

New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 18 | Number 1

Article 3

1-1-1943

The Government and the Navaho, 1883-88

Frank D. Reeve

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

Reeve, Frank D.. "The Government and the Navaho, 1883-88." *New Mexico Historical Review* 18, 1 (2021).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol18/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NAVAHO, 1883-1888

By FRANK D. REEVE

THE dismissal of Galen Eastman¹ as Navaho agent, after a hectic career, was foreseen by interested parties who early sought the appointment. The prize fell to D. M. Riordan, a California politician and Civil War veteran residing in Arizona at the time for reasons of health, who became interested in reports of mineral wealth in the Navaho country and sought the job as agent. Eastman had reported that "Some excitement has occurred within the past three months, growing out of prospecting and finding of mines in the almost unexplored country lying northwest of this reservation. . . ." ² The future agent was representative of this excitement, partly in his own behalf and partly in the interest of Governor F. A. Tritle of Arizona. "I would like to get the place. Not as an end but as a means," Riordan wrote; that is, to "have unrivalled facilities for seeing them [mining discoveries] but I don't want to express those reasons in Washington, for obvious reasons." ³

Fortunately,

Comrade Riordan's political record is clean & he has always been a good worker. He was a member of the 4th Congl. Dist. Com. during the last presidential campaign & was nominated for the Assembly of Cal. but declined in favor of Jos.

1. See Frank D. Reeve, "The Government and the Navaho, 1878-1883," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XVI, No. 3 (July 1941). For the period 1846-1858, see *ibid.*, XIV, No. 1 (Jan. 1939). A study of the longer period 1858-1880 may be found in four installments in *ibid.*, vols. XII-XIII.

2. *Annual Report*, 9/1/82, 47 cong., 2 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 189 (2100).

3. Riordan to Chas. H. Fish (of San Francisco), 5/4/82, Appointment Division 209, 343/82 (a special file of confidential correspondence; hereafter abbreviated to AD, but not to be confused with AD in parenthesis which refers to a letter book).

All footnote citations are to documents in the National Archives, Office of Indian Affairs, unless otherwise noted. Outgoing correspondence is copied in Letter Books, hereafter abbreviated to LB, and divided into categories: Civilization (C), Land Division (LD), etc. Incoming correspondence is numbered and will be cited by number and year; for instance, Number 343, 1882, or 343/82.

Wasson in order to save Mono Co to the Republicans.⁴

He had also "put up his money like a man."⁵

In spite of his political antecedents and Machiavellian approach in securing his new position, Riordan had honorable intentions toward the Navaho, and was

prepared to sleep on the ground, go on mutton "straight" if necessary, in fact do whatever the occasion demands in order to make myself efficient in this position, providing I can secure the sanction and coöperation of the Dept as long as I do right.⁶

Before undertaking to "sleep on the ground" it was necessary to assume formal charge of the agency. This was done on December 31, 1882, with considerable unpleasantness and a resulting low opinion of Eastman:

this inert mass of gainlous obstinancy that has been acting as agent here has harrassed and baffled me continually. I am determined to get the examination done and receipts rendered by 12 Oclock tonight or something will have to give. Such a mess as it all is! and such management is sickening.⁷

And the management, Riordan wrote, was tainted with dishonesty:

"Fixing the papers" is not in my opinion the way to account for missing govt property, and I have used very plain language in telling Eastman so during this transfer.

I believe that every Govt employe who was in the agency at the time I came here was an accomplice of Galen Eastman in robbing this Government, and I know I did not discover a tithe of it. And I say this too whether it costs me this position

4. C. Mason Kinne to Hon. Jno. F. Miller, San Francisco, Calif., 5/13/82, *ibid.*

5. E. B. Jerome to Gen. Jno. F. Miller, San Francisco, Calif., 5/10/82, *Ibid.*

6. Riordan to Price, 12/21/82, 23443/82.

7. Riordan to Price, 12/30/82, 637/83. Appointment Division 209, 22/83.

or not. I would respectfully ask you, sir, to make an entire change in simple justice to all concerned.⁸

"An entire change," however, could not be very sweeping. The appropriation act for the year ending June 30, 1883, reduced the agency employees to one farmer from an average of seven for previous years. This gave rise to one of Riordan's chief complaints, *namely*, the lack of help:

I have had to go after red horse-thieves and white; to remove unlawful traders from the reserve; to recover stolen stock; to chase criminals; and to do it all myself—be agent, clerk, chief of police and entire force, hostler, courier, everything, to be able to cope with, single-handed, and to wisely treat all the questions arising between 17,000 Indians and their white neighbors. . . .⁹

J. R. Sutherland, agency physician, who had already lost the confidence of the Indians, was discharged on April 30, 1883. His successor, G. P. Sampson, was appointed a week later at a salary of \$1,000.¹⁰

The first thing Riordan did after taking charge of the agency was to call a council of Navaho as requested by Ganado Mucho and other chiefs. They had already accused "The tarantula" (Eastman) of showing favoritism in the distribution of goods, of giving inferior goods, and of being niggardly with tobacco. "It has been dark so long, so very long," Ganado Mucho said, but now they hoped for better times. Their appeal met with a sympathetic response from Riordan, but not without some misgiving on his part as to the wisdom of his course:

8. Riordan to Price, 1/9/83, 1038/83.

A visitor at the agency said to Riordan, "I do not know you sir, but I feel it is not out of place to say this much. Nothing I have seen in sixteen years of quite intimate connection with the Indian question has at all equalled the Chaotic and antagonistic conditions of things among the Navajoes and at the Agency as it was brought before me during the four days I was there." Riordan to Teller, 1/22/83, 2051/83.

9. Riordan, *Annual Report*, 8/14/83, 48 cong., 1 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 179 (2191).

10. Riordan to Teller, 1/22/83, 2051/83, and Riordan to Price, 1/23/83, 2145/83. 49, p. 271 (AD).

My methods may not seem the wisest to one at a distance, but I am satisfied no one with a heart in his breast could see the eager, intelligent, impassioned faces of these people and hear their expressions without being convinced that they were at least entitled to a hearing and in their own way.¹¹

The council was held January 19, with Ganado Mucho and Manuelito the principal speakers for the tribesmen. They demanded the dismissal of Sutherland, the agency physician, whom they called "tarantula no. 2"; the post-trader was accused of being a tool of Eastman and should be removed; they requested a few supplies for the aged and infirm, and an addition to the reservation on the northwest and northeast. Riordan was sympathetic toward them and promised that they should receive all goods that the government supplied and that he would visit them.¹² In addition, as a part of his "methods," he asked for a few supplies for the benefit of visitors: "Occasionally some sick or aged Indian comes in and asks for a little sugar and coffee to make a warm stimulating drink. They are entitled to it and ought to have it." This request was hardly in keeping with the economy plan of the government, and Riordan experienced his first disillusionment over his new work:

There isn't today as much available means at my disposal to do this much-needed work as is in the hands of a corporal in the army. I am not going to sit down however. I am going to do what I can, of myself I have made up my mind I'll just have to do it myself in the interests of humanity, and call the expenses a dead loss.¹³

And a "deadloss" they were, as he believed later, but meanwhile he dealt to the best of his ability with the

11. Riordan to Price, 12/28/82, 451/83.

12. Riordan to Teller, 1/22/83, 2051/83.

13. Riordan to Price, 2/7/83, 2829/83. Riordan to Teller, 1/22/83, 2051/83. Riordan to Price, 1/20/83, 2050/83.

Either at this council or later the commissioner authorized the expenditure of \$57.00 for tobacco with the admonition that "hereafter under no circumstances, will a similar expenditure be approved." LB 93, p. 102 (pt. 1, F)

problems of law and order, liquor, and whether or not the Indians could or should live within the boundaries of their reservation.

Several complaints of Navaho stealing were received from settlers along the southern side of the reservation, accompanied with threats of direct action if conditions did not change. During February and March Riordan made six trips through the Indian country rounding up stolen stock and investigating complaints of various sorts. He met with some success, but also with much disappointment at the lack of means for carrying on the work. He collected thirty-three horses and 400 sheep, stolen or estray. "My efforts," he wrote, "have fallen short, far short of producing the result they might have done if the Govt had backed me up, but I have no reason to be ashamed of the showing."¹⁴

Far to the south, a number of Navaho were rounded up and brought to the reservation. One old man had purchased 160 acres at Alamosita for farming and his home had developed into a rendezvous for mischief-making relatives.¹⁵ In the north a more serious problem was presented. A certain Tracy had been murdered by a Navaho and the culprit fled toward the Cañon de Chelly. Receiving information that tribesmen might resist any attempt at an arrest, Riordan requested aid from the commander of Fort Wingate. "From all I can gather," he wrote, "over fifty men have gone into that section—and they never came back. I came very near staying there myself two years ago. I know them."¹⁶ This personal experience did not daunt him, however, and when Colonel Bradley failed to support him promptly with soldiers in sufficient number, he pushed on ahead of his small detachment with an interpreter and brought the quarry out: "We started off at once to get him

14. Riordan to Price, 4/10/83, 6904/83. For complaints of Navaho stealing see 1514/83, 2771/83, 15747/83, 5617/83.

"Not one of the men who got their horses back has even said 'Riordan take a smoke.'" Riordan to Editor, 4/26/83, *The Morning Journal*, 4/29/83.

15. Henry Connelly to Commanding Officer 2/19/83, 4426/83. Riordan to Price, 4/23/83, 7934/83.

16. Riordan to Commissioner, 9/3/83, 16643/83.

out of the cañon as it is a perfect nest of the worst element in the tribe and a harbor of refuge for thieves and murderers."¹⁷

On the exciting trip to the Cañon de Chelly Riordan also accomplished something in regard to the problems of Navaho slaves that had early attracted his interest. He estimated that there were about 300 of them. In the spring, Francisco Capitan, a chief in the northern part of the reservation, had killed one of his slaves, a fourth generation Moqui boy descended from a Moqui girl purchased for some corn. Riordan had forced the release of others held in the same band.

One old villain wanted to know "who was to take care of him if his slaves were taken away from him?" I shut him up by telling him "I would take care of him and the whole band if they were not set free."¹⁸

During the trip after the murderer, Francisco Capitan delivered six more to the agent. Riordan's efforts to solve this problem were not so successful; the slaves returned to their former masters, and not without reason.¹⁹

With scarcely time to rest from his fifteen day trip to the north, Riordan hastened to Navajo Springs, southwest of the reservation, to arrest C. P. Owen, alleged murderer of an Indian boy. The fugitive was arrested in the home of J. D. Houck, some distance away, and taken to Fort Wingate. Those two men had an unsavory reputation among the Navaho; "I saw over twenty five Indians who have been shot at by them during the past year or two," so

17. Riordan to Commissioner, 9/16/83, 17513/83.

Bradley was slow in supporting Riordan; he reasoned that it was hardly worthwhile to endanger peace with the Navaho "for a small evil, that will probably correct itself in a little time." Bradley to AG, 9/4/83, 19170/83.

See also 16886/83, 16933/83, 19037/83, and Bradley to AG, 9/20/83, AGO (Adjutant General's Office, Old Records division), LR (Letters Received, New Mexico File), 3315/83 letter number 3315 for the year 1883.

18. Riordan to Price, 5/5/83, 8675/83.

19. Bowman to Commissioner, 8/1/84, 14974/84.

Riordan reported.²⁰ These episodes, only of passing interest in themselves, lent weight to the argument that a police force should be organized among the Indians to maintain law and order on the reservation.

A police force had been organized back in the days of Agent Army, but had soon been dismissed after accomplishing some useful work. Instructions had been issued to Agent Eastman to organize another force, but nothing had been done about it. Riordan early requested and was given authority to enlist a troop of thirteen at a rate of pay of \$8 per month for captains and \$5 for privates, in keeping with provisions of the Indian Appropriation Act of May 27, 1878.²¹ Riordan claimed that "Nothing is more certain than that no reliable Navajo can be hired for less than fifteen dollars a month and rations, *or its equivalent*."²² The "equivalent" seemed to be an expanding concept. After agreeing to fifteen dollars pay per month, the commissioner was then advised that rations, arms, clothing, forage, etc. must be furnished. The force was finally organized late in the year, but whether or not all their desires were met with is not known.²³ Henry Dodge, "intelligent and fearless, faithful to a trust and a staunch friend. . .," was appointed acting chief at a salary of \$600 per year.²⁴

The new guardians of Navaho behavior were soon given an assignment. Complaints had been received through the military at Fort Wingate of Indians roving beyond the eastern border of the reservation, so in December a detach-

20. Riordan to Commissioner, 9/21/83, 17829/83.

A Federal judge turned Owens over to the territorial officials on the ground that the killing had taken place off the Navaho reservation, and he was sent to Apache County, Arizona, where Riordan believed that "no conviction will follow. In fact I do not believe the man will ever be tried." Riordan to Commissioner, 9/27/83, 18192/83.

21. Commissioner Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 10/15/84, 48 cong. 2 sess. hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 12f (2287). Price to Riordan 3/15/83, LB 184, p. 414. U. S. S. L., XX, 86.

22. Riordan to Commissioner, 8/16/83, 15635/83.

23. Riordan to General D. S. Stanley, 12/12/83, AGO, LR, 4491/83. Also 19369/83, 6081/83.

24. Riordan to Commissioner, 10/16/83, 19370/83. Price to Riordan, 3/8/84, LB 56, p. 131. (pt. 2, F).

ment of five scouts was despatched to bring them back to their official home.

The persons complaining are stock men grazing their herds on the unsurveyed lands of the public domain and reaping benefits they are not entitled to as industriously and persistently as the Indians of whom they complain.²⁵

Such complaints, of course, were more or less chronic, but served to keep alive the old question of whether or not the Navaho could be self-supporting within the boundaries of their reservation. Shortly after assuming charge at Fort Defiance, Riordan had advised the Indian Office that "I do not know of a single available place today where I could put a family or a band if I had to."²⁶ And yet he tried to force them onto the reservation just as his predecessor had attempted to do.

A particularly troublesome spot for white-Navaho conflict over land was in the valley of the Rio Puerco of the West. Matters became so serious around Tanner Springs that the agent finally ordered the Indians to move onto the reservation after harvest time. Their leader, Toh-yel-te, argued most of one night that he would die rather than move, but Riordan simply told him to move or get ready to die.²⁷ Not without feeling, however, did the agent assume such an attitude, as demonstrated in the case of Nash-gal-li who owned a spring off the reservation about five miles from Manuelito. The railroad company wanted the spring, which happened to be on their right-of-way. And what was the answer to the problem? Riordan believed that

These people have feelings and they have rights. Of course the settling up of this section,

25. Riordan to Commissioner, 12/12/83, 23226/83. Also 23229/83.

"I believe the military once ran a portion of the East line, but the marks, if ever any were placed, have entirely disappeared." Price to Secretary of Interior, 3/14/84, LB 47, p. 591.

Price recommended a special appropriation of money for a new survey of the reservation line, accepting the view that the Indians must move onto the reservation because of the railroad and the influx of settlers.

26. Riordan to Price, 2/14/83, 3611/83.

27. Riordan to Commissioner, 8/31/83, 16394/83. Also 11622/83, 23490/83.

especially the fertile spots that have been taken away from the Indians cannot be retarded for any consideration of right and wrong. At least it is safe to assume that it will not be. But we, as the dominant race, will be false to ourselves if we fail to provide, by suitable additions to the reservations, a place on which these people may live in peace and graze their herds and raise their families.²⁸

The commissioner refused to consider another boundary extension, but some slight measures were taken to improve the economic condition of the Indians. The agency farm at Fort Defiance was given up on the plea of lack of proper tools and that government farms on the reservation were not to the best interest of the people. The land was subdivided among the Indians and about \$7,250 was expended to construct an irrigation ditch, and additional sums were spent on repairing the dam that had been recently damaged by flood waters.²⁹ These activities could only benefit a few Indians at the best, but a broader project was undertaken with the allotment of \$2,000 to erect a sheepcote in preparation for providing a better strain of sheep to improve the Navaho flocks. This would make possible their reduction in number for conservation of the range. The evil of the excess number of unused ponies, the Navaho's basis of wealth, was stressed by the agent, but little could be done about it.³⁰

28. Riordan to Price, 2/14/83, 3611/83.

The Navaho could prove up on his claim if located prior to the date of the A. & P. RR. grant of March 12, 1872. Price to Riordan, 3/6/83, LB 180, p. 534.

"The government will promise protection to settlers and after every dollar they have is invested, will leave them to the tender mercies of the Navajo, the warped judgment and prejudice of the eastern bred Indian agents, and the overbearing ease-loving disposition of the army officer. . . . our right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' is a myth under the beneficial misrule of the powers and conditions that be."

"At present they overrun, and virtually ruin for all purposes of settlement, sixty townships south and forty on the east side of their reservation." C. W. to Editor, *The Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 2/10/84.

29. Riordan, *Annual Report*, 8/14/83, 48 cong., 1 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 180 (2191). LB 86, p. 91 (pt. 2, F); LB 91, p. 114 (pt. 2, F); LB 96, p. 243 (pt. 1, F); LB 99, pp. 150, 248 (pt. 2, F); LB 101, p. 56 (pt. 1, F).

30. Price to Riordan, 10/12/83, LB 91, p. 243 (pt. 2 F.). Riordan, *Annual Report*, *ibid*, p. 180.

Another approach to the problem lay in connection with traders dealing in Indian goods, an activity shrouded in much "surmises, jealousies, conjectures." In June, 1883, E. S. Merritt and others of Winslow, Arizona, addressed a letter to the president requesting protection for the Navaho against "the rapacity of the Indian traders." "I have to reply," the commissioner wrote, "that you furnish the first complaint to this office that the Indians, of the section to which you refer, (Northern Arizona) 'are receiving less than a fair price (from licensed traders) for their surplus wool and this in goods at from 100 to 200% profit.'" Mr. Merritt did not answer the challenge to furnish a formal complaint, but pointed an accusing finger at Keam who

robs both the Indian & the Government at both ends alike. *Mr. Hyatt* we are informed sells goods very *low*; & no complaints are made against him.

The Indian make the complaints, & have like the white men of the country found out that they get nothing from Keams either for their money or their products—6c is what he paid for wool in goods at his own prices—the poor Indians getting a *store ticket*—equivalent to nothing elsewhere.³¹

At that time there were two traders located at Fort Defiance, Thomas V. Keam and Ben F. Hyatt. When the reservation had been extended in 1880, Keam had left Fort Defiance and relocated off the reservation about seventy-five miles to the west at a spot that came to be called Keam's Canyon. With the removal of agent Eastman, Keam had promptly visited Riordan at Fort Defiance, probably for the purpose of securing a license to reopen a trading post there. Eastman had accused Riordan of being a tool of

31. Merritt to Commissioner, 6/12/83, 11052/83. Commissioner to Merritt, 5/25/83, LB 39, p. 405 (pt. 2, Civ.).

"The use of tokens, tickets, store orders, or credit of any kind, will not be permitted. The Indians must be paid in cash for what they have to sell." Hayt to Agents, Circular No. 37, 12/1/79, LB 154, p. 124.

A decade later the wool was paid for only in "trader's goods" and bought at 4c to 6c per lb; "This seems wrong, but I have no remedy to suggest." Welton to Commissioner, 6/17/88, 15959/88.

this trader, but that seems to have been a false assumption, because the new agent believed in a multiplicity of traders in order to assure fair prices for the Indians. If Riordan had close connection with Keam, whom he did know personally, he logically should have tried to promote his friend's interests, but on the contrary adopted the above attitude that was hardly compatible with such a purpose. Neither Keam nor Hyatt spent much time at their posts, but left the business to be conducted by clerks, a policy that Riordan did not favor. In December of 1883, Keam relinquished his license to trade at Fort Defiance and Walter R. Fales, clerk in charge, bought out the stock and continued the business on his own account the following spring.³²

Whether or not Merritt's criticism of Keam had any bearing on his quitting business at Fort Defiance can only be guessed at, but the commendation of Hyatt was not entirely justified. The commissioner had promptly requested Riordan's opinion about Hyatt as a proper person to hold a trader's license; the agent, in reply, was rather non-committal:

I said that, because I believe any one is an improper one to be stationed here whose presence tends to foster antagonisms and dissensions; and there is no telling where they will end. That is all I have to say.³³

The dissension referred to probably arose from scanty stocks, which the Indians complained about, and high prices. In the fall of 1884 the rent for quarters occupied by Hyatt was fixed at \$30 per month by the commissioner, a figure considerably lower than that recommended by an Indian service inspector or by Riordan, and was intended to eliminate one possible excuse for high prices.³⁴ Hyatt had previously increased his stock of goods, but the Indians were

32. 4892/83, 12502/83, 23588/83, 22813/83, 329/84, 10817/84; LB 173, p. 314; LB 181, p. 20.

33. Riordan to Commissioner, 7/7/83, 12900/83.

34. Price to Riordan, 1/17/84, LB 55, p. 240 (pt. 1, AD). Price to Hyatt, 1/24/84, *ibid.*, p. 440.

not satisfied and he momentarily considered withdrawing from business in the summer of 1884, revealing at the time other motives for his action:

By despatches before me bearing date of June 19 & 21 from Mr. Vance, who has been attending to the recommending of my app. for renewal of license (having furnished at the start the endorsement of the leading business & Professional men of Findlay, Ohio (my home)—and will cheerfully do so again as to Character & qualifications) saying "Cant recommend renewal under the circumstances"—2nd despatch "Must have Six hundred dollars at once and partnership contract or will not renew." Am very sorry to have to bring such matters to your notice but justice to my friends & myself compel me to—Mr V——has been well paid in years gone by. I can truthfully say that in the three years that I have been here, I have not made \$4,000.00 the trade is not what it was before the advent of Railroads.

I do not mention the Vance matter in a spirit of malice, but simply to bring to your notice the manner in which my renewal can be had. I do not wish the office of trader if its a marketable one.³⁵

Nor did Riordan want *his* "office" any longer. The lack of sufficient help and money to carry on the work, and unsatisfactory living conditions at Fort Defiance, were very discouraging. The failure of the department to honor expense vouchers in the spring of 1883 crystallized his dissatisfaction and he tendered his resignation in June. In his annual report for that year he wrote a blistering description of his difficulties:

It would require the descriptive powers of a Scott or a Dickens to portray the wretched condition of affairs at this agency in language such as

35. Hyatt to Price, 6/24/84, 12275/84.

In 1883 Mr. Hyatt bought up to June 21

63,000 lbs wool

For the same period in 1884

6,000 lbs wool

See also 10287/84, and 16716/84 for reports of Navahos' objection to Hyatt.

to present a faithful picture of it to the mind of one who never saw it.

The United States government has never fulfilled its treaty promises and "It is safe to assume that it never will." The Government provides little aid

for the sick, indigent, and helpless Indians, the agent being compelled to see them suffer under his eyes and to close his ears to their requests, or else supply the much-needed articles at his own expense.

How any man could turn a deaf ear to the sufferings I witnessed here last winter—to the cries of hungry women and children whose only support had perished (the sheep), owing to the severity of the winter, and who were thus deprived of all means of livelihood—puzzles me.

In a word, the agent and employes who were to lift up these people to a higher plane, to carry out the civilizing policy of the Government, were expected to live in a lot of abandoned adobe huts, condemned by special, regular, and annual reports as unfit to live in fifteen years ago, condemned by every one who has ever seen them since, and repeatedly damned by all who have been compelled to occupy them. They are full of vermin and utterly unfit for human habitation. I have had to tie my children in chairs to keep them out of the water, on the floors, in midwinter. I have seen my wife, a delicate lady, and who was at that time nursing a baby, walking around with wet feet on the floors of the agent's palatial quarters in a freezing atmosphere, and there wasn't a dry room or a warm room in the house. I have seen as soon as the weather began to moderate, the snakes come out of the walls of those same palatial quarters. You wonder we *kick*. . . . Why don't the Government give an agent here as good a shelter as it gives a mule at Fort Wingate?³⁶

36. *Annual Report*, 8/14/83, 48 cong., 1 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 177 (2191).

Riordan's salary was reduced from \$2,000 to \$1,500 in 1883 and he claimed to have spent \$800 of his own money in carrying out his duties, etc.

His interest in mining has not appeared in the records since his appointment. Instructions "that I am entitled to 'an allowance of actual and necessary

The answer to the last question was not given immediately, nor was Riordan's resignation accepted. Two special investigators were sent to Fort Defiance in August, 1883, one of whom remained for about six weeks and helped Riordan in the routine work. A slight flareup of charges and denials of mismanagement and corruption at the agency occurred, reminiscent of the days of Agent Eastman, but soon disappeared under the tempering influence of time.³⁷ Riordan carried on with his work, but looked at it more through the eyes of a realist. He was disillusioned about improving the lot of the Navaho, and pessimistic about the future policy of the government: "One thing is certain, as far as the General Government is concerned, the past wrongs of the Navajos will not be righted."³⁸ Finally, in April, 1884, he tendered his resignation and it was accepted, effective when a successor had qualified. Meanwhile he was granted a so-called leave of absence for the last sixty days, beginning on April 20th. The Navaho were reluctant to lose their agent and agreed in council to supplement his salary by \$1,000 as an inducement for him to remain. "Much was said . . . the regret being universal and very feelingly expressed. . . . Any man might well be proud of the evidence of respect, confidence, and affection shown by the Indians toward the retiring Agent."³⁹ He later tried to withdraw his resignation, but the usual scramble of applicants for the

travelling expenses incurred in the discharge of official duty' I was green enough to think that meant something; and greener still to think that I was supposed to know anything about what was 'actual and necessary.' If I had had more experience in Government work I would have read, (between the lines, and before the words 'actual and necessary,') the modification, 'what a man twenty five hundred miles off; who knows nothing whatever of the circumstances, may think is'—actual, etc." Field work is essential! Riordan to Commissioner, 5/31/83, 10332/83.

"I have had faith enough in 'Boston philanthropy' to give agent Riordan \$250, and to undertake to double that amount, raising the entire \$500 among friends in the fall, to enable him to fit up his quarters so that he can live decently and have his family with him." General S. C. Armstrong in *The Morning Journal*, 9/25/83. See Armstrong to Price, 8/24/83, 16992/83.

37. 16992/83, 16081/83, 19942/83, 18446/83, 18447/83, and 18574/83.

38. Riordan to Stanley, 12/10/83, AGO, LR, 4261/83.

39. S. E. Marshall to Commissioner, 4/21/84, and 4/22/84, AD 209, 518/83. Riordan to Commissioner, 4/8/84, *ibid.*, Teller to Riordan, 4/17/84, 7566/84.

position had set in, and the prize went to ex-sheriff John H. Bowman of Gunnison county, Colorado.

Despite the petition of thirty-three persons who lived near the reservation that a man be appointed who was experienced in Indian ways and familiar with the Navaho country, the new agent was selected for political reasons with the backing of James B. Belford of Denver, Colorado. It was through Bowman's efforts that Colorado "was secured to the Republicans two years ago. He is eminently qualified and deserving."⁴⁰

Bowman assumed charge of the agency June 30, 1884. The responsibilities and problems of the office did not differ from those of his predecessors. White men were competing for the Navaho trade, conflicts continued to occur over land and water rights, liquor was available, and an occasional act of violence was committed. In the last category an immediate problem was inherited from Riordan in the murder of Walcott and McNally, who had been prospecting in the Navajo Mountain country, near the Utah-Arizona boundary. The suspected culprits were Osh-ka-ni-ne's gang, known to Riordan from experience as being dangerous:

I was corralled by them, there being but myself and another white man. They debated several hours as to whether they should kill us or not. We barely escaped.⁴¹

Bowman was a man of action, and issued a ten day ultimatum to the murderers to surrender or the Navaho scouts would be put on their trail. A threat of force would hardly convince an Indian, or a white man for that matter, to voluntarily accept the ministration of the law, but three of the suspects were captured in July. The following month Bowman accompanied a force of ten scouts and forty soldiers toward the Navajo Mountain country, but failed to apprehend any one else. The remains of Walcott were

40. I. W. Stanton to Teller, 4/17/84, AD 209, 173/84. James B. Belford to Atkins, 3/27/85, AD 253 and AD 209, 289/84.

41. Riordan to Commissioner, 4/19/84, 8228/84.

brought in and buried at Fort Wingate; only the murderers knew the whereabouts of the other victim.⁴²

The three Navaho were imprisoned at Fort Wingate. Since the killing had occurred in Arizona, the governor of that territory issued a requisition on the governor of New Mexico and the defendants were turned over to the sheriff of Apache county. One was admitted to bail in the sum of \$500 and presumably not tried, a second escaped, and the third one, after escape and recapture was set free on the refusal of the grand jury to bring in a bill of indictment.⁴³

On the northern boundary of the reservation, and on the southern, on the east and the west, the slowly increasing white population made inevitable further conflicts between the two races. "Every mail which comes here contains complaints of petty difficulties from the white settlers of the vicinity," Bowman wrote; "the conflict of races is growing more intense."⁴⁴ A Navaho was killed at Mitchell's ranch, near the four-corners, in the spring of 1885, and another one came away with a finger paralyzed by a blow from the rancher, who "was no good whatever" in the eyes of the Indians.⁴⁵

The Zuñi to the south complained of Navaho trespassing on their lands, and Bowman sent a representative to settle that matter. In the spring of 1885, the Zuñi appealed to higher authority; a petition was sent to President Cleveland asking for relief from Navaho intrusions, and also from white homesteaders.⁴⁶ Incidentally, the

42. 12891/84, 13406/84, 14012/84, 15305/84, 16371/84, 18284/84.

"Mr. Bowman is a cool-headed, brave, accommodating gentleman." Lieutenant H. P. Kingsbury to Post Adjutant, Fort Wingate, 9/1/84, 18284/84.

Ganado Mucho was willing to cooperate, but was suspicious of the white man's justice because of failure to keep troublesome whites under control. His action, at least, indicated a growing sense of the necessity of preserving law and order among the Navaho. Marshall to Commissioner, 5/8/84, 9313/84.

43. 2385/85, 3146/85, 15296/84. AGO, LR 3411/84. LB 159, p. 250 (LD).

44. Bowman to Commissioner, 10/16/84, 20340/84.

45. Herbert Welsh, *Report of a visit to the Navajo*. . . . The Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia, 1885, p. 23f. AGO, LR 3039/85.

46. Bowman to Pedro Sanchez (Agent at Santa Fé), 2/14/85, AGO, LR 640/85. Yaqui (Governor of Zuñi), *Petition to Grover Cleveland*, 3/28/85, 7459/85.

And a Navaho killed a Zuñi in a dispute over a trading deal. 8957/85, 9566/85.

Cebolla Cattle Ranch owners hoped to benefit from this protest.

In the Datil Mountain country, wandering Navaho were accused of stealing stock and frightening women and children. The agent sent notice to his wards to return home and urged Governor Sheldon to use his influence in the matter: "I think the department should take steps to concentrate them in some way, and believe that a recommendation from you to that effect would accomplish the desired result."⁴⁷

Nothing came of this effort, and in the fall of 1885 the settlers petitioned Governor Ross for relief, and he wrote a strong letter to the commissioner with the usual plea that the Indians be confined to their reservation, particularly because he did "not want any more killings of settlers or Indians in this Territory."⁴⁸ The governor was ahead of the times however, in his "want." A Navaho butchered a mired cow in return for the alleged stealing of his horse by some cattlemen, his former employers. The deputy sheriff at Gallup, James Maloney, arrested him for cattle stealing. A band of Indians came to town to rescue their kinsman, some shooting occurred, and the sheriff took refuge at Fort Wingate for two days until the excitement subsided. "So far as I can judge," Lieutenant Colonel Crofton wrote, "the fault is all on the side of the whites."⁴⁹

On the eastern side of the reservation the Navaho ignored the boundary line and grazed their sheep on land owned or coveted by white men. J. M. Freeman of Santa Fé had purchased the Ignacio Chavez land grant for the

47. Bowman to Sheldon, 10/18/84, *New Mexican Review*, 10/21/84. Bowman to Lieut. Col. R. E. A. Crofton, 10/17/84, AGO, LR, 3757/84.

The Navaho get hunting passes "and go over the entire northern slope of the Mogollon range to a distance of a hundred and fifty miles from their reservation." E. R. Carr to Secretary of Interior, 1/6/86, 1939/86. Carr was justice of peace at Winslow, Arizona, and agent for the Waters Cattle Co.

48. E. G. Ross to J. D. C. Atkins, 9/21/85, 22490/85. See also E. R. Carr to Secretary of Interior, 1/6/86, 1939/86.

49. AGO, Post Letter Book No. 3, pp. 116, 118, 119, 121. 24345/85.

"Lippy was the Indian who caused the disturbance last fall, and was known to be one of the most dangerous Indians in the tribe." *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, July 23, 1886.

purpose of restoring its grazing value by non-use and then selling it for a profit. The Navaho were upsetting this plan and the owner's protest brought a reply from the commissioner that could hardly bring him comfort:

It might be well for your correspondent to notify the Indians that their alleged acts of trespass have been made the subject of complaint to the Department, and that it is known that their Agent has given them no such permission as they claim to have received from him; and that it is believed that if it be shown to them that they are trespassing upon lands in violation of the rights of others, they will desist of their own accord.⁵⁰

V. S. Miera was another complainant on similar grounds. He located a ranch around the junction of the Rio Escobada and Chaco Canyon. The Navaho beat up his herders and told Miera "that if he attempted to put up buildings they would burn them down and would drive his men away." Miera apparently held on to his holdings, however, for the time being.⁵¹ C. F. Meyer, another homesteader, made inquiry concerning the legal status of the Indians when off the reservation, and his attention was called to a General Land Office circular of May 31, 1884, wherein the policy was stated,

to preemptorily refuse all entries and filings attempted to be made by others than the Indian occupants upon lands in the possession of Indians who have made improvements of any value whatever thereon.⁵²

The answer was little calculated to aid the settlers since the Navaho herdsman was not interested in the white man's

50. Price to Freeman, 10/19/83, LB 117, p. 490 (LD). Also 17410/83, 13522/83, LB 119, p. 103.

51. *The Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 2/13/84, 5/1/84, and 5/7/84. Miera to Teller, 6/18/84, 13977/84. Bowman to Commissioner, 7/17/84, 13977/84.

52. Price to Meyers, 1/3/85, LB 132, p. 298 (LD). Meyer to Price, 11/28/84, 23165/84.

Trouble on the eastern side occurred again over the selling of whiskey at San Mateo. Bowman was authorized to spend \$200 to suppress the traffic. See 20546/85, 21724/85, 4984/85, 6065/85, and LB 50, p. 479 (pt. 1, C).

conception of a homestead, and improvements ordinarily consisted only of some evidence of seasonal occupation, such as a bit of tilled land, or a brush dwelling.

In the western country a serious charge was made in the summer of 1884, by the United States commissioner, of a Mormon-Navaho coalition for preying on the cattle of the Gentiles and Mexicans. "If the Gentiles do open up hostilities you can safely count on the largest and most complete massacre that ever occurred in the United States, the matter is worked just to this pitch. . . ." On instructions from Washington, Bowman investigated the situation in the course of an extensive trip over the reservation and belittled the seriousness of the charge:

there is no danger of any thing of the kind, no truth in any such rumor the Mormons are thrifty settlers and always manage to be on friendly terms with their Indian neighbors they readily acquire their language, use the Indians well and fairly as a rule, and I believe get along better with the Indians than most of the Gentile settlers. . . .⁵³

A year later the killing of a Navaho by a cowboy occurred at Tanner Spring. The trouble was the outgrowth of a common source of disputes, the possession of a water supply. Bowman rode eighty miles in twenty-two hours to the scene and found about 150 Navaho surrounding and threatening to kill the "occupants of the 'stone house'." After a two day parley the Indians agreed to turn the culprit over to the sheriff. The unfortunate Navaho, a man of some wealth and years, was off the reservation, but the sympathy of the officials was with him:

Don't you think it is time some measures were taken to punish whites who recklessly and without

53. Geo. A. McCarter (United States commissioner) to Robt. T. Lincoln, St. Johns, Arizona Territory, 6/7/84, 12076/84. Bowman to Commissioner, 10/30/84, 21257/84.

Bowman made careful inquiry among Indians and whites, including the sheriff (a Gentile): "I believe it to be only the fears of some very timid, nervous, or designing persons." Bowman to Price, 7/18/84, 14145/84.

McCarter confessed his own prejudice toward Mormons in the above letter.

the slightest provocation take the lives of Navajos? I look upon your Indians as being remarkable for their forbearance. They are certainly greatly the superiors of many of the whites to be met with in this country.⁵⁴

These bits of trouble between the whites and Indians kept alive, of course, the controversy over the size of the reservation. The Navaho wanted an increase; the whites insisted that they be forced onto their reservation, increase or no increase. The commissioner of Indian affairs denied the request for an addition, although favored by Bowman, on the grounds that the Indian right to take up homesteads was sufficient to provide more land for them,⁵⁵ and they must choose one permanent abode.

The homestead plan was hardly feasible. An estimated 8,000 Navaho lived off the reservation; they had little conception of the white man's meaning of a homestead; they clung to their treaty right to hunt off the reservation; and there was insufficient land and water for many miles around the reservation to satisfy the needs of the Indians and the wants of the cattlemen and settlers. Perhaps an NRA (Navaho Recovery Administration) might have solved this problem, but the 1880's were still the age of "rugged individualism," and the Indian was not doing too bad in that respect.

The alternative proposal of forcing the Navaho onto the reservation likewise presented difficulties. The estimated area of 12,749 miles allotted to them sounded large on paper, but its productive capacity was not rated highly; "it would be difficult to find a region of equal size and with an equal population where so large a proportion of the land is so

54. Crofton to Bowman, 11/15/85, AGO, NM, Post Letter Box No. 3, p. 129. See also Bowman to Commissioner, 11/10/85, 27069/85. AGO, NM, LR 3877/85. 26358/85.

A small group of Navaho settled on the Cottonwood Wash, west of Holbrook, were also using water coveted by cattlemen. E. R. Carr to Secretary of Interior, 1/6/86, 1939/86.

55. Bowman to Commissioner, 7/9/84, 13397/84. Price to Bowman, 7/30/84, LB 128, p. 235 (L D). E. L. Stevens to Bowman, 8/11/84, *Ibid.*, p. 369.

nearly worthless."⁵⁶ The commissioner believed that the reservation had reached its productive capacity except in grazing, and advanced the older suggestion that the number of horses be reduced and the quality of sheep improved.⁵⁷ The Navaho, however, were fond of their horses and content with the quality of the sheep.

The economic picture of the Navaho was not so bleak as the chronic clamor might indicate:

The Navajo is by far the most intelligent and thrifty, ready and willing to work, and several have grown rich by their trades of silversmith, blacksmith, or saddler; which they have acquired from their contact with the few whites near them.⁵⁸

In addition to the growing crafts as a source of income, the government was pursuing its policy of encouraging farming, long considered as a prime solution to the problem of economic self-sufficiency, although actual results to date had been slight. In the fall of 1884 Bowman was authorized to spend \$2,500 to develop water resources; presumably the money was mostly spent in building a stone dam at the mouth of Bonito canyon where dirt dams had failed to serve the purpose. The project was completed the following spring and furnished water for about seventy-five

56. Cosmos Mindeleff, "Navaho Houses." *Seventeenth Annual Report*, Bureau of American Ethnology, pt. 2, p. 477 (1898).

Bowman stated: "This reservation is about my ideal of a desert." Quoted in Atkins to Secretary Interior, 12/19/85, 31061/85.

Thomas V. Keam estimated the reservation area at 16,500 sq. mi., with 60,000 acres of farm land, and a population of 17,500. 1623/86.

The agent's census of population in 1885 was 21,000. Atkins, *op. cit.*

57. Atkins to Bowman, 5/26/85, LB 137, p. 117, and 31061/85. Parsons, *Report*, 4/27/86, 12532/86.

Keam estimated the horses at 25,000, cattle 2,500, sheep 650,000, and goats 325,000. 1623/86.

Bowman's estimate for horses was 35,000-40,000. 31061/85.

58. Keam to Atkins, 1/2/86, 1623/86. -Op. cit.

"Aside from their peacefulness they show few signs of civilization. They retain their barbarous customs and indifference to Christianizing influences, and it is believed that were it not for their property interests but very slight provocation would induce them to wage savage and cruel warfare. They are an expense and a burden to the General Government. Their herds roam over the public domain untaxed, and they contribute nothing to the general good of the country." Governor of Arizona, *Annual Report*, 1885, 49 Cong., 1 sess., Hse. Ex. Doc. 1, pt. 5, p. 904 [2379].

✓ families.⁵⁹ Windmills, brought to the agency in 1880, and never installed, were probably given to the Moquis; at least Bowman so recommended on the grounds that they "can not be judiciously used by the Navajos."⁶⁰ In the western country Keam claimed to be furnishing water from his developed supply for 10-15,000 Navaho horses and sheep daily during the summer months, remarking that the Indians "like children required assistance in management."⁶¹ In addition, farm implements were furnished along with a miscellany of other articles. In March, 1886, about 4,000 recipients attended the issue of goods. Many others did not attend for the common reason of inclement weather and the difficulty of transporting anything worthwhile

to their distant homes on the back of a diminutive pony—though I did see one determined Navajo carrying off a large plow on horse-back and another a wheelbarrow, though I regret to say that in the latter case the experiment proved unsuccessful, the fragments of the wheelbarrow being scattered by the refractory horse all over the north side of the plaza.⁶²

Another method of civilizing the Indians was revived by Bowman, namely, the building of houses like the white man's dwelling. About twenty-five were erected in the fall of 1884, and twenty-two more authorized in the winter of

59. Price to Bowman, 10/23/84, LB 107, p. 448 (pt. 1, F). Herbert Welsh, *Report of a Visit to the Navaho*. . . . 1885. p. 17f.

60. 12150/85. The project for a sheep-cote near the agency had not succeeded; Bowman was instructed to distribute the 75 marino bucks to reliable Navaho. Teller to Bowman, 10/1/84, 19263/84.

61. Keam to Atkins, 1/2/86, 1623/86.

62. Wm. Parson (special Indian agent), *Report*, 4/27/86, 12532/86.

In the fall of 1884 Bowman reported that "The shovels are as thin, and easy bent as *tin*, and possess as little flexibility," and plows were practically useless; all shipped by John Dere & Co. of Moline, Illinois. 22890/84.

Wagons were still being furnished to the Navaho also. "There is no better method of giving them practical lessons in independence—and self reliance!" That is, by using the vehicles for doing the public freighting. P. H. Folsom (special agent) to Atkins, 4/30/85, 10005/85.

During the fiscal year 1886-1887 the Navaho received \$287.20 for freighting government goods. Patterson, *Annual Report*, 50 cong., 1 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 255 (2542).

1886 at a total cost of \$1,084; another one was built for a son of Ganado Mucho as compensation for being ousted from a spring by a white man, and Keam reported that one or two chiefs in his locality had paid white men to build houses for them. The steam sawmill, set up at Fort Defiance to supply lumber for dwellings, had failed to serve the purpose for lack of nearby timber; it was now offered for sale and the proceeds were to be used to buy doors and windows from J. C. Baldrige Lumber Company of Albuquerque.⁶³ Several years later an appropriation was made for a portable sawmill.

All in all, the reports of Navaho economy were now much better than during the hard years at the opening of the decade. "The condition of the tribe, as a whole, is not only far removed from hardship, but may even be said to be one of comparative affluence,"⁶⁴ a state of affairs due more to the seasonal swing than to government aid, however, because subsistence supplies had been discontinued. As early as 1883 it was claimed that

They are already self-supporting, living chiefly on mutton, and on flour, sugar and coffee purchased from the traders, supplemented in summer by their own corn, pumpkins, watermelons, etc. Not a dollar from the government for any living purpose whatever.⁶⁵

Other evidence that the Navaho were not destitute can

63. Bowman, *Annual Report*, 9/3/84, 48 Cong., 2 sess., hse. ex. doc., 1, p. 179, (2287). LB 118, p. 170 and LB 120, p. 131 (pt. 1, F); 18365/85, 22336/85, 1623/86, 22511/85. Patterson, *Annual Report*, 49 Cong., 2 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 422 (2467).

64. Mendeleff, *op. cit.*, p. 482.

Although published later, the material in Mendeleff and Stephen (see below) was collected in the 1880's.

65. General S. C. Armstrong in *The Morning Journal* (Albuquerque) 9/25/83.

The Navaho "have planted quite a crop of corn and are showing a spirit of industry heretofore unknown among them. Along the road between Wingate and Defiance most of the land susceptible of cultivation has been planted. . . ." D. O. T. R. to Editor, 7/31/84, *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 8/3/84.

"The average Navaho farm, and almost every adult male now has a small garden patch, comprises less than half an acre, while two acres is considered a large area to be worked by one family at one time." Mendeleff, *op. cit.* p. 503.

See also A. M. Stephen, "The Navaho." *American Anthropologist*, vi, no. 4, 361f. (October, 1893)

be found in the rivalry among white men for a license to trade, and the attempts of the government to regulate the business. Under a new policy effective in 1886, traders were required to report their annual gross sales as a basis for determining the number of licenses to be issued; the maximum profit per article was to be fixed by the commissioner of Indian affairs, and the average profit allowed was not to be greater than twenty-five percent of the original cost plus freight charges.⁶⁶ The limitation on profit was presumably in the interest of the Indian, but it is doubtful that any such rigid rule worked in practice. Trade was carried on by the barter system. The Navaho exchanged wool in season for goods, and sometimes pawned his jewelry with the trader during the interim, although such practice had been forbidden. The sellers competed for the favor of their neighborhood patrons by the giving of trivial presents to the more influential Indians. The Navaho on the other hand had the advantage of going from trader to trader for the best price, and of patronizing the numerous stores off the reservation when not too distant. The limitation on the number of traders on the other hand, was hardly in keeping with the theory of free competition for establishing the best price level, but there was some fear that too many traders would tend to force the price of wool down to the detriment of the Indian.⁶⁷

In this period of Navaho prosperity, the traders were all Republicans. . . . They are very bitter in their feelings towards the administration and some of them are giving the Agent trouble—I am sure that “Day, Damon, Donovan, and John H. Bowman” compose a ring calculated to defeat the intents of law, and are very objectionable men as traders.

The writer, J. M. Weidemeyer, a Democrat, belonged to one

66. Commissioner Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 9/28/86. 49th Cong., 2 sess., Hse. Ex. Doc. 1, pt. 5, p. 115 (2647).

67. Atkins to J. S. Struble (House of Representatives), 4/14/86, LB 1. p. 166 (pt. 2, M).

For a brief statement of Navaho trade see Bowman to Commissioner 8/10/85, 18952/85, and 2/22/86, 6219/86.

of the best families in Missouri, according to Senator F. M. Cockrell, and had not only secured a license to trade at Fort Defiance, but was trying to secure a monopoly on the business at that location.⁶⁸ His efforts was unavailing despite the backing of Cockrell; the commissioner believed that business justified two traders at the agency; furthermore, Mr. Weidemeyer had been too choosy once before in securing a license, preferring a location at the Crow Indian agency instead of Fort Defiance.⁶⁹

His desire for a monopoly was justified if his figures were accurate. He claimed only a gross profit of 25 per cent in less than two and a half months beginning June 26, 1886; a net gain of \$150, or about \$30 per month for himself and clerk. By the end of the year he had grossed \$4,602.80.⁷⁰

Weidemeyer's *bête noire* was the store of B. F. Hyatt who was the storm center of Indian discontent during Riordan's period as agent. He had secured the license for his clerk, S. G. Reeder, a Republican, but it was commonly believed that he really owned the business.⁷¹ The gross receipts for 1886 amounted to \$8,448. Reeder (or Hyatt) survived the attempt to cancel his license for the benefit of Weidemeyer, but he finally sold his business to the newcomer January 1, 1887.⁷²

69. Atkins to Patterson, 9/9/86, LB 2, p. 77 (pt. 1, M) Atkins to Cockrell, 7/12/87, LB 2, p. 206 (pt. 2, M) Cockrell to Atkins 7/7/87, 17654/87.

near Fort Defiance, was seeking aid to secure the reopening of his store, closed by the commissioner of Indian affairs 7/6/86.

69. Atkins to Patterson, 9/9/86, LB 2, p. 77 (pt. 1. Atkins to Cockrell, 7/12/87, LB 2, p. 206 (pt. 2, M) Cockrell to Atkins 7/7/87. 17654/87.

70. Weidemeyer to Atkins, 9/1/86, 25639/86. Patterson to Atkins, 3/1/87, 6844/87.

Weidemeyer's business was managed by his son. The above letter was written from Clinton, Mo., indicating that he was not always on the reservation.

71. Bowman to Commissioner, 8/10/85, 18952/85. Weidemeyer to Vest, 2/8/86, 4580/86. Parsons to Atkins, 3/13/86, 8076/86.

72. Patterson to Atkins, 6/18/86, 16483/86. Patterson to Commissioner, 1/9/87, 1723/87. Patterson to Atkins, 3/1/87, 6844/87.

The traders carry a stock of \$500 to \$4,000; silver buttons, bracelets, rings and bridles pass as emergency currency; wool is sold by the blanket, not by the pound; traders expect to furnish free tobacco and "numerous presents to influential patrons," competition is keen among traders; in 1885 wool sold for 7-8c per

The rival business at Fort Defiance was owned by Michael Donovan who bought out W. R. Fales in the spring of 1885, and also secured a license to trade at Washington Pass.⁷³ Donovan hailed from Syracuse, New York, and had some connection with the firm of Upson and Donovan of Baldwinsville, New York, manufacturers and dealers in clothing and shoes. He too was accused by Weidemeyer of being a "front" for some one else. In the struggle for the license at Fort Defiance, Donovan pulled strings through Representative Frank Hiscock, but the influence of the senator from Missouri was greater and he lost out. The new agent for the Navaho also withdrew his recommendation for the renewal of Donovan's license "for good reason," believing now that one store was sufficient at the agency.⁷⁴ Donovan retained the other license and opened business July 28, 1886, at Chinlee where former Agent Bowman served as his clerk. Donovan left for the east for business reasons and died in the summer of 1887. Bowman, meanwhile tried to secure the license with Donovan's approval, but Patterson hoped that no one connected with the former administration would get the license "for the peace and harmony of matters here." His hope was apparently realized. At any rate, C. N. Cotton of Mount Vernon, Ohio, bought the stock of goods after the death of Donovan with the understanding that he would receive the license, but that part of the deal not being successful, he was closed out by the agent in November, 1887. He immediately appealed to General G. W. Morgan and Senator A. B. Payne, but without success. The prize was worth a struggle, the gross

pound and was quoted in Albuquerque at 9-12c; trade cannot be monopolized because the Navaho are nomadic, "They are sharp traders, persistent beggars, occasional thieves but withal good natured." Bowman to Commissioner, 2/22/86, 6219/86.

73. LB 181, p. 423; LB 49, p. 118 (pt. 2 C); LB 51, p. 298 (pt. 2, C); 5038/85; 18952/85.

74. Patterson to Atkins, 6/18/86, 16483/86. The change in agents will be discussed later. Weidemeyer to Atkins, 9/1/86, 25639/86. J. W. Upson to Frank Hiscock (House of Representatives), April, 1886, 16523/86. Atkins to Hiscock, 6/23/86, LP 1, p. 439 (pt. 2, M). Hiscock to Atkins, 11/1/86, 29235/86. Also 28676/85.

receipts for the store amounting to \$16,360.50 from August, 1886, to March, 1887.⁷⁵

The other licensed trading post on the reservation was located at Tse-a-lee ("the spring that flows out from two rocks"), about fifty miles north of Fort Defiance; it was started by S. E. Aldrich, probably related to Senator N. W. Aldrich, and his partner (E. S.?) Clark, in the spring of 1885. In the summer of 1886 Clark was succeeded by A. S. Sweetland in the firm, and during that same year the gross receipts were \$10,947.47.⁷⁶

About thirty-five miles west of Fort Defiance, at Ganado or Lu-ka'nt-quel ("place of water reeds"), John Lorenzo Hubbell had opened a trading post in 1876, eventually staking out a homestead, and was considered one of the most successful traders in the business.⁷⁷ Thomas V. Keam at Keam's Canyon and about fifty other stores off the reservation completed the array of places where Navajo products found their way to market in the 1880's.⁷⁸ While the white men struggled for licenses and competed for business, the suspicion lingered in the mind of the Indian that the cards were stacked against them in the game of barter and sale. "In all the complaints that were made, the evils of certain trading posts were those which most grieved them now."⁷⁹

75. Patterson to Atkins, 3/1/87, 6844/87. Cotton to Morgan, 11/23/87, 32361/87. Also 29235/86, 31914/87, and LB 1, p. 132 (pt. 2 M). Frank Hiscock to Atkins, 11/1/86, 29235/86.

76. LB 1, p. 479 (pt. 2, M); LB 49, p. 2 (pt. 2, C); LB 50, p. 100 (pt. 1, C); 18952/85, 7889/86, 17562/86, 6844/87, 14201/87, 748/85.

77. John Lorenzo Hubbell as told to John Edwin Hogg, "Fifty Years an Indian Trader," *Touring Topics*, vol. 22, no. 12 (December, 1930), Los Angeles, Calif. Also 5603/86, 18952/85.

"Out here in this country the Indian trader is everything from merchant to father confessor, justice of the peace, judge, jury, court of appeals, chief medicine man, and *de facto* czar of the domain over which he presides. For nearly half a century I've been known locally as The King of Northern Arizona." *Ibid.*, p. 24.

"Moreover, his [Hubbell's] influence and power through five decades have been greater than that obtaining with the governors of many of these United States. A modern frontiersman he was indeed." The Editor speaking, *Ibid.*, p. 25.

78. Bowman to Commissioner, 8/19/85, 18952/85.

79. H. O. Ladd to Editor, 9/9/87, *Daily New Mexican*, 9/14/87. Mr. Ladd had visited the Navaho and met with them in council.

Meanwhile another change in agents occurred at Fort Defiance. The brief tenure of Bowman was due to entanglements with too many women, one of whom had followed him from Colorado and produced a rupture between the agent and his wife. The agency staff divided in their attitude toward this situation. R. R. Aycock, the agency clerk, and G. P. Sampson, the doctor, were the chief critics and accused the agent of malfeasance in office, immorality in conduct, and of allowing his female friend to operate a boarding house in the school building with the aid of government supplies. Aycock in turn was accused of clerical incompetency and Sampson of being a quack. S. E. Day, agency farmer, and Stewart the blacksmith were allies of Bowman. Inspector Pearsons was sent to the scene and made a report favorable to Bowman: "He is energetic, resolute and quick man." Bowman, meanwhile, had offered his resignation, effective preferably December 31, 1885, and became manager of a cattle ranch at Navajo Spring.⁸⁰ In a subsequent investigation, Special Indian Agent Parsons exonerated Bowman of charges of dishonesty and forced the resignation of Dr. Sampson who had a medical diploma, but was "in no way qualified for the practice of the healing art."⁸¹

The successor of Bowman was S. S. Patterson of Newton, Iowa, a Civil War veteran, a "fine lawyer & a Democrat," and a partner of J. C. Cook, attorney for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company.⁸² He enjoyed a period of quiet following the scandal in agency affairs, but it was only

80. Geo. R. Pearsons, *Extract from Report on Navajo Agency*, November, 1885, 29696/85. Patterson to Atkins, 12/4/86, 32718/86. Also AD 209, 173/84.

81. Wm. Parsons, *Reports*, 6047/86, 11814/86, 11992/86, and 12446/86. Sampson to Patterson, 4/10/86, 10926/86.

Other documents pro and con are 2007/83, 28453/85, 28676/85, 7429/86 (attached to 8076/86), 12446/86, 6335/86, 688/86, 22478/85.

C. M. Jeanes declined an appointment as additional farmer because of unfavorable conditions at the agency with the ambiguous statement that he expected to make some money but could not do so under the present agent. Jeanes to Atkins, 11/29/85, 29178/85.

82. Atkins to Secretary of Interior, 12/21/85, AD 253. Cook to Benton McMillan (House of Representatives), 7/8/88, 20157/88.

the lull preceding the storm. The usual difficulties eventually raised their heads.

In the summer of 1886 a Navaho was killed in Gallup by Wm. Davis, a herder for Frank Ritz, in a dispute over a horse. A detachment of troops was sent from Fort Wingate to prevent further trouble. After a two hour conference, the Indians agreed to accept \$80 worth of supplies from Ritz, payable to the family of the deceased. Patterson swore out a complaint against Davis and had him bound over for grand jury investigation, intending to make an example of the case in order to prevent such incidents in the future; cowboys, he thought, were "too free in the use of revolvers which they always carry."⁸³

The following winter a shooting occurred in the neighborhood of Houck's Tank, about forty miles south of Fort Defiance. The constable served a warrant on a Navaho for horse stealing, but was dealing with the wrong party, one who was returning an estray and not the real wrongdoer. Instead of making sure of his party, the constable, in the popular conception of Western behavior, shot first and talked afterwards. Before the melee ended, the constable and probably two assistants were dead, the Navaho was also dead and another one badly wounded, if not mortally so. A detachment of cavalry was rushed to the scene, but nothing more came of the matter; the white men apparently felt that they were in the wrong this time.⁸⁴

In the summer of 1888 the whiskey problem raised considerable excitement. The Navaho were getting unusual quantities of liquor, or else the traffic had been conducted

83. Patterson to Atkins, 7/28/86, 20821/86.

84. O. O. Howard to AG, 2/14/87, 4650/87. Patterson to Atkins, 2/15/87, 5110/87. Lieutenant Grierson, *Report*, 2/28/87, 7454/87 and 5246/87.

"There are undoubtedly horse thieves among Navajos as well as whites, and a number of worthless men of both classes lounge around the same towns begging, stealing, and gambling." Col. R. S. La Motte to AAG, 10/15/87, Fort Wingate, Post Letter Book No. 3, p. 250.

The acting agent reported in the spring of 1887 that white men ran off about 150 to 200 horses from Ganado Mucho's place and the Navaho went in pursuit. Ben C. Ford to Patterson, 3/21/87, 7911/87. Patterson was in Washington, D. C. at the time.

too secretly for officials to notice it. The publisher of *The Gallup Weekly Register* complained to the commissioner that whiskey was sold in unlimited quantities to the Indians at Cabezon, in the upper Puerco valley, and that it was a "growing and dangerous evil." Patterson was instructed by commissioner Upshaw to investigate and punish the offenders. Meanwhile the agent requested the sum of \$250 to hire detectives to secure evidence against them, and also asked for a company of soldiers to be sent to the agency to aid in breaking up the traffic.⁸⁵ An attempt by the Navaho police and ten cavalrymen to arrest a half-dozen Indians for bringing liquor to the reservation was met with resistance by 100 or more Navaho. The outcome of this particular episode is not clear, but some Indians were put in jail at the agency and one seller indicted. Patterson claimed that "the whiskey traffic is completely wiped out among the Indians in all parts of the reservation," but this was over confidence in the long range view; it was not believed by Colonel Carr, nor by one of those hardy women characters found on the frontier who wrote: "If the right man is sent here I will put him in possession of facts that will largely be the means of suppressing the[whiskey] evil."⁸⁶

While the whiskey traffic remained *in statu quo*, that is, business as usual, the problem of the boundary line and the Navaho living off the reservation continued to ferment. The Indians took advantage of the change in agents to press for an extension to their reservation. The whites, on the other hand, and particularly the authorities of Arizona

85. A. M. Swan to Commissioner, 7/6/88, 17320/88. Upshaw to Patterson, 8/21/88, LB 176, p. 428 (L D). Fort Wingate Post Letter Book No. 3, pp. 317, 321. Patterson to Commissioner, 8/18/88, 21367/88.

86. Mrs. H. C. Mason to Commissioner, 10/15/88, 26296/88. Patterson, *Annual Report*, 9/1/88, 50 Cong., 2 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, p. 192 (2637). Carr to AAG, 9/10/88, Fort Wingate Post Letter Book No. 3, p. 330. Also 22124/88 and 21936/88.

Speaking of Mrs. Mason, "She is not much for 'polish' but she is what we call on the frontier, 'a good rustler.'" Riordan to Commissioner, 3/6/87, 6779/87. She had tried to secure the trader's license for Chinlee, "you know a sturdy woman can do more towards civilizing those Navajos than fifty men such as they send out here from Washington." Mason to Riordan, 3/6/87, *ibid.*

territory, were urging the removal of all Navaho on to the reservation; even the territorial legislature memorialized the government to that effect; and the sheriff of Apache County seized Indian horses for non-payment of taxes, an action that Patterson advised his charges was legal.⁸⁷ Patterson favored the viewpoint of the whites on the grounds that the influx of settlers and the growth of towns had led to a condition of constant friction with the ever-present possibility of serious trouble. The reservation area, he thought, was sufficient for their support, particularly because of a current project for water development.⁸⁸ The Washington authorities decided that it was advisable to send out a special investigator before taking action.

After spending about three months studying the problem, Special Agent Welton reported that the Navaho advanced the following propositions: the boundary should be extended westward to the Little Colorado River, the southern boundary marked off with a wire fence, and a qualified official sent to allot lands; in return, the Indians agreed to locate within the boundary lines of the reservation (except those who received allotments in non-reservation land), while reserving the privilege of going off the reservation for trade.⁸⁹ This report produced no change in the situation and before anything further could be done another agency upheaval occurred, due to scandal connected with the water development.

When Special Agent Parsons visited the reservation in April, 1886, he recommended the appropriation of \$50,000 for the development of water resources which he believed would make possible a living for all the Navaho within the limits of their own country. Commissioner Upshaw favored the policy; artesian wells, he stated, had proved successful in southeastern New Mexico, furthermore, the Navaho too

87. Patterson to Atkins, 7/1/86, 18213/86. Arizona Legislative Assembly, *Memorial*, 2/3/87, 4550/87.

88. Patterson to Atkins, 2/25/87, 5750/87.

89. H. S. Welton to Commissioner, 7/8/88, 18372/88. Also Atkins to Secretary Interior, 4/6/87, LB 158, p. 213 (LD).

little understood the white man's land system and the working of the homestead law to solve their problem by that device. Congress appropriated, not \$50,000, but the modest sum of \$7,500 in 1886 and again in 1887.⁹⁰

The project was quickly started and in the course of the first year fifteen springs were opened and improved, five dams and fourteen reservoirs constructed, and nine ditches excavated.⁹¹

In view of the size of this project and the favorable report at the end of the first year, substantial progress toward the economic betterment of the Indians seemed to be under way, but unfortunately evil machinations were going on behind the scene. The first symptom of trouble occurred when the agency physician, Dr. William A. Olmstead, was discharged June 4, 1887, at Patterson's request on the ground of incompetence and trouble making in general. The dismissal was probably justified, but the doctor complained to the commissioner that Patterson secured his dismissal because he feared a possible investigation of agency affairs.⁹²

During the following winter, friction developed between the school staff and the agent; the superintendent, matron, and one teacher requested an investigation of agency matters on the ground that scandalous reports had been spread to discredit the complainants and that drinking and gambling occurred at the agency. The upshot of this affair was the suspension of the superintendent by Patterson late in March.⁹³

The more serious consequence of the trouble lay in the

90. Parsons, *Report*, 4/27/86, 12532/86. Upshaw to Secretary Interior, 5/27/86, LB 148, p. 422 (LD).

91. Patterson, *Annual Report*, 8/23/87, 50 Cong., 1 sess., hse. ex. doc. 1, 256 (2542).

92. Olmstead to General A. B. Upshaw, 10/20/87, 28520/87.

Eight employees preferred charges against the doctor. One quoted the doctor as saying that Patterson was incompetent and that "*Hell was full of such Agents*," and that he (Olmstead) had come to make money "and by g-- d-- he was going to make it." 14181/87.

Olmstead had been appointed agency physician September 11, 1886.

93. 2625/88, 4511/88, 7906/88, and 9127/88.

appearance of Special Indian Agent H. S. Welton in March, 1888. He soon reported evidence of payroll padding on the water improvement project; furthermore, the agent had never seen the work in progress, and Indians were hired at \$1.00 per day and charged fifty cents by Patterson for board. He recommended that work be suspended, a step that was taken promptly by Commissioner Atkins.⁹⁴ Patterson left for Washington in April, probably to clear himself from pending trouble. During his absence, the agency clerk Ben C. Ford, was in charge, but proved to be too fond of liquor to suit Mr. Welton who put pressure on the clerk to resign. Mr. Ford was reluctant to resign, so the special agent took the matter up with the commissioner, stating that

*Disipation was not alone, the cause of my desire that Mr. Ford should resign. A suit brought, to recover the Thousands of Dollars of "irrigation funds" fraudulently taken, would necessarily develop facts (now in my possession) that would most seriously and criminally implicate Mr. Ford, which is not desirable unless necessary.*⁹⁵

Mr. Ford protested his innocence, but he was dismissed as of May 26.⁹⁶

The initial report to Washington in regard to the water project was not sufficiently specific to prove wrongdoing against Patterson, and Welton was instructed to sift matters to the bottom. In the report concerning Ford, however, Welton laid himself open to sharp criticism. His job was to investigate and report findings; he had presumed to pass judgment on the question of prosecution, which, he wrote, "is not desirable unless necessary." The commissioner promptly corrected that attitude: "Your duty as Special

94. Welton to Atkins, 3/31/88, 9154/88; Atkins to Patterson, 4/7/88, LB 92, p. 281 (pt. 2, AD).

95. Welton to Commissioner, 4/29/88, 11615/88.

96. "I am innocent Genl Upshaw and the victim of spite and malice I have been made the victim of an old cranky and malicious Special Agent." Ford to Upshaw, 6/30/88, 17847/88. See also 11838/88, and LB 93, p. 198 (pt. 1, AD).

Ford had been nominated for the job of clerk on December 20, 1886, and presumably started work early the following year.

Agent is to report . . . without fear, or favor, or regard . . ." to results.⁹⁷ Welton had little time to make any more reports; his services were unsatisfactory and another investigator was sent to the scene.⁹⁸

The next investigation produced ample information to terminate Patterson's career as agent. In the first place, T. D. Marcum, the new special agent, found dissatisfaction among the Indians. They called their agent the "old woman" because he moved slowly, and also the "man who smells his mustache." And other sources confirmed this frame of mind. Old Manuelito complained to the commander at Fort Wingate that he had been thrown into the guard house at the agency because he had called Patterson a dishonest man and a liar: "When a man is lying with a sharp stick or stump running in his side, it irritates him. That is how I feel about this matter," Manuelito said. And the vigorous minded observer of Navaho affairs, Mrs. Mason, took her pen in hand to testify:

Since S. S. Patterson has been here they have had no Agent. John Bowman was poor enough because he was careless, but this man Patterson is a curse to the Country as well as to the Indians.⁹⁹

Marcum meanwhile rendered a detailed report on his findings, an exposé that could be defined simply as embezzlement. The payrolls had been padded, false abstracts of expenditures of property had been issued, government

97. Atkins to Welton, 5/7/88, LB 93, p. 395 (pt. 1, AD). Upshaw to Welton, 5/5/88, *ibid.*, p. 390.

98. "It would seem that Special Agent Welton is too impulsive, is governed more or less by prejudice, lacks good judgment and discretion, misuses his official authority, and is even not altogether free from malice in his investigations and reports. . . ." Atkins to Secretary of Interior, 5/15/88, LB 93, p. 94 (pt. 2, AD).

The new investigator recommended the dismissal of Welton. 25781/88.

Another employe of the agency was dismissed in June. He held the positions of blacksmith, carpenter, chief of police, and postmaster. His protest illustrates the patronage system: "know that you strike one who served near four years in the Union Army, a pensioner. One who served four years as Sheriff of Keokuk Co. Iowa. A Democrat, with a standing in Iowa, that the melicious assaults of my enemies can not effect." H. C. Adams to Commissioner, 6/21/88, 16181/88.

99. Colonel F. A. Carr to AAG, 9/30/88, 26651/88. Mrs. H. C. Mason to Commissioner, 10/15/88, 26296/88.

property at the agency illegally used, and a private boarding house for laborers had been operated with the government paying the salaries of the cooks. All told, Marcum figured that \$8,692.83 expended on irrigation works "is virtually a waste of public funds," and that Patterson owed the government \$4,298.29. The superintendent of construction and an accomplice in the payroll padding, S. E. Marshall, had been approved for appointment as additional farmer for one month in the summer of 1886 with the following instruction to Patterson: "you will not submit his name for any position at your agency, in the future." Marshall was appointed nevertheless to the construction job in January, 1887. Apparently he had influence some place.¹⁰⁰

Needless to say Patterson was dismissed from the service. Ten years later his accounts were finally settled and he was indebted to the government in the amount of \$829.87 on a/c of "Public moneys and property unaccounted for."¹⁰¹

A most promising project for the economic betterment of the Navaho had come to a dismal end. The peace time problems that confronted the government and the Navaho had not been solved in the course of a generation following the return of the Indians from their enforced sojourn on the Bosque Redondo.

100. T. D. Marcum, *Report* (synopsis), 9/20/88, 25404/88. Concerning Marshall, see Atkins to Patterson, 9/3/86, LB 79, p. 66 (pt. 2, AD); also LB 83, p. 460 (pt. 1, AD), and LB 82, p. 264 (pt. 2, AD).

101. Auditor to Secretary of Interior, 3/22/98, Appointment Division, 258. Commissioner to Secretary of Interior, 11/1/88, 26651/88.