

TWO CASE HISTORIES

by David Edmunds

At two in the morning on October 12, 1492, a lookout aboard the *Pinta*, one of two caravels accompanying Christopher Columbus's flagship, the *Santa Maria*, sighted a limestone cliff on the coast of San Salvador, an island in the Bahamas. At dawn, Columbus went ashore and claimed the island for Spain.

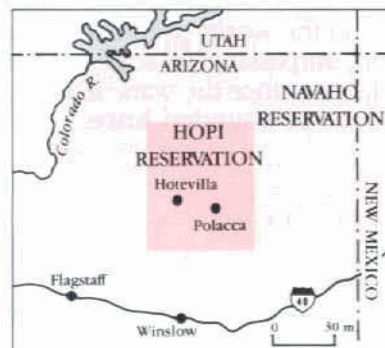
Following Columbus's discovery, Europeans came to realize that America was a New World. But they remained abysmally ignorant of its inhabitants, largely unaware, like Americans today, of the diversity of Indian cultures.

The hundreds of Indian tribes in what is now the United States adapted to Euro-American expansion in hundreds of different ways—as they had adapted to expansion by other *Indian* groups during the millenniums before Columbus. Against great odds, most tribes managed to preserve some degree of group identity in exchange for some sort of accommodation with the white majority.

The tradeoffs between Indian and non-Indian continue. What follow are two brief case studies: one of the Hopi Indians, a tribe that has hewed to its traditional ways; and one of the Potawatomis, a tribe that has chosen to change in order to survive.

I: THE HOPIS (ARIZONA)

They are a people with close ties to their land and to their past. Emerging from the ancient Anasazi culture, the Hopis—the name means “the peaceful ones”—have occupied their desert homeland in what is now northeastern Arizona for at least 1,000 years. In July 1540, when 17 Spanish cavalymen, a few foot soldiers, and some Zuni Indian guides under the command of Don Pedro de Tobar came upon the Hopi pueblo of Kawaika, they found a farming people growing corn, beans, and other vegetables. The Hopi villagers lived in



autonomous pueblos scattered across the southern flanks of several large mesas.

The tribe lacked any centralized government, but the Hopi people shared a language, a culture, and a religion. A network of clans and extended families linked the many villages. The Hopis considered themselves to be the stewards of their environment, and all of the villages joined in a rich ceremonial life that reaffirmed ties to the land, to the spirit world, and to the *kachinas* (represented by masked dancers), who variously personified Hopi ancestors and the powers that bring rainfall, good harvests, and abundance. A yearly cycle of nine great ceremonies, the Hopi Road of Life, was celebrated in solemn, symbolic offerings and elaborate public dances—the Corn Dance, the Snake Dance, the Bean Dance, the Home Dance, and many others. Various secret societies, all-male, were responsible for particular ceremonies. Associated with the dances were rituals performed by men in the underground *kivas*, or ceremonial chambers. Many of these practices remain closely held secrets.

Kit Carson's Sympathies

The extension of the Spanish Empire to the American Southwest brought many changes, but the Hopis, in their high, isolated pueblos, retained much of their traditional way of life. In 1629, the Franciscans established a mission at Awatovi; attempts to spread Christianity to other pueblos met with little success. The Hopis did, however, accept some Spanish technology, substituting metal knives, axes, and needles for the bone or stone implements used by their forefathers. They supplemented their diet of corns and beans with new foods introduced by the Europeans: watermelons, onions, peaches. The Hopis also welcomed European livestock, raising horses and small flocks of sheep.

In 1680, ties such as those the Hopis had with New Spain were abruptly severed when they joined other tribes from throughout northern New Mexico and Arizona in the great Pueblo Rebellion—spurred by repeated Spanish attempts to suppress native religion. The enraged Hopis killed numerous colonists and 21 Spanish priests, poisoning some clerics and hurling others from the mesa tops. Spanish troops eventually were able to reoccupy New Mexico and Arizona, but most of the Hopi villages, secure atop their mesas, escaped the ravages of reconquest. In 1710, Spanish officials admitted: "Since the uprising it has not been possible to reduce them, notwithstanding the efforts that have been made on the part of His Majesty's forces as well as of the religious whose apostolic desires have always had as their aim

conversion of these souls.”

A century later, the Hopis would spurn the Mexicans as they had spurned the Spanish. The Americans were another story. In 1850, following the United States' victory in the war with Mexico, the Hopis established relations with the federal government. Why? A relatively pacifist people, they faced frequent raids by the stronger and more aggressive Navahos. They welcomed efforts by the U.S. cavalry to subdue their powerful neighbors. Unfortunately, the same Yankee horsemen who fought the Navahos brought with them smallpox, and during the 1860s a smallpox epidemic swept through Hopi country. At the same time, the Southwest suffered a prolonged series of droughts. Kit Carson, in 1863 commanding a force of cavalymen against the Navahos, found the Hopis “in a most deplorable condition. . . . Their only dependence for subsistence is on the little corn they raise when the weather is propitious.” The Hopi population abruptly fell by almost 50 percent.

The Hopis' territory was shrinking, too. In 1869, Washington created an independent Hopi agency at Oraibi, a pueblo on Third Mesa. Thirteen years later, on December 16, 1882, President Chester A. Arthur signed an executive order creating a 3,920-square-mile reservation in northern Arizona for the Hopi tribe (and, fatefully, for any other Indians whom the secretary of the interior should “see fit to settle thereon”). Meanwhile, the transcontinental Atlantic and Pacific Railroad brought ranchers, miners, and other settlers into the region. Between 1900 and 1910, the population of Arizona nearly doubled (from 122,931 to 204,354), and the new cities abutting the Hopi reservation, including Flagstaff, grew accordingly.

Hopis versus Navahos

The Hopi reaction to all of this was mixed. Some Hopis, led by Lololoma, a leader from Oraibi who had once visited Washington, D.C., cooperated with the U.S. government. Others clung to the traditional way of life, shunning the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Mormon missionaries who flocked to the reservation, and refusing to send their children to the new government schools at Oraibi, Polacca, and Keams Canyon. Led by Lomahongyoma, also from Oraibi, the traditionalists successfully blocked government

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"Mountain Sheep Dance" (1920–21), by Hopi artist Fred Kabotie. The Hopi ceremonial cycle, emphasizing continuity, centers on masked kachinas, who personify the spirits of ancestors and the powers of nature.

attempts to "allot" the reservation—that is, to divide its land among its residents, destroying its communal character. After several clashes with Lololoma's followers, Lomahongyoma and his "hostiles" withdrew from Oraibi in 1906 to form a separate village, Hotevila, near Third Mesa. The rift between "traditionalist" and "progressive" Hopis persists.

With the Americans came economic opportunity—for some. The Navaho and Zuni Indians had introduced the Hopis to silversmithing during the 1890s; during the 20th century, the craft grew in importance. As more and more tourists ventured into the Southwest, demand soared for Hopi pottery, a beautiful polychrome clayware characterized by bold, stylized designs. Many other Hopis came to rely on wages earned off the reservation as ranch hands, miners, and laborers.

The Hopis' growing dependence on the outside economy led, inevitably, to a decreasing reliance on raising livestock. Into the vacuum stepped Navaho tribesmen from the surrounding countryside. Outnumbering the Hopis by 20 to 1, the nomadic Navahos began grazing their sheep and cattle on the fringes of the Hopi reservation, bit by bit penetrating further. During the 1930s, worried about overgrazing, the federal government forced *both* the Navahos and the Hopis to reduce their herds of live-

GENEROSITY

In 1967, the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) hired me to help investigate housing conditions on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. With a team of self-described experts, I visited all 22 villages on the reservation, from Two Strike to Milk's Camp, and discovered, among other things, that Rosebud families had much to endure.

Many occupied dirt-floor shacks that lacked adequate heat or running water. Some were forced to sleep, even to cook, in rusted-out car bodies. In winter, the families were virtually defenseless against the frequent blizzards that swept the South Dakota prairie.

Our architectural consultant, a cheerful young man from Chillicothe, Ohio, went from door to door asking astonished Sioux mothers whether they preferred gas stoves to electric stoves; whether they liked bunk beds; whether the children could use a "mud room" for their boots and galoshes.

Few of the mothers could summon answers. I attributed their reticence to the fact that their houses had no gas or electricity, their rooms had no beds, and their children had no boots. But there was another explanation. As a tribal leader admonished us: "You should not ask so many questions. The people think there is a right answer and a wrong answer, and if they give the wrong answer, they will not get a new house." Over the centuries whites have admired Indian silence as the complement to Indian eloquence. But it may also have been a way of avoiding trouble.

Two of the people I met during that Rosebud sojourn were Nancy and Sam White Horse, who lived in a shack atop a barren knoll near the town of Mission. Born around the turn of the century, they had spent most of their lives on the reservation, taking strong roles in tribal affairs and sharing with other members of the tribe in the manifold miseries and occasional improvements that came their way.

Now the arrival of "Washington officials" gave grounds for hope that housing might be the next item slated for progress. "You're not the first to fly out here and look around," Nancy White Horse told me as we stood amid the tall, yellow grass. "Nothing ever comes of it. But I'll tell you what. If you can get some houses built for my people, I'll make you a quilt."

In time, the OEO built 400 houses on the Rosebud Reservation, including one for Nancy and Sam. Nancy was as good as her word. The quilt she

stock, but the Navahos continued to usurp pastureland formerly used by both tribes. When the Hopis complained, the Navahos pointed to the language in President Arthur's 1882 executive order establishing the Hopi reservation and sanctioning the presence of any other Indian tribe that the interior secretary saw fit "to settle thereon."

The Hopi-Navaho dispute continues. In 1962, federal courts decreed that many of the contested lands should be deemed a "Joint Use Area" open to both tribes, a decision that pleased neither. The 1974 Navaho-Hopi Land Settlement Act provided for

sent was a brilliant patchwork of red, orange, and white, with a large green star at the center.

It was hardly surprising that the bargain Nancy struck with me should benefit the whole tribe—"If you can get some houses built for my people"—rather than herself alone. In Indian country people tend to move forward in concert. Their individual struggles become a war of all on behalf of all. Nor was it unusual that out of the tatters of her daily life she should strive to fashion a gift of great beauty. That, too, went with the territory. In a culture with few commodities and virtually no market, creative generosity can flourish.

Do the Indians perhaps know something that we do not—not, to be sure, about getting ahead, but instead about *not* getting ahead? Is it possible that life is more fruitfully and magnanimously lived in the Indians' circular way (the turning of the earth) rather than in our accustomed linear fashion (onward and upward)?

Recently I returned to Rosebud for the first time in a dozen years. It took me a while to find Nancy White Horse because she had moved to a new neighborhood, a place named in honor of her husband, who had died a few years previously: the Sam White Horse Housing Project. Nancy's face had more wrinkles than I had remembered, and she walked very carefully now, but otherwise she seemed unchanged, and certainly undiscouraged.

"What happened to your other house?" I asked. "The one that we built for you?"

"Oh," she said matter-of-factly, "there was a fellow who needed a place to live. So I gave him my house."

I thought of John Wesley, that troubled missionary who learned something in the 18th century that we may have forgotten in the 20th. Homeward-bound to England, Wesley gazed at a tossing sea and wrote in his diary, "I came to America to convert the Indians. But oh, dear God, who will convert me?"

—R. J. M.



the equal partition of these lands. Within a few years fences stretched across the desert, supposedly protecting the remaining Hopi lands from further Navaho encroachment. They did not.

By 1980, the Hopi population numbered about 9,000 while that of the Navaho approached 170,000; more than 2,000 Navahos were permanently settled on lands once designated as being under the jurisdiction of the Hopi. (Fewer than 100 Hopis were on Navaho lands.) Many Navahos have refused to relocate. As one Navaho woman put it during the late 1970s, "If I was beaten unconscious or put to sleep, then maybe I would be taken to the

place where we are supposed to move to. But it would not be of my own will, and as soon as I was awake I would get up and come back to this place."

The Hopis quarrel not only with the Navahos but also among themselves—in particular, over the mining of coal and other mineral resources. Since 1936, the Hopi progressives have controlled the Hopi Tribal Council, in large part because Hopi traditionalists have boycotted the council elections. Backed by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the council in 1969 granted the St. Louis-based Peabody Coal Company the right to strip-mine coal from Black Mesa, in northeastern Arizona. The mines opened in 1970 and have brought some \$500,000 in annual royalties to the tribe.

Hopi traditionalists bitterly oppose the mining. They regard it as a desecration. As one group of traditionalists stated: "We, the Hopi leaders, have watched as the white man has destroyed his land, his water, and his air. The white man has made it harder for us to maintain our traditional ways and religious life. . . . We cannot allow our spiritual homelands to be taken from us." During the 1970s, as Indian activism increased nationwide, so did opposition among the Hopis to the mining operations at Black Mesa. Thomas Banyacya, David Monongye, Mina Lanza, and other traditionalist leaders enlisted legal counsel to challenge the lease agreements. So far, the tribal dispute remains unresolved in the courts, and the coal mining goes on.

Dolls for the Tourists

Today, like other Indians, the Hopis are beset by a high unemployment rate—in excess of 25 percent on the Hopi reservation. Those Hopis who do work are generally low-income herdsmen and farmers. Others make a living from crafts, perhaps fashioning pottery or *kachina* dolls for the tourist trade. A few Hopis have jobs in the coal mines or elsewhere in the private sector. They, together with Hopis employed in white-collar jobs by the BIA, account for many of the roughly 500 members of the tribe who have incomes higher than \$7,000.

But the Hopis do not necessarily view their condition as a "plight." Perhaps more than any other tribe within the Lower Forty-Eight, they have been able to preserve their traditional way of life. Unlike most other tribes in America, they have continued to occupy their ancestral territory, atop the same mesas as their forefathers. They keep alive many of their religious traditions. They disagree about whether (and how far) to enter the white man's world. But that disagreement, too, is of long standing.

II: THE POTAWATOMIS (OKLAHOMA)

Their surnames are Pel-tier, Levier, or Beaubien, and they always have been masters of accommodation. When French fur traders met the Potawatomis during the mid-18th century, these adaptable people, "the keepers of the fire," were hunters, fishermen, and farmers by the shores of Green Bay, in modern Wisconsin.

At the time they numbered about 2,000.

To obtain French goods, including guns and knives, the Potawatomis served as middlemen between French fur agents, such as Robert de La Salle, and distant Indian tribes. French Jesuits preached among the Potawatomis, winning their souls for Christ and their hearts for King Louis. Many members of the tribe intermarried with Creole French settlers in the Great Lakes region. During the French and Indian War (1756-63), fighting the English, the Potawatomis called themselves "Onontio's [their name for the governor of New France] faithful." Their warriors supported the French siege of Fort George in New York. They also participated in the rout of Gen. Edward Braddock's redcoats in 1755, near modern Pittsburgh—a battle that George Washington survived.

When the French did not prevail in North America, the Potawatomis promptly shifted their allegiance to Great Britain. Meanwhile, they spread their villages across southern Michigan and northern Indiana. The American Revolution divided Potawatomi loyalties, as did the War of 1812; some tribesmen profitably aided both Americans and British. Throughout, the intermarriage of Potawatomis and whites continued, producing mixed-blood leaders such as Capt. Billy Caldwell and Alexander Robinson, Chicago fur traders who would later guide the tribe.

During the decades following the War of 1812, American settlers swarmed across Indiana and Illinois. It was the era of removal, and the Potawatomis were forced to cede large areas of their homelands to the United States. Like most other Indians, the Potawatomis rarely received full value for their territories. But they became adept at securing the best possible terms. In 1832, they signed three treaties with Washington that surrendered more than 780,000 acres in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan—but





A member of the Potawatomi tribe pumping gas outside the tribal store in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Of the 11,568 Potawatomis recorded in 1979, only 2,928 had more than one-eighth Potawatomi blood.

in return they received an annuity of \$50,000 for 15 years and manufactured goods worth approximately \$250,000. Looking back on the deal, federal negotiators in 1833 acknowledged that "these half-breeds have soon learned how to vex their agents."

Following the land cessions, most Potawatomis were removed west of the Mississippi, where, in 1847, they accepted a reservation encompassing more than 500,000 acres near what is now Topeka, in east-central Kansas. There, on prairie land watered by the Kansas River, they erected their log cabins, planted their gardens, and ventured westward from time to time to compete on horseback with the Sioux, the Cheyenne, and other Plains tribes for the diminishing herds of buffalo. Although the Plains warriors resisted the Potawatomi intrusion, the newcomers, using military tactics they had learned from the British, readily defended themselves.

They were not so successful, however, against the flood of white settlers who gradually overran their lands. In 1861, a majority of the tribe agreed to the allotment of the Kansas Reservation. Pressured by land speculators, most Potawatomis, perhaps 1,500 of them, soon sold their property, accepted U.S. citizenship, and jointly purchased a new reservation in east-central Oklahoma, near modern Shawnee. About 500 members of the tribe refused to participate in the allotment process. Known as the Prairie

Band, they settled on a small reservation in Jackson County, Kansas, where the tribe can be found today, 1,326 strong.

In Oklahoma, the progressive, or Citizen Band, Potawatomi shared land with the Absentee Shawnees, descendants of those Shawnees who had fled from Ohio during the late 1700s. In 1890 the Oklahoma reservation was itself allotted; each Potawatomi received a plot within the former reservation. Surplus lands were opened to the white public during the Oklahoma Territory "land run" of 1891, and the tribe shared in the proceeds.

As their tribal acreage diminished, the Potawatomi gradually became more acculturated. In 1876, the Order of St. Benedict founded Sacred Heart Mission on lands donated by the tribe near Asher, Oklahoma. The mission opened two Indian schools, including St. Benedict's Industrial School, founded in 1877, and St. Mary's Academy (1880-1946). A new generation of educated Potawatomi established flourishing farms and ranches. Some became retailers, like G. L. Young, whose general store at "Young's Crossing" formed the nucleus of what is now the business district of modern Shawnee (pop. 26,506).

An Entrepreneurial Spirit

Like their white neighbors—and relatives—the Potawatomi endured the devastation of the Dust Bowl years. With other "Okies," many left their homes for a new life in Texas, California, and elsewhere. About one-half of the 11,600 Citizen Band Potawatomi are in Oklahoma, and some 2,500 still live in and around Shawnee. The rest are dispersed among all 50 states and several foreign countries. In Oklahoma, the Potawatomi occupational profile resembles that of any rural town's population. Unemployment is low compared to that of other tribes: 11 percent.

An elected five-man tribal council and an elected business committee oversee the affairs of the Citizen Band. John Barrett, the current tribal chairman, attended Princeton University and holds a graduate degree in business administration from Oklahoma City University. All told, some 40 employees make up the Citizen Band payroll, with jobs as diverse as publications editor and museum curator. Every summer tribal officials supervise federally subsidized job-training programs for 150 Indians.

Using tribal lands near Shawnee, the Potawatomi recently established an "enterprise zone" designed to attract business and industry into their community. Under the federal Tribal Government Tax Status Act (1982), the Potawatomi and other Indian tribes can offer private industries reduced tax rates if these firms locate within the tribal jurisdiction. Tribal lands are also exempt

from state sales taxes. Potawatomi leaders believe that they can attract Oklahoma businesses by charging lower taxes than the state. The revenues would be used to finance the tribal government, to purchase new tribal lands, to provide additional social services for local Potawatomis.

Negotiations with several major companies have already begun. In June 1984, the Potawatomis opened their own "trading post" on tribal lands. Because they charge no state sales taxes, the Potawatomi entrepreneurs can offer some commodities, especially tobacco, to Oklahomans at substantial savings. The one-story trading post currently takes in more than \$200,000 a month in cigarette sales alone.

Accompanying the rise of the Potawatomis as a corporate entity has been a further dilution of their ethnic identity. Since 1961, when the tribe voted to restrict membership to those with more than one-eighth Potawatomi blood, the number of "pure" Potawatomi has continued to decline. Now, the tribal council is considering opening up tribal rolls to those with less than one-eighth Potawatomi ancestry. Few of the Citizen Band, however, wish to forgo the economic advantages that acculturation has brought them. Speaking of his tribe in 1984, John Barrett observed that "we have left the age of government programs and support. . . . Tribes unable to stand on their own two feet are going to find themselves fading into the background."



In retrospect, the varied responses of Indian people to European and American society have produced tribes no less diverse than those that originally inhabited the United States. But different as tribes such as the Hopi and the Potawatomi may be, each must contend with the same economic realities.

The Hopis share the dilemma of more traditional tribes whose larger land base offers the prospect of oil or mineral development. Hopi traditionalists may oppose the desecration of their homelands, but history suggests that the pressures for development, from both within and without, are difficult for any tribe to withstand. With much less land, the Potawatomi have attempted to use their unique legal status as Indians to enhance the economic position of their tribe. Whether they succeed in doing so remains to be seen. For both the Hopis and the Potawatomis, however, one thing is certain: Without gaining additional financial strength, the Indian people will be increasingly unable to control their own destinies as communities.