

Tape # 280
NAVAJO
Ray Blanco Yazzie
September 11, 1969
Michael Husband - Interviewer
Side One
Recorded at 33/4 ips

Crownpoint Boarding School
Stores
Miscellaneous Area Notes

QH. - Michael Husband

AR. - Ray Yazzie

AR. Is the colored people getting worse or what?? Fighting again or what??

QH. I don't know.

AR. Down south huh??

QH. Yeah.

AR. What do they do, do they club somebody or what?

QH. I don't know what happened, pretty bad though.....

AR. I heard that Chee Co Chee, what do you call him??

QH. Ho Chi Mien.....?

AR. He died right?

QH. Yeah, he is dead....

AR. What happened Bob?

QH. Heart Attack...

AR. Oh boy!!!

QH. It kills alot of people.

AR. Too much drinking and war and everything.....oh boy!!!!

QH. Probably. Pretty bad.....

AR. How many men he loose now?

QH. Oh, I don't know, half a million.

AR. Oh boy!!!

QH. Quarter of a million, something like that....

AR. You ask too over here right??

QH. Yeah alot.

AR. Is that a dog or what??

QH. Where?

AR. Over there.

QH. Yeah.

AR. Oh boy, there is alot of water here on the road.

QH. Are those Henry's horses?

AR. No, sombody elses.

QH. He can't find his horses.

AR. That horse was gone a long time I don't know, somebody took it.

QH. Maybe.....sombody kill it and eat it.

AR. Yeah.

QH. I never eat horse, it is pretty good? Have you ever ate it?

AR. You know one time, somebody you know, he said, you like horse meat, he cut me some, oh boy, that was too much fat on it too.....

QH. Oh pretty much fat on it huh?

AR. Oh, boy yeah. I didn't boil it I just roast it. It was all right. Too much fat.

QH. Pretty good.....

AR. Pretty bad, dog right??

QH. Yeah, big one.

AR. Someone took his place yet?

QH. I don't know not yet.

AR. He is the dictator huh?? Communist, pretty bad man huh??

QH. I guess. Yeah, I don't know...

AR. How about Hitler?

QH. Oh bad.....

AR. Worse?

QH. Real bad, kill alot of people.

AR. They have got that, you know he just make a rule, and oh boy, somebody caught him.

QH. Yeah. How do you sepll Woody's name?? Just like Woody??

AR. W O O D Y.....

QH. Woody huh??

AR. Pinto.

QH. That is his real name huh??

AR. Yeah. They almost done something with Nixon too, didn't they?

QH. Yeah, I don't know...

AR. That is the way that I heard it. You know, they almost do something with him.

QH. Could happen.

AR. Over seas.

QH. That way huh?

AR. Over seas, they don't know what they are doing right?

QH. Yeah, pretty bad.

AR. Especially those young guys. Almost club them huh?

QH. Yeah, pretty bad....

AR. Over here in the United states, it is the same too, they loose a good man too, Kennedy right?

QH. Good man, two Kennedy....

AR. Yeah, Senator...

QH. Senator and President.

AR. He was going to do alot of good right?

QH. Senator?? Yeah.....

AR. Oh my!!!

QH. Not now, he is dead. Shot him right in the head.

AR. Too Chee Kee.....

QH. Yeah. It gets pretty cold out here in the winter huh??

AR. Yeah, pretty bad.

QH. Snow pretty soon huh??

AR. Maybe I hope not.

QH. I do too.....

AR. You know this guy that come up from Iowa, what do you call that, Iowa??

QH. Yeah.

AR. They said down there it is still warm.....

QH. Still warm huh?? Could be....

AR. You know what they say, they raise alot of corn, and soy beans and pumpkin and.....

QH. Pretty good huh?

AR. How about in Albuquerque Bob?

QH. Yeah, alot of that.

AR. What the Spanish, do they still work on chili?

QH. Oh, alot of green chili, do you like that?

AR. Yeah.....Mexican right?

QH. Green chili is pretty good.....

AR. What about this Bologna what do they call it? I don't know what they call it?

QH. Pumpkin, Melon.....?

AR. Yeah.

QH. Melon?

AR. Yeah. Even they have got apple right?

QH. Apples everything.....grapes.

AR. Have you ever been down at Zia dance?

QH. No.

AR. Those people went over there around the 15th, they said that it is pretty good.

QH. Pretty good dance huh?

AR. They are going to have another one over here in Jemez...

QH. Oh.

AR. It is on the 12th, November 12th. That is when it gets a little cold.....

QH. Yeah, it is pretty cold then. Too cold huh??

AR. You know long time ago the Navajo just used to travel by wagon,

QH. Yeah, no pick-up trucks?

AR. I mean, I used to go with Henrys' father, he passed away but, I don't know how many years ago, we used to go in the wagon in the morning and we sleep down at those village then we went down across, then on the highway and then we start from there and then we get there in no time. See our friends. AT that time, they didn't have any drinking, those Jemez, they make homemade....

QH. Beer??

AR. Looks like wine to me, they boil it I think.

QH. How long ago was this??

AR. Oh, I don't know about 20 years ago I think.

QH. 20 years ago.

AR. Something like that.

QH. You go down to Jemez to see the dances huh?

AR. Yeah, they have a dance all night I mean in the daytime. But now they are just drinking, I don't know what they do.

QH. Drink alot....

AR. That is what they do....they have a barrel....lot of it.

QH. Just full of that stuff...?

AR. Yeah, oh boy, one time I went, I was working with that guy, they were drilling the well, and he was from Farmington, he said, do you want to go with me in town, in Farmington, that is where he live, we were in Aztec see....and I went with him, he treat me right.....oh boy... home made.....I don't know how he made that....big barrel too.

QH. Where was this?

AR. Aztec. Next Morninghe gave me one gallon for amigo.....friend....so I came back.....

QH. Whole gallon??

AR. Yeah, cause I work for him.

QH. Homemade stuff?

AR. Homemade yeah...

QH. Wine?

AR. It is not like wine, it taste different, it is pretty good, but the whiskey, it is too strong.

QH. Pretty strong huh?

AR. Yeah. This guy was a pretty good man.

QH. They don't fix the roads too well around here do they?

AR. No.

QH. Who is suppose to do that??

AR. Oh, it is suppose to be RW, he is county commissioner, I don't know why he don't. He don't do what he is told right??

QH. These are pretty bad roads.

AR. Yeah. He is the one that has alot of busses, he is the county commissioner.

QH. Shall we go this way??

AR. No, that way, way trading post, and then we go that way. You have never been that way have you?

QH. No.

AR. Tinian and then there.....

QH. Go to Tinian huh??

AR. Yeah, they have got a store there too. It is the same as Morris store, have you ever seen Morris?

QH. No, he owns the Torreon Trading Post?

AR. Yeah, he has got alot of stores about two three, four, five. Millionare right?

QH. What is his name??

AR. Morris Tanner. You have heard about him.

QH. Yeah, but Winston runs the store? It is Harry Winston?

AR. No, I just call him Winston, talks Navajo pretty good.

QH. His boy got killed huh?

AR. Who?

QH. Was it his boy that got killed, or his father? Up there?

AR. I don't know.

QH. Who got shot huh??

AR. You mean the one that Henry killed?

QH. Yeah.

AR. No, that was a different guy. Gib Grand.....

QH. But he worked there?

AR. Long time ago, the first store....ever since his boy got killed he moved.....

- QH. Left huh??
- AR. He is a good Joe, but I don't know what happened....they burned his store and everything.
- QH. That was at Torreon huh?
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. Before this post was here?
- AR. Yeah, then Shelby fix it and sold it to Morris Tanner.
- QH. Tanner owns it now huh, who runs it, does he run it himself or somebody else does?
- AR. Winston is the one that runs it.
- QH. Winstons runs it huh??
- AR. I don't know where I heard, it maybe someone told me, maybe it is true, but they said that Gib is over there now. In Colorado. I could recognize him, he recognize me one time.
- QH. Henry is your half brother isn't he?
- AR. He and me we are good friends. You know the boy, you know he hire me every time at his store, to work for him.
- QH. Yeah.
- AR. Gib's wife, I know everybody.....
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- QH. The boy had a gun too and he pulled it on Henry first?
- AR. Yeah, that is what he did. He was with another Navajo man.
- QH. Henry was protecting himself then?
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. Henry didn't get in trouble for that did he?
- AR. He did.
- QH. Even though it was self-protection?
- AR. Yeah, you know that one guy, they were fighting with one guy and this guy was fighting with this one boy, and he start, then he tried to shoot Henry so he tried to protect him.....
- QH. So Henry shot him huh?
- AR. Yeah, with a 22 what do you call this, 22 small shot??

QH. Yeah, 22 short. Got him?

AR. That is what I heard. They took that boy, they tried to take him to the hospital in Crownpoint just when they got to Whitehorse out of sight, right on the leg, that is where he got shot.

QH. Died before he got there though huh?

AR. Yeah, here is the trading post, got an airplane.

QH. Is this Winstons place??

AR. Yeah, he is home now.

QH. Where does he fly to?

AR. He is going to see.....

QH. He is just the manager, Winston?

AR. No, I mean yeah, Morris has got all the stores, boy he is, even buy little things, it is too much.....

QH. You have to go there though, it is too far to Cuba. Isn't it.

AR. One missionary he help us sometimes, but we have to be good, no drinking he said.

QH. Is that what the missionary said?

AR. Yeah.

QH. No drinking, they don't like that? That is not good for you to drink too much anyway is it?

AR. That is what he did over here and then the next day they took Henry and another boy because another boy was fighting too, they took both of them to....

QH. Cuba?

AR. No, to Bernalillio.

QH. Oh, put them in jail?

AR. Lock them up.

QH. How long was Henry in jail?

AR. Oh, about one month there and they hear....what do you call it??

QH. Yeah, a trial.

AR. Yeah, then they took him to Santa Fe.

QH. For how long? How long did he have to go there?

AR. About five years.....I think.

QH. Really? What they didn't call it self-defense then, they called it murder?

AR. Something like that, you know some guys.....

QH. The other guy shot first huh??

AR. They are trying to tell them right, but they wouldn't listen.

QH. So he had to go to prison huh?

AR. Yeah, that is pretty bad.

QH. The traders aren't too honest huh?

AR. No, you know after that, when Henry comes out of there, see then one day, that day was pretty dry, no rain or nothing, like that around New Mexico, then I was, we had some horses, I took them to one place over there they have a well and they started drinking and somebody coming down the road, close to down that away right?? And then old he got truck, kind of white, but he stop right there, he look at me and I know him right away. And then pretty soon he laugh and he shook my hand long time, no see he said, oh boy!!! And so he ask me I like to know so and so he said, and Henry Geronimo right, and then Ramon and another guy his name is Toledo, and he mention some girls name and some boys name oh boy!!! They are going to watch out pretty soon he said. I am going to get them.

QH. Pretty mad huh??

AR. Yeah, he told me you are all right, but.....

QH. He never got them though?

AR. Yeah maybe.

QH. Henry is still pretty mad about that isn't he?

AR. Yeah, he said, I might when I forgot you know, behind some Navajo right, from Gallup or someplaceone day they said, there were two men, a boy and a man came over to the other place and they said, where is Henry.....

QH. Tried to find him??

AR. Yeah, that is what they said.

QH. How long, when did this happen?

AR. Oh about 1953 I think.

QH. '53?? He was in jail five years huh? Boy that is pretty bad.....He don't like to talk about it huh?

AR. No, one guy got, you know, just like something happened here one time too. You know, I will show you where someone got shot too. A little way from here.

QH. What happened??

AR. This is in the nighttime, I have never seen it with my eyes but the next morning, in the night-time these guys were drunk and they shot one guy.....

QH. Killed him??

AR. Yeah, and he shot women right here.

QH. What did they do to him? Take him away?

AR. They took the body to Crownpoint and they arrest this guy.

QH. He is in jail?

AR. No, he come out, he said that it was in self-defense.

QH. But Henry didn't get self-defense?

AR. No, they just put him in jail, over here, over here.....

QH. Where are we now?? We are just the other side of the trading post?

AR. Yeah.

QH. How long ago did that happen?

AR. Which one?

QH. This killing here?

AR. Oh it is about 6 years ago....this guy was married to another kind of Indian from Utah and this boy was pretty good but another boy kill him.

QH. Drunk huh??

AR. Yeah, that is pretty bad. He shot with that 22 too.

QH. Right in the stomach huh?

AR. Yeah, and he shoot the other one?

QH. No other killings though, those are the only two that you know of around here? No other trouble huh??

- AR. The only trouble, accidents happen to the children that are going to school, in Cuba, one morning I think, you know that day, I think that, the bus driver was following him and he.....
- QH. Wreck the bus?
- AR. Yeah, no...the bus turn over and he kill one girl and two got really hurt. That is what happen no good right??
- QH. You went to school at Crownpoint boarding school?
- AR. No, at that time they didn't have boarding school, government school, boy they make us do something right there. You know superintendent was pretty bad.....
- QH. Who was he?
- AR. The superintendent.....?
- QH. Oh the superintendent.....
- AR. If we run away or not doing the right thing, they club us right there, beat you up huh?? You know this disciplinary, boys advisor? Used to be a long whip.....
- QH. Oh.....hit you with it huh??
- AR. Yeah, even girls they whip too.....The girls have to wear pants and we wear dresses....
- QH. Really?
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. Is that what they made you do?
- AR. That is right.....Oh that is just.....
- QH. Make you pretty mad huh?
- AR. Oh they make us do right, they don't give us much to eat too. Just enough too.....
- QH. The boys advisor and the superintendent were white men huh??
- AR. Yeah, no, one is a Spanish fellow, you know the guys that run away all the time, they tie them up right here.....
- QH. Chain.....
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. What year was this that you went to school?
- AR. It was in 1923.....Yeah that was bad people that time.....

- QH. Just government school at Crownpoint huh??
- AR. Yeah, we fight with the girls too.
- QH. Oh yeah, did they punish you for doing that?
- AR. Yeah, oh we were not very big, but do alot of bad things, fighting.....
- QH. Didn't like school huh??
- AR. No, alot of guys steal too.
- QH. What would they steal?? Stuff from school??
- AR. It was because they didn't have much to eat, they go to dining room and broke the window and steal bread. Even they steal cheese, oh boy....lot of things.....
- QH. Just food to eat huh??
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. What did you learn there, what subjects did they teach you??
- AR. Arithmetic and oh I was behind on that division....
- QH. Pretty hard huh?
- AR. Yeah, one time we had summer school, we never come back, they make us work, I know one girl, he is living in Gallup too, she was cook and I take care of the patient, hospital and something like that. Oh a waiter or something like that.....
- QH. They didn't have any nice teachers there, anybody nice to the kids?
- AR. No.
- QH. All bad huh?
- AR. Even the doctor, is too mean.....
- QH. Even who??
- AR. Doctors....
- QH. Doctors are mean too?
- AR. Oh my!!!!!!!
- QH. It is not that way anymore is it?
- AR. Nowadays it is pretty good.....you know where that.....

- QH. Baptist church.....Tinian.....
- AR. Yeah, you know that house over there.....
- QH. Do they ever come and see you, the Baptist?
- AR. No, the missionary don't like me.
- QH. What do the missionaries think of the traders? What do the missionaries think of Winston down there? At the Torreon Trading Post?? Do they like him or do they think he charges too much??
- AR. Yeah, too much. I don't know why the Navajo tribe doesn't want to buy that place. He ask too much.
- QH. Oh really, how much?
- AR. I don't know.
- QH. You mean they tried to buy it, the tribe??
- AR. Yeah, and then they...I don't know, they don't trust each other.....
- QH. Well what would happen if the tribe bought it, would the prices be cheaper?
- AR. They would, you know, some guys they are not all the same, somebody you know, maybe if they do that, somebody might put the money in their pocket.....
- QH. Can't trust anybody huh??
- AR. Yeah, just like in Cuba, only one place has got, this Spanish got a store, his name is Cosare, or something like that.
- QH. In Cuba??
- AR. Yeah. he is the only guy his prices are low.....
- QH. What store is that?
- AR. Safeway...outside he has got an automechanic...where they fix the.....
- QH. But he has pretty good prices though??
- AR. He has got everything...gas...everything. The guy that works there he is from Oklahoma, he is part Indians.....
- QH. Navajos like Safeway though?? They do most of their shopping there?
- AR. Yeah, Shelby try to put the Safeway, but he said that he is getting sick again.
- QH. Who is Shelby??
- AR. The one that has the bar over there.....

QH. Oh at where?

AR. At Penistaja.....

QH. Oh at Penistaja.

AR. Pretty bad man huh??

QH. I don't know, is he a white man??

AR. I don't know.

QH. He isn't an Indian though is he??

AR. No.

QH. That is just a bar and a gas station huh??

AR. Yeah, he's got some bread, crackers such and such.....In Albuquerque they have alot of them??

QH. You never go to Albuquerque much huh??

AR. I have been in Gallup but that is different.

QH. Oh, you don't have a car though?

AR. I just ride with my buddies one time, we stay over night there, my buddy, he don't drink.

QH. Oh yeah.

AR. He never tough it he said.

QH. He is probably smart huh?

AR. He just want to see the girls that is all....there is alot of Navajos there too....lot..!!!!

QH. Where?

AR. In Gallup. Yeah alot of them.

QH. You didn't go over to the ceremonies this year huh?

AR. No, my buddy wants me to go over there, but I told him no.

QH. There are too many people.....

AR. Yeah, women, girls, boys.....

QH. Your wife is still in Gallup huh??

AR. Yeah, I think so, cause she never come back. Maybe in Grants, that is where her boy lives....

QH. This is her boy that died??

AR. Yeah, but the boys wife is still living and got alot of family. About 8 all together.....

QH. But they don't come to see you though??

AR. No, they maybe they don't know me.

QH. Probably not....

AR. I see those Mormon once in a while.

QH. Where are they from?

AR. Down that way....Star Lake.

QH. Star Lake huh?? They don't come around too often?

AR. Used to be coming every Monday or Tuesday, but they never come again any more....Tinian.....

QH. So this is Tinian...???

AR. Yeah, that is a big place, too huh??

QH. Trading post, who owns this trading post here?

AR. Morris.

QH. The same guy huh? The same guy that owns the Torreon Post?

AR. Yeah, he flys little bit right? Got lake around here???

QH. Not many sheep on the reservtion are there?

AR. No, they belong to Morris too.

QH. Does it,...what does?? The sheep.????

AR. Yeah, you know they give to some of those Navajo people and then every five or ten years, they pay wool or lamb time you know.....

QH. Did you ever have any sheep.

AR. We used to get some sheep from Gib, these guys they steal you know.....

QH. They steal sheep?!?????

AR. Oh, I don't know, they give us some clothes.....

QH. Don't any of the Navajos around here though have a big herd of sheep?

AR. Nobody.....

QH. No more.....Why.....too much money???

AR. This way, I think.

QH. Too much money huh??

AR. Yeah. Gallup.....I think Arizona, alot of people still have some sheep cows and some of them, I think in Arizona, they are still living in the old ways, they don't cut their hair, andlet it

go like yippie, how do you call them?? Yippie or.....????

QH. Hippie.....

AR. Yeah, hippie, too many right?? One time we see one over there at Cuba.....Long hair.....

QH. What do you think of them?

AR. Oh, I don't know.....they say hello, but we have to say hello, they don't bother.....

QH. Whiteman huh??

AR. Yeah, I see some colored too. Pretty bad, right, colored.....

QH. Is that what the Navajo thinks??

AR. Yeah, how do they do it those Hippies.....?

END OF TAPE