

Tape #339  
NAVAJO  
Peter MacDonald  
Recorded by TOM RATION  
Twin Lakes Chapter House  
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Side One

PETER MACDONALD TALKS  
ABOUT THE NAVAJO TRIBE,  
TWIN LAKES CHAPTER HOUSE:  
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ON  
THE RESERVATION--HOW IT  
IS BROUGHT IN AND THE  
CONFLICTS THAT ARE INVOLVED.

...from OEO, these are some of the monies that we have to maintain an office until we get the foundation to give us money for it or to go to the Tribal Council and have them fund it, put that on installment... So, that is the organization of ONEO. This idea is presently in trouble because the Council don't, didn't like the way they were operating and because of this very delicate relationship the Council has always been able to hire and fire the Director and have been trying to get him fired. They try several methods, recently they decided to cut off the funds up here, so that's what has happened now. They finally cut our here so that matter of days these people began to scream, but they...they think they can do it better though, the OEO and get the money instead of having to come to the Council. This is a sort of hot area now for the ONEO people to be concerned with, the Board and none of these people need to know about it. It's a very delicate situation, it has alot of overtone in every direction so I think the Board is doing a pretty good job in trying to maintain the effort. The important thing is that there are alot of people here depending on the service of legal aid and there are quite a few clients who are now

active clients and attorneys who are employed by the program...it's under the enterprise and the enterprise section divides into things that the Tribe runs itself and the other, they have Board of Directors set up. Sawmill has its own Board of Directors and NTUA has its own Board of Directors and I think there is one more but these two, NTUA is run by the Board and the Board then reports to the Advisory Committee here and then the Council. They hire the men, but it's all administered by Tribal funds.

Q. Are the members of the Tribal Council itself, are they elected?

A. There are 74 members in the Council. They are elected every four years at the same time Tribal Chairman is elected. Another election is a year and a half, 18 months from now they will have another election.

Q. How are the members of the Advisory Committee chosen?

A. The Council goes by District. You notice that the land District, there are 18 land District in the Navajo Reservation and each Councilman representing from the District get together and they vote on the guy that's going to represent them and so they...so then the Council ratifies the selection and then they become advisories.

- Q. ... (INAUDIBLE) ...
- A. Yes, it needs to be worked out...
- Q. How does the Tribe actually get its money, through the sale of oil rights?
- A. Yes... they get it two ways, one is through send a man out for prospective purposes to hunt for oil. Then when the oil is discovered then the Tribe has an agreement with the oil company that every sixth barrel belongs to the Tribe and the others belong to the company.
- Q. I hear the income from these oil wells has dropped five times over...
- A. No, it's dried up. We are running out of oil.
- Q. Is the money running out also? I heard that.
- A. Yes.
- A. When you first develop an oil field you get 100% out for the first few years, but then after you get the immediate stuff out you then have to work out to get the rest of it. Also, there are a bunch of incentives for developing new fields, taxes and such. So it may be very possible for the first few years, then after that they're gone.
- Q. Are they still hunting for more oil see if they could discover more oil and try to maintain that figure. Otherwise, the biggest oil reserve was

down at San Juan Valley and part of Utah and Farmington and Shiprock and down in that area and they pretty well pump quite a bit of milage. So, that was going down and close down that well. But, in the meantime they coming along the mountain range and over the western part and some previous survey, they don't seem to expect too much from that area, not like they did in the river valley. So, they are liable to discover more, but chances are...

Q. ... (INAUDIBLE) ... so that eventually this could become a Tribal enterprise and the people could go out and survery and drill the oil...

A. I think the Tribe has felt at least from what I gather that it is cheaper for the outside companies like Texaco and Standard Oil to do the work, than for them to tune up and try to do it. Although, what you say is also connected, the arrangement could be made that eventually the Tribe could take over and it's fine, but I think there is a certain hesitancy on the part of the Tribe for another reason that the Tribal is a government and yet all of the land and all of this resource is held in common by all the people. So, in a way, the Council is administering what belongs to everybody. Whereas on the outside there is no government on the Reservation. In other words, if it's oil

discovered on the your land you do what you want with it so long as you give some of it to the government. But here, the Tribe, the NTUA is sort of a government; it's a TVA is what it is. It's not privately owned, Tribal government owned. And I think there's a great indecision as to whether they try to go all out and own everything on the Reservation. And this leaves the rest of the Navajos just to or to develop into so that what the Tribe wants owned to be given to the individual Navajos...which is also another sign. They been trying to do both at this time and deciding which way to go because there is great need for development yet there has to be some reserve as to how far you go before you get into a communist situation.

Q. What efforts have been made for water development...

A. Yes, the Tribe has also in the Resources Division in their livestock and land they also have a ground water development program. When the Tribe has alot of money they just went all out regards anyway and drilled for water and put up windmills and they also dug quite of shallow wells. After they become, they got much of their money, then the PHS came in, the PHS said something and they began matching funds, the PHS on a

50-50 basis to develop shallow land. Even that now has going down. You find many of the windmills has stopped and many of the shallow wells has stopped because of lack of maintenance. So, there is some cooperation that really hasn't blossomed yet. BIA developed water, but it developed water for its own comfort, in other words, it developed water for the school here, not for the community, for livestock or anything else. It developed water down at Tohatchi for the school and some extent many of the government agencies do that. Where they set up headquarters they develop water and anything else and although the Tribe tries to get water for the people and livestock. There is a great need, I see, for coordination and try to get the court engineers and those people get in. Except there may be alot of political

which prevents the court engineers coming in and the fact that we live in three States also contributes to the problem because New Mexico has its own rules, Arizona has theirs, Utah has theirs, and alot of times that's enough to get them tangled and instead of doing anything, they do nothing.

- Q. It would be really helpful if \_\_\_\_\_ like that developed... \_\_\_\_\_ the VISTA people.
- A. Yes, I think that \_\_\_\_\_ be made available and

and I think if we can know who's doing what. In many areas you see that there may be duplications. But really when we get down to it, it is not duplications because the Tribe has a Welfare Service but they only give to those people who are not qualified in the BIA or State Welfare Program. Yet even that you find many who are just in between and you find that the Tribe also has a Youth Employment Program like something like NYC. We also have NYC program. The BIA also last summer started the Youth Employment Program but they all have different rules and regulations. The Tribe caters to the college kid so that they would have money to go back to college without any income criteria. Whereas the ONEO NYC program directs efforts to those who 16 and 21 years of age and have a family income of \$3,000 or less. So, they have the same name in many cases, work on the same thing but because of the rule and regulation made by different agencies there is geared to different kind of people. So, when you have this method there are bound to be some gap, some people, some section of the population may not be getting anything.

- Q. What's the relationship between the Tribal Government and the trader, is there any at all, any connection there?

- A. Yes, the connection is a positive one. The Tribe gives the trader the lease of the land on which he has the trading post and he is required to pay the Tribe for the use of that land and also a portion of his profit. That's the extent of the relationship.
- Q. What is mined besides turquoise and silver on the Reservation?
- A. Uranium and , those are two major...and coal.
- Q. ...(INAUDIBLE)...
- A. As I see, I see that ten years from now if the efforts that are being made now continue at this pace, I can see that 10 years from now we could begin to build the kind of economic base that will truly make the Navajo people as well the Navajo Reservation self-sufficient. For example, in ten years it may not be...we may be one fourth of the way there. How is this to be done? Well, the effort of ONEO and other agencies is going to have to put new thrust into working with people...I think one of the greatest downfall has been not working with people...I think, but pretending that the government can solve all things, pretending the Tribal Council and through its argument can solve all things. I think we have sufficient proof...it is evident people have to support themselves. Eventually, people



are going to have to support the government that they form...so in order to have self-government and self-sufficiency then the people need to be the jobs and people need to more and more get together and began to trust and exchange ideas and they will begin to have an effect on the education of their children. So that the...up to now education has not made this impact on the Reservation because of the manner in which it is handled. So, there is still a great need for leadership in the educational field, in school, in engineering, medicine, law or social services,

. Whatever it is, there is a great need for the government leadership in these areas, so that these people then began to form the necessary catalyst of this development of the private sect and the government of the economy and also this also would change the leadership and will change the policies that is now effecting the Indian. I feel that this is the direction in which this old is directing itself, again to be more responsive so that they can help in those areas that required their help to have the people get the necessary boost to get them to level where they need to...so I always say that if the democracy is to work then you must have excess of leadership...right now we don't have it. What I

mean by excess of leadership...I'm looking for a controller, Navajo controller, I can't find it...if democracy just as equally qualified, sure I could have my pick. I'm looking for a purchasing agent, I can't find him...I'm looking for a deputy director, I'm looking for a Head Start Director for six months before I got one...so these are the leadership that we need for people to become self-sufficient so that they in turn, then all the way down the line, the barbers, the shoeshine people, the people who operate the stores and services and what have you. There is a great need for this kind of development so that they can become, this community should become self-suffieient in some way so that they don't say, bring here, this hospital here to our location. That maybe the doctor I should not be going to see this hospital but I do because it's the only hospital on the Reservation. Whereas, if I'm in Los Angeles there may be one or two Public Health Service hospitals in the area for whose who are in and out of welfare. But there are hundreds of clinics and hospitals all privately owned to which I can go when I'm sick. But I see the day that thing developing like that and so maybe ten, fifteen years this is gonna happen if concerted effort is

made at this level because these are the people that complain and these other government agencies are made to be responsive to this need because they look at the need of the social and not until the people direct them to the real need, then they can put their money in the right place to really develop a

. So, I see in the future one day, to be able to pick up the Navajo Times and maybe another newspaper, Shiprock Sentinel or Twin Lakes Local, whatever it is, read it and instead of Dow Jones average, they have

This is what I see, what we are trying to work toward and it can only happen like it's happening here in American, you allow the individual initiative to take over. Someone told me that..(TAPE IS HARD TO UNDERSTAND)...and see if they could grant or start a new business here on the Reservation. It's very hard to do...

except for the location of... The next two weeks we will be in Chicago for two days for the National Indian Industrial Conference and we will then bring our... and when I go on this kind of trip, I have to put on a different kind of face. I'm always two kind of person. When I go on these trip I don't say how poor the situation is, I show

pictures of the beautiful springs on the Reservation, the Navajo Reservation portion of Lake Powell, the boating, boat landings, and I show the nice churches and good school buildings and also the industrial plant, General Dynamics, see the name on it. I show the Navajo people working on the miniature circuits, putting the transistors together, the intricate work that is necessary. So, I take pictures of these all the time and also show big trucks going across the Reservation, transportation industry. I show the airport in Gallup. Then I have a ride to come to the Navajo Reservation...and from Fort Defiance, fifteen minutes ride out to the Reservation and you can catch some rainbow trout, in five minutes he got 5 trout, and fifteen minutes away you can have fresh fish. Then he's going back to General Dynamics, beautiful sunshine and rainbows, mountains and what have you and I say, we got 25,000 highly skilled and able workmen who are ready to come to work, very stable labor, you can't go wrong, no unions and we can provide you with buildings, provide you with cleaning money. You can make all kinds of money on the Reservation. So, I give them this pitch. When I come back, I go from there to OEO and say, look at this, no houses, no water, schools run down, no transportation, dirt roads, so

many people starving...so they have to pave the roads. So, for industry they don't care how poor you are, they take care of you. So industry, just imagine yourself on the 5th Avenue on the top floor sitting there thinking about how you going to make another buck, and somebody comes to you and says, hey, how do you like the wide open spaces, horseback riding in your back yard and fishing...what do you think about that? Oh boy, he says...

He talked about the money he's gonna have to make...

and so he, that's the only way you get him out. Then when you get him out be sure you take him to the right places. Take him to the places you showed him. Sometimes they change their minds and go on their own and don't look at selected sites. We have sloppy (?) roads and we have industrial roads. Anyway, the opportunity to attract industry, there are different ways of doing it, we found that out. You can't beg, say, we're poor, please helps us. Cities don't like that.

- Q. But your buildings may have to be local commerce?
- A. Local, because that's what takes the form of labor you don't want. You want the country to built it's own wealth from individuals, entrepreneurs (?). I think that is the key. We could bring industry that's not

that problem, that's just a labor camp. We don't want that. How would it be if all lll industry in America were all foreign industry with American laborers. That's no good. The United States would go to pot...that's no way to run an economy. I think Russia has that system, communist system. That's the thing that we have to guard against in the administration of the Indian program that too many people think there ought to be more and more government. I may sound like a Republican but I think we have to have a little bit. I think we need a backbone for the system we have in American.

Q. When I left here there were two conferences going on developing and what happened there?

A. Well, we ran into money problems. We had potential, but again, you've got to have got to have government to do this. I don't care what government it just never has enough money for everything it needs. So, we ran into money problems. Still, an effort is being made to develop tourism and maybe the fact that we set aside certain parks run by Park Service...

Q. The whole idea of small business and industry run by the people means that the attitude of the people has to be competitive...is the attitude of the Navajo to

be competitive?

- A. Very competitive . There's alot of Navajos I know wants to get into business but they have alot of restraints. One of them is getting a lease on land. Even for Navajos it would take from six months to six years to get the land to lease from the government from the Tribal Council. So, this is a constraint. The next constraint, once you get the land you know there's more things to come. I go to the bank and I leave my own land there as collatoral, and here you get the necessary capital to go over there. But here, the outside capital don't want to invest a penny 'cause they know that tomorrow the company may come and want the same amount and that's much money and so get capital is also another constraint. Therefore, the private sector is...trying to get enough of your own willing to gamble or somebody is willing to gamble with you, you begin to get something going. But even then, maybe you're successful and want to expand, it takes another six months or six years to get that piece of land. By that time maybe the capital structure has changed. So, you're thinking of a problem that rests with the BIA or the Tribal Council.
- Q. Is it the BIA...what is the thinking of the Tribe by

having all this land held by the Tribe instead of by individuals? Or is the BIA hoping and trying to do that?

- A. Because at the present time no one knows how to equitably allocate land...and it's getting worse every year, 2,000-3,000 more people are asking about land. So, in other words...the Tribe I know one time thought about allotting land. As the years go on it became more complicated 'cause I have a certain right in this area and the guys says I have certain rights; it's overlapping. So, there was tremendous dispute over who has the right to what area, just rights, use rights not ownership. So, when you get down to cutting the land and you going to run into strong opposition, not because people don't want it, because I want my share. You know, it's alright to divide it as long as you divide it my way and the other guy says no, it's all right to divide it if you divide it his way. So, this becomes then, one of the key things in trying to develop private .  
So, as a result the Council has gone out and built things so that they could...again, you and I know that the Government is the least efficient enterprise and business there is in the business world.
- Q. I would like to make one announcement before we break



up for lunch. Mr. Russell and Mr. MacDonald would like to meet with core team just as soon as we eat... so, and Mr. MacDonald has to be back in his office by 2 so we have to eat very quickly, core team members...

(GENERAL CHATTER...)

(APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES OF TAPE IS INAUDIBLE...)

- Q. We will have a number of programs going now and September...plus the fact we are going to have to increase our volunteer strength in July, August and September to go with the new volunteer strength that will probably be about one third higher than what we have for this one because of the increased budget and they are going to ask for more bodies and if someone else wants to wait, fine.
- A. Yeah, it seems to me that since you slaughtered those people in such a hurry that it would be very easy to convince some of the program officers and volunteer leaders if they would need it.
- Q. That was an assumption, it wasn't done in a hurry.
- A. Well, according the information we received, it was.
- Q. Two changes were made, two additions were made and those additons were people in the Job Corps Camp.
- Then expanded their numbers and expanded memorandum of agreement that would either extend an equal period program for this program. It's alot

easier to identify work in those areas .

A. Are you referring to what Ray said?

Q. Yes.

A. Ray said there were sixty people coming into the program, 36, and they only had 25 slots left. Is that the point?

Q. What has happened, people have been working on their program. The program did not materialize at the due date for the slots, they did materialize later. The only additional ones were five for Job Corps Center, the Centers that Willy had and I wouldn't and I don't think you want to compare that placement request with what you might want. They are completely different kinds of situations... The basic problem is we have had this placement center and the others now have committed themselves and committed other sponsors to them, based upon the fact you know, of that training program, the numbers coming in.

A. Somehow I thought that once we got down here and found we needed more people that we wound up with a lower number of people than we had that we feel free to try to call on, to get those people out of Oregon (?) 36, that this was high enough priority that we could do that... .

Q. I just, don't see why you people are stuck with

Oregon 36 when these volunteers, first of all, coming at that time of the year the way they are selected, I doubt if any of them would be ready for the program. ... (INAUDIBLE FOR 30 SECONDS...) ...

A. The impression I got from what I went to was that alot of people didn't get the volunteers they asked for and alot of people argued on the basis that they had a commitment to the sponsor for these many volunteers and they didn't get them. And it seems to me that if we presented a strong enough case and if the Regional Office was really in support of us...

Q. Three volunteers and you say the Regional Office can't support us?

A. No, no, no!

Q. You just said it.

A. What I was trying to get at is... I think we can do if ... if everyone is willing to go along with it.

Q. I don't know that and I'm not committed to it, we'll explore it, we'll go make our phone calls on Friday and that's as far as I can go right now. I'll call, and John will call, I can't be committed to it...

(INAUDIBLE EXCHANGES FOR 30 SECONDS...) ...

And I'd say I'm willing to explore it but I can't do it now. I know what is happening, I just can't say now, Okay, let's say that these three volunteers right

here and say some of the other projects are not getting any. You just can't say that...we have other commitments too, I just don't want to sit on responsibility.

A. Supposing political situation flares up?

Q. We have those situations all over. Are you saying that's your, part of your justification for wanting to have volunteers to go into Crownpoint Agency?

Okay, that's understandable. This can be additional consideration. I just don't feel that I can give you a commitment today, you want a commitment now, and I'm not going to give it to you. (LAUGHTER...)

A. Well, I just don't understand the priority system, you know, one week we are top priority and the next week we are down on the bottom.

Q. Top priority doesn't mean in any instance that everything, every time, every battle is provided to that priority program the priority program. The priority program that's going now, it means you've gotten top priority on everything that you wanted. Now you're fighting and arguing and saying that on one thing we are not cooperating. We have cooperated with you on every God damn thing, name one thing that we haven't... We'll try, like I said, I don't feel I can commit it now. I would not want to do it, it would not be fair

to the other guys, the other projects too. If it's possible, it will be done.

- A. I understand, at the same time I'm going to do everything I can I feel we get these volunteers because... we've made a decision... . In VISTA... . You know, what I don't get is when Chet was up here, but especially the first time when you go in there he use the word priority kind of to...I mean it really sounded good, you know. I mean just the way he used the phrase sounded like next year...it had a lot of meaning, like we'll work things out.
- Q. Oh, he didn't say for next year.
- A. No, I know, I says this is the impression I got. I guess not...I was thinking in terms of 100 volunteers, until we reached that level we're top priority...that is the impression they gave me.
- Q. Top priority... Program, the whole regional sources are part of that program as opposed to having other programs in other states . It is top priority, you know.
- A. What I was saying is not your performance in the past because it has been good, exceptional, it hasn't, it's been demonstrated fine and I take back all the nasty things I've said about you.

Q. I understand your position.

A. But now...(INAUDIBLE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES...)...

This is the discussion about the . The last part of this is discussion about what the rest is ....going to do and where they going to work, where they going to work among the Navajo people and they are deciding what to do to help the Navajo people in other things which they have in mind to talk about and where they want to be located...during the time of their work and about the meeting, where they want to meet, what hours and so forth. So, they have done quite a few or quite alot of talk about the Navajo people and I think that is just about all what they are saying, they are leaving right now...

END OF TAPE