

Rodeo life and early history
of the Navajo and their mounted
raids and hunts.

Tape 359
NAVAJO
Billy Guyman
Gallup, N.M.
Interviewer - Terry Lee Carroll
November 1968
Side 2

This is an interview with several persons in Gallup. I will give
you the names as I edit and retape the original interview....

I can't get this person's name, but in an interview in Gallup
with an Indian there is considerable background noise...and
he is giving me the location of his home, which is 38 miles
from Gallup. I have not as yet determined the name of the place.

The statement here by this Indian is that he knows Jim Williams...
Jim Williams is a person who interviewed sometimes back....this
person being interviewed is an Indian is an Indian, and lives
38 miles from Gallup and I have not yet determined the place where
he lives, but that will come later in the interview.... I will
spin the reel back of this tape and on the box....

This Indian says he works at a refinery on the outskirts of
.....Gallup, the refinery is the Senesa Refinery, where he works
as a carpenter.

Well, the Indian has expressed his likening for Gallup and I asked him whether or not he felt like the merchants in Gallup cheat the Indians and he said they did to some extent.....

He remarks that the people surrounding him are mostly Navajo and this is indeed true because this particular place is crammed full of Navajos....

This person says....the question that I asked him was done hecome to Gallup very often and he says yes, he comes every week, usually on Fridays....

The distracting sounds, drowning out this persons voice is coming from one of the taverns in Gallup, this tavern in Gallup is crammed full of Navajo and this is a Saturday night in Gallup and it is more or less typical, often more typical of the situation in Gallup....in on a Friday or Saturday night.....

The question here which I asked the Indian was whether or not he remembered any expressions by his parents of the coming of the Spaniards....he said that there were legends..... stories concerning the Spanish coming a long time ago and that

the Indians didn't like the Spaniards but they fought against the Spaniards upon their arrival and I asked him from which direction the Spaniards came and they said from the west.... I also asked him whether or not his parents ever told him any stories regarding the first coming of the Americans....and he said that they did, he said that his father told him a story that the first white man he saw was at Fort Defiance and that was in the 19th century....about the latter quarter of the 19th century...

He, the rest of the interview I might as well skip.... I will just tell you what I remember because I cannot retape it effectively on this tape, I asked him amongst the glare of noise and jukeboxes, whether or not he knew any feather stories. I asked him especially concerning the horse.....he said that the horse as he knew came... the horse story which he was acquainted was the one in the San Juan area. He said that a long time ago there used to exist, this was collaborated by another Indian, Tom Ration, that long time ago there used to exist in the San Juan area, a special type of horse that lived underground and this was the ancestor of all horses....that these horses would graze in and around the water....and that the Indian is trying to catch one or more of these horses..... The Indians wouldall the horses, all stampede to the San Juan river, where upon they would jump into the water go under the water and remain there until the Indians had left..... I suppose upon Indians

entering the water and remain there until the Indians had left...
I suppose upon Indians entering the water they would go down
to the bottom of the river find an underground water cavern
and there go into some hidden caves, this was a story that I
heard later by Tom Ration...

This is a continuation of the interview with the same Indian
and the question here was whether or not he attended the
Gallup ceremonials and he replied that he attends every year.

And he says that he attends the dances and everything that
they have...he particularly likes to attend the rodeo, he seems
to, he appears to be a rodeo rider or says to be.....

The question that I asked here which was probably not recorded
was whether or not.....why it was that the Indians instead of
the Navajos were so acquainted with horses and why they were
such good riders and why they often won at the ceremonial events
and he said that Indian proficiency comes about because of their
caustic contact with horses in their daily lives....and he went
onto tell me how the Navajo take prizes at the State Fair and how
they win here at Gallup ceremonials and how they even do well up
in Wyoming....and elsewhere.

This Indian's name is Sam.... I do not yet have his last name.

I would like to make a correction....here, the Indian that I am interviewing is not named Sam, Sam Miller is an Indian I interviewed the day before and he is here now, reintroducing himself.....

During this rather nosiy interview he also, the Indian also talked about how the Navajos came to be such good horseman, he said that it was because of their dependence on the horse for transportation and locomotion and it enabled them to use my own words....to cover a greater range of territory and then I asked him then, whether or not this explains why they had that time to devote the making of jewelry in the past and he said that it probably did.....

Here the person tells me that they used to have.....the Navajos used to have extensive funds that centered in and around the Canyon de Chelly area, they would have rabbit hunts which they would surround the the rabbits and then close in on the rabbits which would herd together and they would kill them on a stick or whatever was handy..... They would also drive a larger game, and be used to their horses, games such as deer....into box canyons and there dispatch the game, you would usually, was the whistle was often used with game such as deer, they would also use this same technique to capture horses.....

Here the information that I can get from this information is in and around Gallup there is many.....Indians that possibly do have many professions and especially many of these Indians live around the oil refineries east of town, Senesa Oil Refineries and their occupation as day laborers.....masons, brick layers and carpenters.....alike...

Information that I gathered from this segment of the that his... wages went from either 39 or 69 dollars a week.....

The nature of this part of it I cut off because it wasn't intelligible....to me and I could not translate it. The.....just what was just said....but this Indian is a performer at the ceremonials.... I asked him what he did during the ceremonials and he said that his function was to hoop dance, I don't know how truthful this is but he said...he sometimes danced with Tony Whitecloud and he said that he used 15 hoops....and his performance which I tend to disbelieve, because he doesn't appear like he would fit through some of the hoops....

The essence of this part of the tape and I am cutting it off short because most of it is worthless..... I just take out those points which I need.... Sam is saying that Tony Whitecloud is

a good dancer and I asked him why....he said because of.....
I asked him if he was good because he was acclaimed or actually
because he actually had greater skill than most Indians.....
and he said that Tony Whitecloud was acclaimed that he did have
skill as a.....unusual skill as an Indian performer.....

And this Indian said that he lives in and around Commercial and/
or, he works in and around Commercial...

Here the Indian who is from Commercial said that Tony Whitecloud
is a Pueblo, which is true and then he goes on to say that he
is a Jemez Indian.....

Here he is making an interesting comment, and it seems that
Howard Wilson, who has been for 20 or more years, been concerned
with the Gallup Indian Ceremonials, Indian Ceremonials, has just
this day, that day, which is....was in mid-November just died....
I asked him whether or not the Indians thought much of Howard
Wilson because on several occasions, Howard Wilson had lost his
patience with some of the Indians....and he said that the Indians
respected Howard Wilson and Howard Wilson generally treated
them well. Howard Wilson was one who at one time the secretary
manager of the ceremonials and that he quit in a huff when the
ceremonials decided to take on new aspects and do things a little

bit differently and become a little more organized.... But even though he had quit anyhow...he continued to give support to the ceremonial, however, Wilson was also concerned with the movie industry and he helped locate places for shots....and was actually in some of the films....and Howard Wilson also was sheriff in and around...at Gallup...for a number of years....

My question here was why this Indian from Commercial like Howard Wilson and he said because Howard Wilson treated the Indians fair....

This section isn't quite intelligible to me. I didn't understand at the time that it concern some kind of political meeting that was going to be held in Gallup or had been held in Gallup, and at that time, at this time....at the time of the original interview...

Here this Sam is talking about Kay Bennett who is addressing a political convention perhaps a Republican one and the Indian told me some interesting things concerning Kay Bennett and what she said at this convention. This comes out a little bit later, but I found it the most important part of this tape....

This Indian was born March 12, 1933....

The Indian is 35 years old.... I don't seem to be able to get this section in this in this retaping where Bennett made her speech actually it was a speech to the BIA....some of the things that he told me that I remembered was not in the loud enough tone to be audible to my tape recorder.... was that she did make a speech, a speech was made, and this was by the commissioner Robert L. Bennett...and the national convention, the National Congress of American Indians in Omaha....and Bennett...this Bennett that I am referring to is Robert L. Bennett. His main theme concerned the civil rights of the Indians....and he stressed that even though the Indians were American citizens, they were the only ones that went slowly through the passage of time and he said Bennett went on to say, according to this Indian informant that how the Indian is beginning to really to discover himself...remember I am paraphrasing what this Indian is beginning.....to really to discover himself.... remember I am.....and they are coming to the floor as a great people, their true worth is making itself known and felt, and now, there is great appreciation of their cultural achievement and in..... of their historic past.... he says that soon, or some day in the future they will be able to command and he said that in the future they would have to command their own destiny=...and that was the jist of what Bennett said to this meeting....

This Indian from Commerce himself rides in the rodeo....

The Indian is only asking that if I know a few of his acquaintances which I only answer, no....

The Indian was asked the question for himself, how would you compare the Gallup Ceremonials with those held in Anadarko, Oklahoma....and he said that he had seen those in Anadarko.. ..Oklahoma and that he liked the Navajos better, therefore he like the Gallup Ceremonials better....

Here the Indian says that the Ceremonials have rodeo and dance which is true....and are held everyday and that he himself participated in these events....

He said that the people that he knows a good riders.....are good riders.....are this Juan Martinez....just site one that he mentioned..... He, the particular events that he engaged in the ceremonials....that which consitutes hsi specialty, is bronc riding.....

My question here is why are Navajos such good bronc riders? He has already answered this question but he did so again saying that it was due to their constant ccontact and acquaintance with the horse....

Then he went on to say that if you ride across the rest of of the Navajo reservation you will see a great many Indians on horses.....and they ride all the time, all the time and they use the horse in the daily activities as much as we would use a car....and I also asked him that wasn't it also true that the Navajos used automobiles, vehicles and particularly the pick-up and perhaps this has cut down on their proficiency as horsemen....but this was probably true because the Navajos would become, even the Navajos were becoming less proficient with the horse.

One of the questions which I asked him here, which was not picked up, in the retaping and they were very vaguely audible in the original taping....with all the background and all the other distractions....what other type of activities he engaged in on the Navajo reservation. And he said that he engaged in bull-dogging and Brahmabull riding and regarding bulls, I asked him whether or not the Navajo ever remembered anything, whether his parents ever remembered anything regarding the huge herds of buffalo that used to roam in eastern New Mexico.....and he said that his parents have been told of these vast herd, that once they existed in huge numbers.... extensive numbers...east of the mountains and I asked him if these mountains meant the Sandia Mountains around Albuquerque and he said they did. I asked him also whether or not the

buffalo were any time plentiful on the Yano Estecado, that area between Fort Sumner and around Loving, Texas..... And he said that they were there, but they were more extensive and even more eastward and I asked him how the Indians got way over to present day eastern New Mexico to hunt these buffalo.....and he said that they rode their horses and he enquired as to the route they took, and he said that there were two major routes that they used to get to, at the herds of buffalo. He said that one of the routes went more or less around the highway of where highway 66 goes east... They would cross either at following this route where present day 66 is and I am paraphrasing what he said...so that one of the more important parts of the tape....but they would cross either at present day Tijeras Canyon and go outwards into the Yano Estacado and then into the west....into the panhandle area of present day Texas....and or they would cross into the Manzano Mountains at the lowest part directly east of the Pueblo of Isleta, and he said in so doing they would take the horses at least two routes and advance into the buffalo area.... Another route is the second major route would be to go north of the Sandias and to go over to the General Pecos area where they would from there go south of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains over around the Rabbit Ears Mountain and from there if they had not encountered buffalo

they would go eastward. Another interesting part of the conversation as I remember it is that I asked him if his ancestors ever attacked the pueblos on their way to and from the buffalo lands and he said that they did....and asking what particular pueblo was most frequently attacked and he said that the Pueblo near the souther tip of the mountain around Santa Fe, and upon asking him if this was Pecos he said this was probably the Pueblo that his grandparents had mentioned. Other interesting facts that I gleaned from this retaping with the original tape was that they had that... that the Indiaans after the occupation of New Mexico a further consideration to worry them and to be cognizant of the existence of the Spaniards, a new people in the area, and that these people while offering p-ofitable sources of plunder...remember I am paraphrasing him.... They also were a threat because the Spaniard retaliated with, would actually pursue the Navajos after their raids at least for some extent... I asked him if his parents grandparents in their stories that they had told him had ever expressed like or dislike for the Spaniards and he said that they expressed what amounted to a dislike.....for the Spaniards and he said that the Spaniards were often.... His grandparents told them that the Spaniards would enslave them and I.....about this time, I asked him if American's enslaved him...the Navajo Indians....and he said that they never, Americans

never took grownup Indians.....that is adult Navajos as slaves, but they, but the soldiers stationed at Fort Defiance and at another post would sometimes kidnap the Navajo children and that he understood, he was told that these Navajo kids were taken as he said, way far east and educated, or at least brought up in a different manner other than what they would have been brought up in, had they have remained in the land of the Navajo. The interview continues...

Here this Indian, from Coroso is talking about, talking again about the rodeo, and it is hard to keep him off of that topic and to glean more viable information from him is difficult because he often prefers not to answer the question and to discuss only that which interests him at the moment.

Now he is tal-ing about the rules and regulations concerning rodeo work and how it applies to Indians....he said first of all, he said first of all that he is a competent rider and ofter wins...this may be boastfulness because he doesn't strike me as a bull riding type....but he said that....he says that the entrance fee is about forty five dollars at....and I am not sure here whether he is referring to the state fair or to the Gallup Ceremonials.....

He, the name of this Indian is Billy Guyman or something along this order.

He is talking about the prize money that is given away at Gallup or presumably Gallup and he says that it amounts to a couple of hundred dollars, which is five hundred dollars...

These, he is saying now that it cost 35 dollars to enter... and then I kind of think he is talking about Gallup and if he wins he gets about \$200.

He says there, he is making a comment here that, sort of a Navajo nationalistic and particularistic statement..... he says the Navajo are really toughthey are such good bronc riders..-and I asked him if he considered the Nav ajos tougher than the Zuni? And I asked him whether he considered the Navajos in the past tougher than their relatives the Apache and he said, maybe the Apache were equally tough...

I asked him if anybody other than Navajos entered these ceremonials and he said here that he has completely left interest in any comment upon activities of his ancestors... and he is more interested in our talking, my talking about rodeo.....circuit...and I asked him whether or not he, other people, other than Navajos entered and he said, yes, other

Indians entered as well and I asked him if white persons entered and he said they did. This particular fact, if a fact had been out of my experience.

Here is another patrilistic statement on the part of the Navajos.... I asked the question who usually wins the contest at the rodeo contest... Navajos, whites or other Indians? And he proudly said, the Navajo..... I am beginning to feel that he would reply Navajo regardless of what the contest or situation happened to be....

He says that the Navajos...mx question was, in what special event, talking about rodeos now, because he is not interested in talking about anything else....what special event do the Navajos especially do well?...and he said bronc riding, which incidently is how own specialty according to him.... this is Billy Guyman, a Gallup Indian, in Gallup at this time from Commercial or Commerce...

He talks about the difficulty of bronc riding...he says that it is difficult enough with a saddle but even he had difficulty riding broncs without saddles...

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He is talking now about rodeo events, that none of the Navajos like to engage in, he says that not only, he says that before the ceremonials....that actually the ceremonials evolved out of these rodeo events which they used to hold at selective places in and around the reservation and that the one that probably stimulated the creation of the Gallup ceremonials was the one over around Smith Lake, which is an interesting fact....he said that the one....that the Navajo hold....but previously held more frequently these local rodeo events and that in addition to this other surrounding towns...towns surround the reservation have rodeo events..... For example one, the Navajos consider very important is the one held up in Cortez... Cortez, Colorado.

Here he refers to an RCA which is an association with Indians, but the R probably refers to rodeo and the C refers to I don't know what.....maybe cowboy and he insists that he is one of the RCA....

Here he brings in, he allows somebody else to have some proficiency of bronc riding....he the Ute Indians..... participate in these rodeo events and that they also do pretty well....

I asked him when the Navajos first started riding horses....

and then I added, it must have been hundreds of years ago and he said, he agreed, it was hundred of years ago....and then he made wome statement referring to three years ago..... and then I don't know what that is, what that could refer to...

All that amounts to is a couple of other Indians also agreed with Guyman that the Navajos are excellent as far as rodeo performers go...

Question here, and I don't remember getting an answer...was when did the Indians first get the horse...who was the first Indian to get a horse...and I don't remember the reply, I will see if I can pick it up....

He said that he doesn't know any stories...about the first Indians to have a horse, but he knows that a long long time ago, the Indians did not have horses...and it must have been a long time ago when the first Indians acquired a horse... I asked him how the Indians acquired horses...and he said that the Spaniards brought them and I asked him where did the Indians buy the horses....and he said no, generally not, they took him in a raid, just as the Spaniards took slaves and....

They refer to Raymond Nahkai, the Navajo chairman....

I am asking him about Raymond Nahkai and specifically whether or not he thinks that Chairman Nahkai is a very good, whether he thinks that Raymond Nahkai is doing his job and whether or not he likes Raymond Nahkai....and he says no....he doesn't think that Nakai is very good.... He says that Raymond Nahkai is no good because he is a typical politicianhe is not interested in the Navajo people themselves... he is only interested in his own enhancement....to paraphrase him.....

Question here, is do the Navajos attend the NM State Fair and participate and he said yes.... When they are in Albuquerque, Navajos do attend it and asked him whether they participated in the fair, in the rodeo part and he said that they did.... and does he participate in the fair...the rodeo, and he said yes he does....

The question was, how do the Navajos do in competition with white people at the New Mexico State Fair and he said that they usually do pretty fairly, pretty good....

He said that it is easy to win as much as \$100 dollars for him to win as much as 100 dollars and that Navajos usually win that much at the State Fair....

I asked him here, try to get him off the rodeo track and asked him where horses originally came from and he said that..... here I asked him as far as he knew, did he ever know of any of the particular places that the Indians go to raid, and he didn't know...he said he didn't know and while waiting to still discuss the rodeo he implied.....and naturally the first thing that came to his mind...he said that they would raid around Albuquerque...and I asked him further would they ever raiddid the pueblo ever have horses...and he said the pueblos have wanted...when the pueblos got the horses...the, the Apaches would do every thing in their power to steal these horses from them...from the pueblos....and then trying not to discuss that any longer, he went on to say that in Farmington, there were also many people who rode, Navajos who rode in the Navajos....

Here the Indian is very....Billy Guyman...concerning himself with the coat that I have got, it is cold outside and he is not very well equipped with a coat and he is kidding about the heavy coat that I have got...

He says that Navajos never wear coats that heavy...they wearwhile they do wear coats, they do not wear thick bulky parka-like coats...that I have on...

Here another Indian has entered the conversation...he.....
being curious about me, he was asking me where I was from...
where, why I wore such a heavy coat and I told him a few
things about myself and....to explain that I was interested
in talking to Navajos in regard to their history, culture,
preferable their history...and any old stories and legends
that they might have....

The Indian that I was talking to originally Billy Guyman, then
said.....may have been picked up I didn't hear it too distinctly,
but he is talking about the treatment that the Indians get in
Gallup and I said that they didn't appear to be mistreated as
far as I could see, that the Indians seemed to be mistreating
all the, mistreating the town, especially any furniture that
they come into contact with....he didn't reply to that part
of my statement...but he said that it used to be worse in the
past and I asked him what he meant...and he said that as long
as you had money you were a good Indian but the merchants...most
merchants hesitated to extend credit for Indians that they would
give him so many gallons of gas for the number of sheep that he brought
in and things like this and as soon as they saw whatever it was
that they were selling or happen to be selling, the sheep.....
jewelry, or what type of produce or product....ofor
manufacture...they would, the white merchants would then set to

to cheat the Indians out of what they...out of their money... and when I asked him whether or not they charged exorbitant prices...he agreed, he said that they often would....charge exhorbatant prices and he insisted that this was more of a feature say ten years ago, more a fact relevant to the time ten years ago...than what it is today...but that still, Indians found themselves cheated occassionally in and around Gallup...and I asked him if Indians were also cheated at the trading posts on the reservation and off the reservation and he said that they were but not as frequently as in Gallup itself and consider the people in Gallup a _____ and I asked him if this was general feeling among the Indians and he said that he believed it was...the interview continues....

This part of the interview is especially vague... I asked him further and I am asking both Billy Guyman and this new Indian and I don't know his name other than he happens to be Eddie.....what I don't know but I asked him further concerning the attitude of the Indians, the merchants during the ceremonies and he saqd that the merchants like the ceremonies and in fact he said it only benefited the merchants, it didn't benefit the Indians...and I told him he got to ride and perform and yet didn't he make money at the rodeo event, he said that he made money and Indians do make money at the ceremoniesthe dancers...they aren't exhorbatantly paid.....

and I asked him how much dancers got and he said \$20 a day or actually figured out to be about \$30 a day, considering taking into consideration that there was two performances a day... and he said that regardless that whether they were paid or not the few Indians that were paid got much or little that didn't matter...what did matter was that the Indians did have were still in the hands of the merchants and I asked why this was so and he said because the merchants charge excessive prices for things to Indians...and not to the tourist and I asked him wasn't it true that if the Indians had the option of buying and not buying...what kind of articles sell at a high price and he said alcoholic beverages were sold above the standard prices...

This part of the interview does not have too much of value and we are informally talking there and anything that was said that I will, I would consider worth editing in...cause the stigmant of the new Indian a....has come in..into the conversation and he was talking about that he was deploring the general routines of the Indians...the, anyone there had this particular places would have been shot at the general, deprivity and debase tradition of most of the Indians....if not all the Indians in the place and he did not like the rudeness of many of the Indians....in the place they would then.....when they were going some place if

any other Indian was in their way, or if a Navajo was going some where and the Navajo was leaving this place and if anybody was, or if a Navajo was going some where and the Navajo was leaving this place and if anybody was in his way, a Zuni, the Zuni waa pushed out of the way...and all Indians were pushed out of the way and if a whiteman that escaped....would be rudely shoved aside in this place... People...he also was angered at the loudness, profanity that the Indians used....

END OF TAPE