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A Political History of the Navajo Tribe. By Robert W. Young. Tsaille, Navajo Nation, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1978. 174 pp. \$9.00.

According to Broderick H. Johnson, past editor of the Navajo Community College Press, Robert W. Young provides his readers with "an objective outline of the historical antecedents underlying the present Navajo tribal organization" (p. ix). An aura of restraint, however, surrounds more than just the scope of the work. The editor rather than author writes that "it is not the author's intention to disparage historical figures...who played an important role in the political history of the tribe" (p. ix). It is indeed unfortunate that Johnson and, by inference, Young equate the historian's craft as little more than outlining in narrative form. Criticism, analysis, and authoritative judgment incorporated into rich narrative are regarded as disparagement. Consequently, some bothersome doubts arise concerning the value of a book that becomes excessively biased through the timidity of its author and editor. The fault may lie not in the author's intentions nor the editor's perspicacity, but in the limits apparently placed upon Young by the editors working in behalf of a college press whose existence is at the sufferance of a tribal council. Young has had a long association with the Navajo as trained linguist and a participant in the development of the tribal council itself. But in his refusal to involve himself as an historian in any controversial subjects, he has squandered a splendid opportunity to increase our understanding of non-Navajos.

Young claims that one of his reasons for tracing the political development of the Navajo Tribal Council has been his desire to reconstruct "this intense and sometimes violent drama through Navajo eyes, reflecting Navajo rather than Anglo-American motivations" (p. xi). Accordingly, his four chapters become instead four "Acts." Drama and violence, however, are only alluded to in the narrative. Discerning readers must seek elsewhere explanations to the controversies that troubled tribal affairs, especially those of this century.

Throughout the text, the author transmits an overriding sense of unity among Navajos, despite much evidence to the contrary. Other historians have focused attention largely on the growth of Navajo self-government, yet few have been as reluctant as Young to analyze that growth within the context of a changing federal Indian policy as well as within the context of tribal factionalism.

Although Young glosses over the untidy subjects in tribal history and overstates the "rugged individualism and love for personal liberty, so long characteristic of the Navajos" (p. 31), his approach has some merit. The brevity of the book is at once its greatest strength as well as weakness. Its strength can be found in the author's synthesis of disparate sources into a tightly written summary of Navajo pre-history.

Young begins his book with an incisively written review of pre-Columbian "tribalism" extracted from Navajo legends. Balanced against these tradition-based accounts are the recent works of anthropologists and ethnohistorians. Young analyzes the leadership and authority of the headmen (*Naat' áani*) and the periodic ceremonial assemblies (*Naachid*) in the life of the tribe. The legends of the tribe, the recollections of his aged informants, and the recent works of scholars, Young explains, "all point to the Navajo Tribe of former times as a group of people sharing a common language and common way of life, but not as a political entity organized under centralized leadership for a common purpose" (p. 16). Young's opinions are refreshing. He calls attention to the discrepancies within his own and other accounts and avoids offering conclusions where there are none. Although he remains cautious while other authors have been lavish in their praise of incipient Navajo tribalism even in ancient times, he does not derogate from those cultural attributes of political organization that later contributed to political development. Young uses this lengthy introduction to reinforce an appreciation among readers for the difficulties encountered by the Navajo during the nineteenth century. Only their cultural identity sustained them in their struggle to survive when neither government nor geography provided succor.

Tribalism, as the author suggests, was a response by the Navajos to the exigencies of the moment. Lacking any centralized authority that could speak for the tribe in its negotiations with the federal government, or that could assume the responsibility for enforcing treaty provisions within the tribe, the Navajos fell victim to the policies of a mercurial Indian bureau that remained unwilling to support tribal government where its own governmental interests were not directly involved. Sadly, the Bureau of Indian Affairs down to the 1930s conferred authority on tribal leaders only when such authority could be used to transfer some new concession in land or resources to either the Interior Department or some special interest.

Young's blending of secondary accounts with oral tradition, especially in the first chapter, compares favorably to the more specialized analysis in Mary Shepardson's, "Navajo Ways in Government: A Study in Political Process," *American Anthropological Association, Memoir 96*, Vol. 65, No. 3, Part 2 (June, 1963). Shepardson has written in less detail than Young in her sketch of Navajo political organization that antedates the Treaty of 1868. For example, she only mentions the *Naachid* (written as *natcit*) to dismiss it as insignificant. Unlike Young she has placed greater emphasis on selected cultural attributes, and particularly familial relations, to explain everything from political participation of individual Navajos to the structure of the tribal council. Although Shepardson and Young reach essentially the same conclusion about the lack of centralized authority before the late nineteenth century. Young's book provides certain concessions to the general reader. Unlike certain anthropological works, it is not encumbered by jargon.

It is in his analysis of twentieth century tribalism, however, that Young fails as a historian. Although *A Political History of the Navajo Tribe* is the only general summary of Navajo tribal organization from pre-history to the present, much of the necessary detail, even for an "outline," is missing. The Interior Department created the tribal council in 1922 principally for awarding exploratory rights to mineral resources on the reservation. It was not until the 1930s and John Collier's tenure as Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the tribal council gained significant jurisdiction over tribal affairs and administration of the reservation even though the Navajos refused to ratify the Indian Reorganization Act.

The author relies heavily on Lawrence Kelly's *The Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy, 1900-1935* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968). Young, however, sidesteps many of the controversies that beset the tribe at the time of reorganization. Passions stirred by only one of many controversies, stock reduction, extended well beyond economics. Kelly has shown that stock reduction alone had as much to do with cultural transformation as it did the livelihood of individual Navajos. Kelly's account, therefore, remains the superior source for both federal Indian policy as it affected the tribe, and the growth of Navajo tribalism in the first part of this century.

Part of Young's reluctance to swim in troubled waters, again, may be his desire to avoid offending anyone, especially those Navajos still living who survived the factionalism of the New Deal de-

cade to emerge as the leaders of the tribe in the years since Collier's reforms. Young creates an illusion of unity and consensus among the Navajos and their leaders where none obviously existed. A reader has only to consult the recent work of Donald Parman, *The Navajos and the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), to gain a richer understanding of the extent of factionalism in one decade, and the significant victories of the Navajo Tribal Council despite internal bickering and external badgering.

The author ends his book with a reference to an earlier visitor among the Navajo during the last century who remarked about the "unwearing patience they . . . display in all their work, and their zeal and quickness to learn in everything which may improve their condition" (p. 165). The recent emergence of the tribe as a strong political entity, and the development of the Navajo Tribal Government, Young concludes, would certainly vindicate this visitor's evaluation if only he could suspend the laws of time, space, and the grave to travel again through Navajoland. One may as easily imagine what some future reader might think if he had only Young's work to rely on for the history of Navajo political development. The reader will learn that the tribal council was born by decree, and matured in adversity, and eventually prevailed as a means to self-determination sometime during the 1960s (the last decade examined). He will have the outline of events, but not the history.

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Navajos and World War II. By Keats Begay, et al. Tsaile, Navajo Nationa, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1977. 153 pp. pap. \$6.50.

Far too little has been written about American Indian participation in World War II. Though a few significant acculturational studies were published by John Adair and Evon Vogt in the late 1940s, much of what has been written since then is superficial. A thorough historical treatment of the epoch is long overdue. The historian who undertakes an in-depth analysis of American Indian contributions during World War II will make a significant contribution to the literature on the war itself as well as to the field of American Indian studies.