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Northern Navajo Frontier 1860 1900

Robert Mcpherson

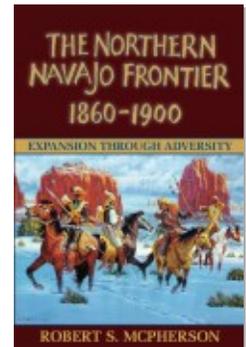
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PREFACE

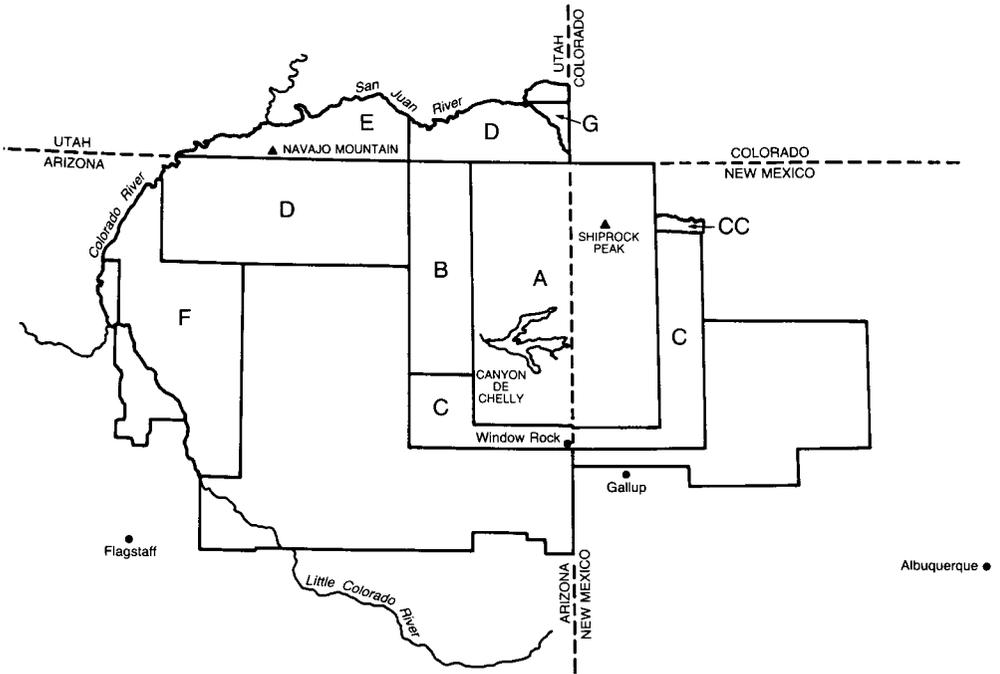
The need for a history of the northern Navajo frontier has existed for a long time. Although writings about the Navajo are extensive, little detailed information has been published about the northern part of the reservation largely because it is considered peripheral to many of the tribe's major events. Early recorded histories of this area often portray the Navajo as either a helpless nuisance to the white settlements along the San Juan River or as aggressors who preyed upon lonely victims. Few authors have delved deeply enough to realize that the Navajo pursued a general course of action which allowed them not only to survive but at times to prosper during the Euro-American advance of the late nineteenth century frontier of the Four Corners area.

My interest in their story began in 1976, when I started working for the Utah Navajo Development Council, and later, as a teacher for the College of Eastern Utah—San Juan Campus. As snatches of Navajo stories from the old days started to surface, it became apparent that the people I worked with had both an intense interest and a strong cultural pride in the deeds of their forefathers. Unfortunately, the mists of time covered much of their history. The paucity of accurate, published information spurred a search that led to government records, oral histories, settlers' accounts, and public records. Because of the early time period under investigation (1860–1900), I depended heavily on written sources, but when feasible, I also interviewed and discussed with Navajo people living in the Four Corners area, the impressions received from information found in the documents. The result is, I hope, a book balanced in its presentation and judicious in its interpretation.

Special thanks is given to my mentors, Ted J. Warner and Thomas G.

Alexander, both of whom directed and encouraged the writing of the manuscript. Their insight and candid evaluation provided the pertinent questions and guidance necessary to bring it to fruition. Appreciation is also expressed to Kay Shumway, my supervisor, for making the time available for me to undertake this project. And finally, my love and admiration go to Betsy and the children, who learned to cope with my long hours away from home and the vacations never taken in order to complete this book. Much of the real credit goes to them.

Map 1. Navajo Reservation Boundaries.



Source: Adapted from Peter Iverson, *The Navajo Nation* (University of New Mexico Press, 1981).

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|----|---|---|--|
| A | Original treaty reservation.
June 1, 1868. | D | Executive-order addition.
May 17, 1884. |
| B | Executive-order addition.
October 29, 1878. | E | The Paiute Strip. Originally a
part of "D"; in 1892 restored to
the public domain; in 1908
withdrawn for the use of various
Indians. |
| C | Executive-order addition.
January 6, 1880. | F | Executive-order addition.
January 8, 1900. |
| CC | Originally a part of "C";
withdrawn from the reservation
by executive order, May 17,
1884; restored by executive
order, April 24, 1886. | G | Executive-order addition.
March 10, 1905. |

Map 2. The Northern Navajo Frontier, 1860–1900.

