

Tape #347
NAVAJO
Peter McDonald
Recorded by Tom Ration
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Tape 7

Mr. McDonald talks about
the ONEO Program at
Kaibeto, Arizona

Now as I was going on with our problems as I was telling you about the ONEO program, this is what we should have be doing from now on..... and I would like to tell you about the earliest days of how I could explain to you, how it came up I want to tell you all about.... one of these hardest and problem that I had to pull out all of these things that I have just told you about working together, Community Action Committee, the ONEO program. And the program that we are now on, home development, is the preschool, head start. In the first place, I have thought about this.... I never did have a chance to rest....myself..... I have worked as long or as long as I can... During the time I think I never thought of anything that I was going to work... the thing like this kind. As I told you before, I never did even rest when I was going to school. And I had a mother and a father, they took me to school so that some of these days, I might help my people as I told you that I never had a rest in my life... time... my school days. I herded sheep just a little and then when school started, I would always be there. I was very happy about my schooling. I noticed some boys and girls; they are having a hard time going to school. I never did have a hard time... I had do my school lessons during the school days, boys and girls were playing outside, having fun, and I was sticking to my school work as much as possible, and

school time I was always there the first. As soon as the bell rang I was ready for action and my school... I was told what I had to do... I am ready to do it... and I never hate anything, as I told you I like my school. For a long time I have been like that. I had a very good record in school. I had a very good grades... in English, in writing... and a lot of different things in school what we used to do. I have a number A in everyone of them. Finally, I grew a little bigger and a little bigger, and I was adding up mostly every year. I never did hate my school. I never did hate my sheep either. When school is out, I always wanted to do something to help my family, help my people, mother and father.. What they can't do, I always be ready. When he's chopping wood, I always get ahold of an axe. I grow up myself, like in the story of George Washington, chopping down the cherry tree. I had done all that, all that my mother wanted me to do and my father. I never did hate to do things. I was always on the go... I know some of you people are like that, and we should be willing to do things, you are ready for action. That is the only way we can help our people. When I went into a little higher school, I thought of my people... I learned what thing was, how things going on, throughout the reservation. I knew that my people had needed a lot of things. That nobody hadn't found yet. I know, I knew it was time for me to act, and help my people. I knew all the steps, cause I know I am not going to fall down because I had learned it in school. I have learned all these things. To stand up and so, when I

get back from school, I never even want to go to the dances or to go to ceremonials or to go something that is going on in the reservation. Sometimes I might herding sheep and helping a medicineman. I had a lot of different ideas I wondered how it would be for the Navajos would be missing that. I had kept in my mind that some of these days, soon even there's a 100,000 Navajos, they were not all Indians, they were different classes of people, some rich people, some middle sized people, some way low people, we are all different. The low people they had nothing to eat, they have not very much to use... for different things. So, my friends, let's get down to business and start to do something, I had just told you a lot of things in through our Navajo country. When I graduated, I went up to a little higher school... which was called college. We went through college for four years... everytime, I go either way. I learn something. When I go to college to school, I learn things over there and when I get back home and stay a little while I learn something. I been keep changing around and finally I got back to Fort Defiance. Here I been looking around, studying things, for jobs which would be the best thing... but still, the job that I wanted was very, was the very thing that needed because of my people. I know mostly every job, office job, I can do the secretary of the, tribal funds.. I can work with the agency. It's easy to be done. I can be the councilman, it's easy to be done. I can be the chairman of the Navajo tribe. It's easily done. I can do mostly anything, that a man ask me to do. But there was something keeps coming

back to me... looks like it's saying, how about your people, how about your people... Sometimes we may go to bed and something seems to whisper in my ear... You remember your people? So finally, I decided that it would be best, for me to do...in ... to help my people. So, while I was around my country, I start to check around. I had been to many square dances, see how the things were going on. I have studied that. There were rich and poor. Mostly the poor, comes around just to get something to eat. I have learned that. I have seen the poor people had paid for their little job that they had done. They might chop wood, to get a little food, to get something to eat at the square dance. They might bring their friends.. and just chop wood there, and feed their family there at the square dance. I went to Yeibichai dance, it is the same thing. I went to Fire dance, the same thing...I went to different office checking to see what people are doing, what the employment program is doing, all these same things... I have looked into, I never have found anything that is worthwhile. People needed something... people needed something to eat, something to wear. There were jobs... open... during the summer time, hoeing garden for sugar beets... hoeing gardens for little fields... hoeing gardens on carrots... these things... There were a lot of Navajo people working... on gardens. They get paid barely just enough to keep them going. They never get nothing ahead, just only get enough for their eat and the little clothes that they wear. It's something says they have nothing to their names... while they were working in fields

... right at their homes. There is nobody to build them a place to live, the old hogan is standing up... every year it's getting rotten out, with dirt. It is packed on top of the log, some places they have to rebuild them here and there... they are doing that... I been visiting many Navajo people for a little better than one year. I have learned all these things, I have to spend my own money, around for transportation to explore the whole Navajo reservation. I have studied and learned how my people were, and they sure needed help. I went back to Washington two times... with my own money... and asking around was there anything that can be done... for my people. Everytime I ask, they tell me or ask if I am one of the leaders of Window Rock, Arizona I usually tell them that I am not a leader; I am not a leader of any kind. They tell me, I got to be marked with something if I could ask about anything to help my people. Finally, I work myself around to a councilman. Went back home, told my people how things were and what things are... So finally they, my people find out a way that they can vote me in for a councilman. So even though I went through college, I start work from among my people into the Window Rock office. While I was around Window Rock, I check all around in the office, mostly everywhere I go there would be whiteman, running the office... We have got some good educated boys and girls that came back from school and went a little higher, grade... here, in Window Rock, we found mostly white people are getting the Indian money. So from here on, I start to fight, my way in... I went back to Washington again and

the Chairman with Mr. Paul Jones, he was the chairman at that time, Mr. Scott Preston was the vice chairman. I was one of the interpretation in Washington, D.C., here, I told them what it was, and I told them, I am the man, that used to tell if there is any mark on me and I told them, I got a big mark. I can say whatever I want to say. So I was in front of them with what little education I learned. I am willing to stand on from of all the public with what little I learned, working hard... for my people. There was two years passed, three years passed and I was still working among the government, still working with my people... going back to Washington I tell them about the situation, in the Navajo area. Finally, the ONEO, the OEO broke out... through the United States, they help the poor. Here, I started to fight in my way to get a little money out of it to help my people, they sure need it. We sure need the opportunity to do something. Now here was my chance, to butt in... I went to Washington, I fill up my plan. I talked with the commissioner and talk with the OEO first... they said, I don't think no Navajo can do it. No Navajo can run it, because they are too dumb, let the whiteman run the OEO. Keep working until another chairman appear, I start to resign off from the Navajo council, what I had done I told my people to get somebody in there in my place, I am going to work the other way to help you people; I can't help you anything on the job if I am on a councilman seat... The people got this in their head, and they put somebody else in my place here, and I start to work in the Window Rock office. I said to myself, this is my chance. I went back and

forth to Washington, I talked to Mr. Nakai... I told him if I can do it... I can make it my job... so you go and ask the OEO you need some of that money. They just barely gave us enough to start off with, but still, the Washington office didn't believe that we could do it. So, I said to myself... we got some men here, some boys and girls, that could run the office. So finally, Mr. Nakai, got me in the chair of director of the ONEO, First we had a white fellow, he was the one that helped. In 1966 his first program that we had broke out into the Navajo reservation. I made a lot of plans what I should do. In a way to make me strong... I thought now I will help my people, I have spent over close to \$1,000 to get all of this in line, to get all of this started. I have a very good experience in Window Rock, in Washington... I know that I could do it. I learn all the money problem where to get it from and how it was organized in Washington, D.C. So, the money that is over here, I strained it out in branches how it could be run. First, we usually get it through the BIA, the government, but the government don't seem to do anything for us. The government doesn't go around to our camps, our homes; they get the money, but they have to work around the office and sometimes they use it mostly for their ownself. If you try areas, all kinds of money, that you can get out of Washington if you work for the BIA. I have learned all of this. I have learned how to branch it out. I have learned how to use it among the Navajo people, What more they need is... they need good place to live, a good happy place

to live and good house. They are wishing for, like I have stayed in these hogans in the earliest days, which I found out that houses were most important thing they need, home, more important and then next is the preschool, the head start, is also was needed... Finally, I took myself in a place where we can do something. I was happy... the time when I took up this job. I didn't know to do. I was so happy, that one day I thought of it, I will give a celebration, and call up some people just like a square dance. I will talk to them, I have found mostly everything that I needed, loud speakers... so everybody would hear of my plans... I got the things I wanted... So, I got down to business work day and night. Getting all the good problems that I have in mind. I need their help, out of the chapter houses. I needed their help from the big councilmen, and I knew how to work it around, what was the best thing to be done to get more money. We was working on good ideas... some of them I didn't even know, but I had to learn from my people, the names of the Navajo people... it took something around five or six years since I got out of school. I have to look around to help my people. From here on in 1966, the first meeting that we had was down at Nastchiti. It was the first class meeting to talk to the workers what we wanted to have done. We had two weeks ... training session... for different programs, to start off, how we would organize them,... What shall we be doing?... We kept that up; start to work among our people... Finally, it was getting good... every day, every month, every year... it was holding

tight one year's time. The people in Washington told us that we can't do nothing. We took in papers, good papers... they sent somebody from Washington to see what we are doing and we showed them. They made it 100%... for our program... they knew the Navajo people can do it then. I made it in first place that we Navajo are not as dumb as they think we are... We Navajo people can think just like the white people things now. We can discuss things... solve a lot of good problems... We solve a lot of good needs, what our people need... The first time I thought that I wouldn't mind getting a very little just to be director... Like I told them, I never did sleep, I never did rest... Even I am running the OEO office. During the weekend, I go back home and herd sheep on the weekend... and then some times, I might be far out from where they wanted me to come; I'm always willing to go... This is the way that we have been going.... on our job We made the white fellows ashamed that we have done the things that they thought that we never do. Today we have mostly all of our children in the office at Window Rock. Same way with our program... the Navajo Economic Opportunity.... office of the Navajo Economic Opportunity. We haven't done it because we know we learn too fast... and now, we are getting into deeper, deeper lesson. We made thousands of our Navajo people happy, and on the reservation... we made them smile now... cause they are living in good houses... The home improvements through the Navajo reservation have made everybody happy. The preschool, now the Navajo people themselves, is working, with their great minds, to help solve a lot of problems, discuss things at their

if there is any problem that you think it is kind of hard, I will come and help you discuss it out, talk it over. We will get to the right point, we will get to the right problem. This is what they want in Washington. The day Washington office says that the Navajos are not too dumb, as we think they are ... The Navajos are one of the great Indian people... which we have learned it from the Fort Sumner's long walk. We still keep on learning. So my friends, that is the same problem that I brought you up here for, this is part of you and you can do the same thing for your people... So, now today, we had been organizing between a lot things, home improvement and preschool and... DNA, Navajo culture... CAP... We have, we have had enough programs that we know that what the Indian meeting we still keep on going there are now, there are some more better programs, better problems that we might run into. So, this is what we came here for... like I told you, I have brought up some people. I didn't tell you all about it. During the time of my celebration, about how glad I was to help my people. I had a big barbeque for my people, I call them over... and we had a talk together. I even got some loud speakers to tell my people about it... We've been talking all day long as though like we were running the meeting... I had some leaders there to talk. We had some good problems, good ideas to talk about, that our people need, throughout the Navajo nation, we still are fighting more deeper in... what needs that our Navajo people want... We

are trying to level them up, from the low grade up to the high grade... I don't mean grades that you go to school by, I mean the way they live. They are high people which, high people are the ones that are rich. There are low people that are poor. This is what I am talking about. I want to level them up to see what I could do; to level them up together, what can I do... to make them even.... There are a lot of things to do it is to... tell them to do this and that... work hard... to make a good living if they can, they can do it. They can work hard... as you tell them to do. Just keep at it, they can find themselves a little lesson gather them up, in each meeting... There is where you want, CAC... the Community Action Committee can do that, if they work hard... They can talk about things at the chapter house... to the chapter officer. The CAC can make out plans for the people and then the chapter officers takes it in front of the people, their needs, and then the chapter officers can do the rest... the chapter officer can explain them to their people. The facts that they need. The things that is more need among their homes, not just only herding sheep, but there are a lot of things that they can do... while they are kicking around, while they are strong. That helps them with. So, this is where we are going at the Navajo chapter house. The Navajo people can do it, if they only can try. The Navajo people have good ideas. They never had a chance to talk. This we got to have it in our chapter houses. This, we got to discuss about it... give everyone a chance that wants

to talk. Teach them to say things... teach them to help solve our problems. The only way you can do it is try, make yourself useful to do things my people... You all people that are in this community, are you listening?.... Are you getting the facts that I am saying? Are you understand things? I want to ask you, maybe I am just going too fast for you. Maybe some of you want to ask a question in here; so, I will rest around and give the community if they want to ask any questions first. I have been talking too long. Some of them I think they forgot. You might wish to ask any question, ask me any questions. I will try to answer it the best way I can... so my friends I'll let it to you.....

For about fifteen minutes passed, there was no questions answered, so we will give it back to Mr. McDonald....Mr. McDonald.

People of the community, it looks to me no questions has been answered... Maybe we will wait a little longer for the last end. And you might be wanting to ask. This is the best way that I think we will make it. While I am talking and saying things, you can raise up your hand on the spot where you want to ask, and that way I could know and I could answer your questions. If there is nobody raising their hands up... that will mean that you know mostly everything. That you have learned mostly the things that have passed; so, this will be the way it will be run my friends. I sure like for you to ask any kind of question you wish. So, we go on, my problem to bring, I thought about

this before. I have made up a lot of plans what I thought would be best... for us to be doing to have... This is one thing I brought you up here together, is that not only to learn more about the community development and the economic opportunity and CAC members... We like to tell each other more about it and how it is run, how it is organized, through our chapter and I came here to tell you all the details that I think of, what would be the best thing for us to do. I know, you people can do it. The leader members you can do it, cause we have tried it before... that we have done it, but there is some places we miss out. A lot of things, that I like to tell you more about it. It might be things that is worthwhile in our community, and I would like for you to acquaint with each other. As we all know that the best part is when we get on in our program. Well... we have like the DNA in our program... law and action... DNA legal service program, the Community Action Program. We have these to talk about the DNA is a way that the discussion the case of Arizona. By the ninth circuit, federal court in San Francisco the case involves another aspect of Navajo tribe, the state of Arizona are trying to apply its extradition laws to the Navajo reservation by arresting a DNA claim, a Cheyenne who's wife is a Navajo. They commit and his wife live on the reservation. The Apache... on the reservation,... the Apache county sheriff came on the reservation and arrest the claimant from February 16, 1968, on an Arizona extradition warning... but before the sheriff would deliver him to Oklahoma, authorize it either, or Mitchell, director of the DNA and the

council for the claimants file, for a right of Habeas Corpus in the Phoenix federal court, claiming that only the Navajo tribe has a justice to the extending Indians from the Navajo reservation. The federal court immediately in favor of Mitchell complaining after a hearing on March 4... in order the Apache county Sheriff to release the claimant to the federal court in San Francisco. The DNA thinks that the federal judge discuss why the Indians, home with a supreme court policy of protecting the right of the Navajo government, the government reservation... but there without extermination by the state. The Navajo tribe has a power to decide who will be exterminated from the reservation just like in other states... It is clear that the Apache County sheriff would not arrest a citizen of New Mexico in Gallup, for explaining and then extraditing him to Oklahoma... it is not different... here... and then extraditing him to Oklahoma. It is no different here, the elected power to extradite him in and extraditing fixes of the tribe, the self government. It is the tribe is to maintain itself... solely. The state cannot be permitted to talk either way... providing the Navajo tribe has its own extraditing law and producing and will extradite an Indian change in Arizona, New Mexico or Utah. Unless the tribal court terminates a charge or finds that the Indians will not receive a fair trial in the surrounding state. The running of the United States courts appealing shall be handed down any day now. The warrant was authorized by the DNA, a legal aide organization, financed by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The hearing on the suit filed by the wards, shall be at 9AM.. Friday, March 1969,

before Jerry H. Genene... the suit was filed here March 7.... and in behalf of Mrs. Warren and three Navajo Indians. The suit was asked that the court order welfare commissioner John O'Lananhan to complaint on Public A, disgrace of welfare department during discussion and to keep the discussed up to date. Granahan said the court order we will of course work something out, but we may not see that it serve any useful purpose. The warrants contain however that the gas is a necessary tool for anything wish to appeal it, and that it is qualified by federal regulations. Plans in pursuit of this shelter in order that the children who contain she has been underpaid \$700 in ADC... 18... dependent children. Grants since 1966, John Billy who was granted aid to the land assitant Stella Begay who was denied surplus commodity and Mrs. Warren has authorized for her, without a director's authorize for discussion. The suit contained authorized comments determining whether to appeal discussion by local welfare, ex-minor, if her hearing cannot be held unless such information is available. Mrs. Warren, represented from Arizona, this is what we got on hand so far that is going on by the legal aide... Tube City... DNA helps Navajos that were getting welfare under payment... Case, they claim came in on welfare program and incompleting his grant, they discovered that a warrant has been made in the amount of his grant. The case would violate in the case at the beginning of this past school year for claim, some back on the list... the list of children. His sons was 20 years old and attending high school. The summer there had been a change in the age limit for children attending school, which made this son eligible. They file to in-

clude a minor who was home from school for two months during a summer. The total underpayment came to \$2,064.00, and the welfare department expressed a special check to pay claimant... this is the way, how, things are standing in the rights of the legal aid. Today this is one of our problems and program in the light of the Navajos that we should have DNA to protect the Navajo people... which we all think that it would be right to look over all of these trouble for the Navajo people because that we have quite a few Navajo people that are uneducated that we think that it would be best to let the legal aide look after such things as the uneducated because they can be skinned alive as a lot of white people does... and the Indians won't even know that he was skinned alive. So all of these problems that we have on hand today... we like the legal aide handle that part and the Navajo people has had the a very well understanding that it would be a very good idea for them to have such a thing as legal aide... because as we all say that most of the Navajo people are uneducated. They don't know the law of a white man. So, we all say that it would be the best thing to have probably, for the Navajo people so, the law is in action now... among the Navajo tribe... this we have.. in my... for the past two years... there has been quite a number of Navajo people that didn't know how to fight laws... everytime they have, they loose... some of the white people's law. So, I think that the best thing that we are doing for the Navajo people is to let them work on a lot of these cases, and the Navajos are learning quite a few of these our program which we have got to-

day. They know now, that where to look up to... all these things you better learn my good, old friends... in this community which I am trying to give quite a few details on different problems and different programs which we have got today... We sure like for you probably like it. So, this is what I was saying to you that if there are any questions that I can answer in the way of all of these things, I am willing to answer it, if you ask, any certain question... So, I will now leave it to you again for a while. If there is any question that you want to ask... please just raise your hand, if you have any questions. I will quit talking until if you could raise your hand up, I am willing to tell you such a question if you want to know... I will give you 10 minutes.. to answer such questions..... The ten minutes is up, so, I don't think nobody is trying to ask any questions. I think you probably has a very well understanding of what I am talking about. Most of you people in this auditorium or rather in this community, I think you have doing pretty good by understanding most of these things that we are talking about. So, in a way of most things that we are talking about... I think you will, are doing pretty good in such problem, and so my friends, I would sure like for you to keep it up as much as you can... as we are all learning. I have told you... how I was before, in the first place, I just don't know... how to thank you people for being so quiet and listening about what I am saying and telling you... There is still about another hour or two yet to go, but still as I say that I think you have been learning quite a few things from this

speech that we are doing hereiin this auditorium, and I am thinking for the school principal that gave us this opportunity here to gather here. And it looks like he also has something on his mind to make him think that we are all one, a thing like this to be going on in our reservation. So, I am very thankful to do this for you people. I want for you to have a very well understanding about each other... and I am keep continue on... as much as I can... and there is still no questions to answer yet.....

END OF TAPE