by two or something like that..... maybe four by two....
- Q.
- A. Looks like it around four feet this way...
- Q. Okay, so, okay, so he was telling you about it, he bought the hinges...what would be next?

- A. and then he buys the board and then he measures it and then he measures how long you make it and stuff like that and he cuts the board...and he moves all his tools down to the corral and if he needs an extra corral, he makes it right there....and he, any left over wood he fixes it on top and uses it as a roof.....
- Q. Oh, okay...
- A. He can take the wood from the roof and use it....
- Q. So he cuts the boards...and then he sets up and builds the corral right? He builds the pen and what does he do first, does he set logs upright first and then nails the boards to them?
- A. Yeah....he builds the fence and then he could make something like a big old long, something like a hall, all different types...of pens and he could make a big old long hall way like that..... and then this, set doors and just set them in there like that..... And you could do it that way too, a fence running inside of the corral.
- Q. He always builds it on the inside of the corral right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So he just uses the long hall and just builds the fence along side of the fence, just block it off and then just....
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay....alright is that about it, he nails the boards to it and three, extras are used for the top.....
- A. Yeah, and I guess, and then he said if you don't have, if you are not set up like that, you can just put up the wood anytime, just kind of a frame, a pen for it and you don't have to be accurate. He put up the hall to make it alot easier...and then he said that another way of doing that, he said to dig pits and put them in there.
- Q. So that the sheep can't get out....?

- A. Yeah.
- Q. That is interesting....okay is that it?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Alright....now we have almost gone an hour....most of the other stuff that we are talking about is women's work.....and maybe we can ask grandpa a little bit you know now that grandma is here about dying wool, do you think that would be pretty good...?
- A. Shall I ask grandma if she wants to talk?
- Q. Yeah....well don't ask them....ask them if they will both tell us, do you know what I mean, handle it as best as you can....
- A. You know that when grandma gets to talk, grandpa always butts in there...so we already know that if we ask grandma to talk that both of them will talk....
- Q. Well ask them about dyeing the wool.....?
- A. Grandma....first?
- Q. Well just tell them that we want to talk about dyeing the wool....and then grandma will, might volunteer.....
- A. Navajo language....
- Q. What did she say?
- A. Navajo language...
- Q. What did she say?
- A. Well she said that grandpa knows about it.....so I just told her to say... I just told her to tell the tape that! She said grandpa knows it and he can tell us himself...grandma's voice isn't very good.
- Q. Well yeah, it didn't come in very good at all..... alright, the mike would have to be close to her because she speaks so quiet....well go ahead...you tell grandpa go ahead and tell us about dyeing the wool.....
- A. Navajo language.....

- Q. You can understand though?
- A. Yeah, I can understand it.
- Q. Is it clear?
- A. Yeah, remember like that last time....?
- Q. Is it clear?
- A. Yeah, remember like that last time.....?
- Q. Is it slow?
- A. No.....yeah, I can understand it but if you would put new ones on it would probably sound different like last time you couldn't understand it...
- Q. Okay, we will put the new batteries in...

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- Q. Okay, let me put this stuff away....in the box... now, you can tell me what he said about dyeing the wool, what did he say?
- A. Well he said that dyeing the wool, there is all different ways of doing it and the most important color is black, gray, white and at least orange....you should have at least four colors, at least that is the most common colors that they use....
- Q. Most common are....black....
- A. Black, gray, white and white you just really have to wash it good.....and then white and then the orange like....it is not exactly orange...but it is brownish yellowish...or yellowish brown.....
- Q. Or somewhere in between there.....
- A. It is between yellow and brown...
- Q. Okay...
- A. Those are the common colors in the rugs. He said that you could buy the dye he said and then after you buy the dye then you are going to have to put them in hot water....

- Q. Where do you buy the dye? What would be the reason for wanting to buy the dye, did he say?
- A. Easier.
- Q. Easier...oh...would he buy it more when he had extra money, would he buy it more if he had extra money, huh?
- A. I don't know, he would probably buy it just to use..
- Q. No, I mean....
- A. Buy more dye?
- Q. No, I mean would he buy more often if had extra money or if he didn't have extra money or would he prefer to use his own...
- A. He could use two of them, he said that if you use store boughten, it lowers the price a little than if you use your own dye, your own technique....store boughten dye fades away easier.... he said that after you got it all dried out and you are going to use it and then you get some water on your rug...then he said that that dye will spread out and if you have black and white together, the black dye will get on to the white and ruin the rug and then he said that if you use these plants out here, this home made dye, which is alot better, he said that it won't ruin, it will keep it's color...
- Q. Okay, so let's talk about using store boughten dye... so the first step would be to buy the dye and then the second step would be to boil a pot of water....
- A. When he buys it he usually puts the water on in a five gallon can, he puts it in a can there....
- Q. That is a fifteen gallon can.....no that is a 10 gallon can....yeah....
- A. Anyway one of those...and then he puts it on to boil and then he puts the wool in there, the spun wool from, some of them don't use spun wool.....some of them just take the wool and dye it and then after that they card it and spin it.

- Q. But grandpa...
- A. But grandma takes the spun wool and she would dye it and then she, probably be boiling that thing for about .....with the dye...they sterilize it....
- Q. You don't have to sterilize it....
- A. Sterilize the wool.....
- Q. The yarn and dye are boiled together?
- A. The yarn?
- Q. The what..... the spun wool....?
- A. The yarn and spun wool, that is what I thought you said....
- Q. I said the yarn and dye are boiled together.
- A. You have to boil it for at least....a couple of hours.... a good couple of hours..... and some of these, you have to get all sorts of plants..... They will try different plants.
- Q. When he and I go look at some plants it is going to be amazing isn't it?
- A. He said some of these..... it looks like yams...it is orange...it is a cross between a carrot and a yam... it looks like it and right here, some of them are around here, some of them are around .... iitsiizh... not but over by Flag.... run through the mountains....
- Q. What do they call Flag? (Kintahni)
- A. Navajo language..... by the mountains... means beggar's mountain.
- Q. And they call Flag that? They call San Francisco Peak hastooii choo.
- A. No.
- Q. Well what is it?
- A. Sacred Mountain.

- Q. Well what is it?
- A. Sacred Mountain.
- Q. Well what is that....?
- A. Sacred Mountain trading post....
- Q. I don't even know where that is.....which one is that, Gray?
- A. No, it is right after you come out of the mountains you know....that long hill it is kind of a beat up old trading post sitting to the left....the first one....
- Q. Bug Flagstaff is the Sacred Mountain, is that it?
- A. But they call it Sacred Mountain...you know that trading post with the hippies. The white man with the hair know in the back here and there is nothing but men living there and they call that hastooii cho'o' all around there, that is where they get their plants, and they bring it home..... Navajo language.... He was just telling me the story about how it got it's name.....
- Q. Okay, let's go on.....
- A. And then that is where they get their plants most of them.....that is where they get the yellow brownish color....plants....plant...
- Q. Alright, whatever it is that is where they get it.
- A. And anyway.....he said that there is where they get it around there.....and then up here by the graveyard here....come in and see this big old bushes there....
- Q. I want to know about dying, not graveyards.....
- A. No, I am talking about those bushes there....and then when that gets ripe there are some berries on there, I don't know what you call it....he puts those, I don't know what you call it....he puts those, I don't know what he calls them, but he gets the berries off of that...and then they boil that stuff too.....

- Q. He gets some berries from the graveyard and then he boils it...alright....
- A. It is only where it grows.....by the graveyard.... not in it.....
- Q. In other words it is a berry near the graveyard not burried from the graveyard....alright.....
- A. Berries....
- Q. Oh I see, B E R R I E S.....
- A. And then he boils all of those.....and then that is the red part, but I don't know where he gets his black dye.... Unless he burns it in the wool..... that is how they got their dyes...actually....they just boil it.....
- Q. And that is the whole thing about dyeing.....
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Ask him if he puts any special kind of rocks or anything to fix the colors....
- A. Rocks?
- Q. Yeah, what do they use for, what is the word mordant? I have forgotten the word.....ask him if he puts any kind of minerals in to make the dye become fixed...?
- A. Navajo language..... no....
- Q. Well alot of people do use a mordant.
- A. Well he is not alot of people.....
- Q. Well that is one thing that is very interesting..... well okay.....
- A. Navajo language..... You have to purify it, you don't want to put anything else in there, or else they dye won't work.
- Q. Well how does he make sure that it is purified.....



- A. He just really washes the wool out first....the inside of the, like the pan is clean, freshly painted and the only thing that connects with those wool is the dye itself.....
- Q. The pan is clean....it is actually painted? You paint the inside of the pan?
- A. Yeah....well he doesn't paint them himself, but most of them are painted.....
- Q. Ohyyeah.....
- A. He will get the ones which aren't chipped..... Navajo language..... He said that to get gray, they get the white one and the black one for awhile and then make up this gray.....and then before that they used to, a lot of these guys copy cats.... they would see one do it and then they say, oh goody, I am going to do mine that way..... it's easier.
- Q. Do you blame them?
- A. No, it flows in the air...you smell it and you do it.
- Q. Yeah.
- A. Like I said before, they get black wool and they mix it with white wool.....
- Q. Oh, and they spin it together.....
- A. Yeah, they get, card it together and then they spin it together..... Navajo language..... He said that one wya to get gray.....and then to get pure, pure, pure white wool....you wash it really good and then after that, and then you get some of the white limestone from the sand, white sand, really white.
- Q. White sand stone or limestone?
- A. White sand....
- Q. What do you do with it?

- A. You will mix it and then you will fix it and then the water look like milk.....
- Q. The sandstone is fixed by lime?
- A. Alright....
- Q. They put it in a pot of boiling water right?
- A. They put the sand, not the stone....
- Q. I know....exactly how you mean, you take the sand, the chalky stuff.....that disintegrates from sandstone and has a lime.....
- A. Not the chalk.....Navajo language.....
- Q. No, it is chalky though.....
- A. Navajo language....
- Q. Alright, so you take the sand right?
- A. Take the sand....
- Q. You see the sand is from the sandstone, a limestone matrix, you know what I mean?
- A. Yeah, one that looks like powder....
- Q. Yeah, I know just exactly what he is talking about....
- A. We could take some of this sand here and then that thing will turn kind of redish color.
- Q. Yeah, you know why?
- A. Why?
- Q. Because the sandstone has an iron matrix.....the sandstone has an iron.....
- A. Alright but he gets the white one....
- Q. And yellow sandstone has an quartz matrix...you see because it forms the glue, it forms the glue, to keep the sand together....anyway go ahead....
- A. Cat's pregnant.

- Q. It is a male....
- A. Oh yeah it is...
- Q. How is it pregnant....?
- A. He ate too much...
- Q. Felix ate too much and got pregnant.....
- A. Okay, he said to mix it up and then the white.... you mix it up and you put it in and boil it and it is really white....white, white.....
- Q. The wool comes out really white....right? Ask him, tell him we have just a little bit more tape left..... We're on 410 feet....
- A. I think it would be more than that....
- Q. We only have about 40 feet....that is all we have left.....
- A. We have got alot...
- Q. You realize it gets thicker down there.....ask him hwo he washes the wool....? Alright?
- A. Navajo language..... He said that they use Cheer..... not exactly Cheer....but ..... that.....
- Q. Well that is Cheer....
- A. I know...
- Q. So in other words they use washing powder....
- A. It cheers her up when she does it....
- Q. It makes her happy....? Does things for her!
- A. Makes her happy.....she is always smiling after she gets through handlin<sub>g</sub> it.
- Q. She's Mrs. Spok with super nerve endings in her hands. Anyway go ahead...that is not what I mean....go ahead.

- A. Just like you wash clothes...
- Q. How do you wash clothes....
- A. I don't know, how do you wash clothes....
- Q. How does he wash clothes, that is what I am interested in, I wash clothes in a washing machine.
- A. Alright, alright, alright.....he said that he takes the wool and puts water in there, warm water.....wash it.... rub it....
- Q. One he takes the wool and two dips it in the solution of Cheer and warm water, right?
- A. Yeah, or borax.
- Q. Okay, what does he do next...? He dips it in and now what is he going to do?
- A. Then he will rub the wool together....
- Q. He will rub the wool together in the water, alright....
- A. And get all....and you would card it, you get some of the dirt out that way.....get most of the dirt out and then when you wash it you get all of the dirt out and then when you boil it you sterilize it....
- Q. I want to know....he rubs this together and now..... he is going to have to eventually take it out of the water....does he rinse it then or does he put it in more hot water and Cheer? Or does he wash it more than once?
- A. Navajo language.....
- Q. Okay what did he say?
- A. He said that you wash it at least two times....
- Q. And then does he rinse it?
- A. First he washes it and the water gets blacker than hell .....
- Q. And he rinses it in a pot of clean water....right?

- A. And then he will wash it again...and pour that out and then he will rinse it....rinse it....wash it twice then rinse it.
- Q. Oh, alright....he'll wash it again huh?
- A. whe will....
- Q. She'll wash again....
- A. Yeah, and then rinse...
- Q. How many times do they rinse it?
- A. Once...
- Q. Then you would be at least two repeats...or at least one repeat...
- A. First time you want to get the soap out and then the second time you rinse again.
- Q. You would have to rinse it twice?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Or at least one repeat on washing....they would wash it and take it out and still full of soap, they would empty the pot and take the pot and put some more water and add soap to it and wash it gain...and take it again and empty the pot and rinse the pot out, then they fill it with fresh water and rinse the wool, right? Alright, this is the end of tape 19, side 1..... the tapes that you are getting have at least 30 extra feet on them so they are not really 900 feet, but 960 or close to 1000 usable feet.....

END OF TAPE