

Conducting the Decennial Census on the Navajo Indian Reservation 1990 and 2000

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Navajo

The Navajo Indian Reservation is the largest American Indian Reservation in the United States and has been the site, both in 1990 and 2000, of the only Local Census Office located wholly on a reservation. Today the reservation consists of a 26,897 square mile land area with a population of 155,214 and is located in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

History

The Navajo Indians form the largest tribe on a reservation in the country. The Navajo refer to themselves as *dine'*, which translates to "The People." The word "*dine*" gives those who are members of the tribe a very strong sense of belonging with others who speak their unique language and a sense of separation from others who do not speak the language and who are not members of the tribe.

Historians place the arrival of the Navajo in the area they currently inhabit around 1000 AD. It is believed that Navajos were greatly impressed with and influenced by the town-dwelling Pueblo Indians of the Southwest. Through myth and folk tales, the Navajo considered the town-dwellers to be wealthy and sophisticated peoples, with awesome powers in their religious ceremonies. Legend says the Navajo arrived on this earth by escaping the four underworlds, and that on earth the Holy Ones created four mountains which form the boundaries within which they would inhabit. The land between these four sacred mountains is generally the area the Navajo inhabit today.

By the time of the Spanish-Mexican period (1626-1846) Navajos are referenced as "agriculturalists," no longer a migratory people. In the 1600's and 1700's Pueblo Indians came to live with the Navajos, some taking refuge during uprisings, others fleeing famine and drought. By the time the first English speaking Americans had contact with the Navajos, they were herders and weavers as well as agriculturists.

In 1846 the United States took possession of the Navajo lands, and over a fifteen-year period numerous military operations were conducted against the Navajos, with army posts being established on the Navajo land. During the Civil War, the Navajo and Apache took advantage of the U.S. army's

preoccupation with the war in the south and raided settlements along the Rio Grande River. In retribution for these raids the U.S. Government sent Colonel Kit Carson in 1863 to Navajo country with orders to destroy crops and livestock. The land was pillaged, Indians were killed, and all Navajos were to surrender at Fort Defiance. By the winter of 1864, a substantial number of Navajos had given themselves up and were ordered to walk to Fort Sumner, a distance of more than 300 miles. Eventually there were more than 8,000 Navajos in captivity at Fort Sumner. After signing the Treaty of 1868, Navajos were allowed to return to their land, but when they returned their buildings had been destroyed, their flocks removed and they had no seed with which to plant crops.

The treaty also made provisions that every Navajo child between the ages of six and sixteen must attend and reside at a school teaching an "English education." The Treaty of 1868 set the stage for federal control of the tribe, and put the reservation in a position of dependency. Even today, there is distrust, cynicism and resentment toward the US government over many of the policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Navajo Tribal Government

At the time the United States government took over administration of the tribal lands, there was no unified political structure or any single leader or spokesperson. Instead, each clan had a person designated as a "speechmaker" who was chosen by the clan, and could be removed at any time by the clan. The first formal government was established in 1923, which consisted of a tribal council and six delegates. This formal structure was created so there would be a "government" in place to lease reservation lands to oil companies. Another reason this government was established was that the Treaty of 1868 required three-fourths of the tribe consent to any "ceding" of reservation lands.

At the same time the government was established, chapters were formed where local people could discuss common problems in their areas. Over the years these chapters have become very powerful and unifying in providing local leadership to be elected to serve on the Tribal Council. Each of the 110 chapters elects a president, vice president, secretary-treasurer and a grazing committee member every four years.

Today the Tribal Council is an elected legislative body consisting of 88 members elected to serve four year terms. This council meets four times a year to discuss and debate

issues, to draft legislation, and to address problems and opportunities on the reservation. There are twelve standing committees which take care of any business between full council sessions. The President is elected to a four-year term, and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Nation.

Culture

Culture refers to the way people in a distinct area, or with a unique language and customs, are different in their life ways than other people. Therefore, culture consists of habitual and traditional ways of doing things, of thinking, feeling, and reacting to events at any point in time.

Within the Navajo culture there are sixty clans, and a child is born into their mother’s clan. Their religion, and their lives revolve around a desire to have beauty, perfection, harmony, goodness, normalcy, well-being, blessedness and order. The Navajo outlook on life is that they are “one with the universe,” not just “a part of the universe.”

After studying American Indian values, a group of social scientists presented a summary of core values of Indians and Non-Indians to the American Public Health Association Meeting in 2001. Some of the items from this study are shown below, contrasting some of the more significant cultural differences in Indians and Non-Indians.

Non-Indian Values	Indian Values
Individualism	Extended Family/Clan/Tribe
Competition	Cooperation
Progress/Success	Generosity/Sharing
Youth	Respect for Age
Getting Ahead	Modesty
Freedom	Social Networks/
Efficiency	Patience
Ownership	Community Property/Land
Asking Questions	Watching/Learning

Many of these differences in values actually fly in the face of the Non-Indian culture, and seem contrary to the “American Way.” However, not taking these differences into account has caused much of the misunderstanding and mistrust between Navajos and Non-Navajos. Indeed, these differences had to be taken into account to gain cooperation and to achieve success on the census enumeration of the Navajo Reservation.

Steps taken included hiring managers for the Local Census Office and partnership specialists who were Navajo. These individuals were knowledgeable of the values, customs and ways of the people, spoke the language, and had grown up on the reservation. They knew the tribal politics and government, the clan system, the religion, the area, the roads, the chapters, and were respected in their own nation. Census Bureau regional managers then listened to suggestions, ideas and proposals from these Navajo representatives, and

modified Census procedures and operations as they could to obtain a quality census count on the reservation. Regional census managers consulted with tribal officials on plans, time lines and procedures. Establishing and maintaining good two way communication was critical to an accurate census on the Navajo reservation.

Census Background

For the first six censuses (1790-1850), Indians were excluded from the census count due to the constitutional mandate to exclude “Indians not taxed” from the count. In 1860 Indians who were considered to be assimilated based on land ownership, were officially counted in the census. Not until 1890 did the Census Bureau attempt to conduct a full enumeration of all Indians. Since 1960 the Census Bureau has relied on self identification for reporting race rather than by observation of the census enumerator which was the method prior to 1960.

1990 Census

In 1990 a District Office (same as the Local Census Office in 2000) was opened on the Navajo Reservation. One of the complexities faced during that census was the system requirement to hold the integrity of state lines for enumeration rather than reservation lines. This caused enormous problems with census listing maps for a reservation which spans three states. In addition, there were problems processing payrolls for individuals working on the reservation living in different states. Payrolls were actually paid out of different District Offices in 1990 because of the state boundary issues.

While the 1990 Census on the Navajo Nation was considered to be a success, there were a number of recommendations that were made after the 1990 census that were considered for the 2000 census.

Some of the key recommendations made by the Navajo Nation, and the results of those recommendations are shown here:

- * Recreate a Complete Count Commission for Census 2000.

Result: A very active and successful Complete Count Commission was formed and active for Census 2000 on the Navajo Nation.

- * The Navajo Nation should fund the Complete Count Commission and other support programs for the next census.

Result: The Navajo Nation did fund the Complete Count Commission, and helped fund a census meeting in Gallup, NM prior to the beginning of census activities for all chapter officials.

- * Help identify space for a local census office early in 1999.

Result: Space was located on the reservation, but it did not meet current building standards. The Census Bureau had to lease a modular office building and have it moved to a highly visible location in Window Rock, AZ.

* Set up a support program to help Navajo census workers with gasoline money.

Result: The Denver Regional Census Center worked with Census Headquarters to provide gasoline money to workers prior to receiving their first pay check. This helped the Bureau retain workers and maintain a steady flow of work on the reservation.

* Each chapter (110 total) should be required to support the next census.

Result: Census staff worked with chapter leaders in each of the 110 chapters to obtain a signed resolution supporting Census 2000.

* Work more closely with the tribe on recruiting, hiring and training. The tribe should be notified of progress of each census field operation.

Result: The Bureau kept the tribe informed of progress in recruiting, hiring and training as well as field operations in 2000 through periodic updates to the Tribal Council by the Local Census Office Manager. In addition, the Local Census Office Manager and the Partnership Specialist kept the tribal liaison informed of progress on recruiting, hiring, and training and field operations on a regular basis.

* Maps should be reviewed for accuracy by the tribe at least twice before census enumeration.

Result: Chapter representatives were given a chance to review all census address listing sheets and maps during the 1998 Address Listing operation. The tribe was given a second chance to review maps and listings in 1999 during the Local Update of Census Addresses.

Partnership

One of the early goals of Census 2000 was to establish partnerships at every level to insure that we were able to rely on people who were close to the community, particularly with the hard to enumerate population. One Census Partnership Specialist was hired by the Census Bureau to work full time on the Navajo Nation. Her primary job was to get the word out to all individuals living on the Navajo Nation about the importance of participation on Census 2000.

Working in partnership with the Complete Count Commission, materials were translated into the Navajo language, and interviews were conducted on radio in the Navajo language reaching many houses in remote areas. Posters and printed materials were placed in all chapter

houses, schools, and other community gathering places throughout the reservation. Signs and billboards were placed in strategic areas and paid advertisements were placed in newspapers and on radio in the Navajo Nation. The Partnership Specialist and Local Census Office managers spoke at chapter meetings and over a six-month period obtained resolutions of support for the Census 2000 from all 110 chapters.

Early in 1999, the Navajo Nation entered into a Memorandum of Understanding between the tribe and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. This memorandum of understanding defined the tribe's desire to maintain a good working relationship prior to, during, and after the decennial census. It clearly defined the roles of the tribe, and of the Census Bureau.

The Navajo Nation Complete Count Commission was authorized more than \$80,000 from the Navajo Nation general fund in 1999 and 2000 to meet goals and objectives for a successful census count on the reservation. The Complete Count Commission spearheaded an effort to bring together leadership from all 110 local chapters, as well as school board membership, in a census tribal conference in November 1999. This Navajo Nation Tribal Leadership Conference drew more than 200 participants from the local communities. The Director of the Census Bureau, Dr. Kenneth Prewitt, was the keynote speaker, among the many speakers and presenters at this two-day event. The event was financially subsidized by the Navajo Nation and was considered to be a great success in promoting the census on the reservation.

In the fall of 1999, the Census Partnership Specialist prepared a booklet in conjunction with the Office of Dine Culture, Language and Community Service for all enumerators entitled, "Census 2000-Navajo Cultural Awareness Overview." This booklet stressed the significance of being aware of values and principles that guide the lives of Navajo families. This overview included sections on In-House Sensitivity, the Door Step Approach, Background on the Census, and an Appendix which included the short form questionnaire translated into the Navajo language.

Tribal Liaison

The Census Bureau established a Tribal Governments Liaison Program to assist with a variety of programs on Census 2000. The Navajo Nation appointed an individual to work as the Tribal Liaison. This individual assisted the Complete Count Commission and the Local Census Office with outreach and promotion, with presentations to tribal officials, and in identification of media outlets to reach the Navajo population. He also reviewed and updated census maps and listing sheets, reviewed and corrected tribal boundaries, monitored for the tribe progress of all field operations, assisted with the Tribal Leadership Conference, and helped with the tribal "Were You Counted?" campaign.

Space Leasing

A looming crisis existed in locating a Local Census Office on the Navajo Nation land. Leasing specialists from the General Services Administration (GSA) and from the Census Bureau scoured the Window Rock, AZ area for leasable space. Unfortunately, the only space that was available for a commercial lease did not meet standards (fire, safety, etc.). The solution was to lease a modular building and have it moved onto tribal lands. The Navajo Nation Complete Count Commission helped locate a very strategic and visible plot of land on the major east/west road through Window Rock located on the tribal fair grounds. Tribal officials expedited paperwork to make this lease a reality. In addition, the Census Bureau established a sub-Local Census Office to be located on the Western side of this massive reservation in Tuba City. The Complete Count Commission worked with the tribe to locate a small office to be used as a base for field operations in the western portion of the reservation. This sub-office was opened in December 1999.

Recruiting

The success of any large scale field operation depends on a large pool of applicants for the jobs. Large scale recruiting efforts took place in each of the 110 chapters of the Navajo Nation, beginning in October 1999. Recruiting Assistants were hired to work throughout the Navajo Nation. They attended fairs and rodeos throughout the Navajo Nation, prepared floats for parades, spoke to chapter officials about recruiting, put up recruiting posters in public places, visited and spoke to teachers and school officials and passed out recruiting flyers and cards to Navajo people.

To fill an estimated 1,500 positions, our goal was to recruit about 7,400 applicants for census jobs. Over the course of the recruiting efforts, more than 140 testing sites were used on the reservation and more than 7,600 applicants were tested for census jobs. This testing, although usually conducted in public places, occasionally included testing in individuals homes to make sure we tested all interested applicants. Ultimately, more than 2000 persons were hired from this large pool of interested applicants.

Address Listing

During the 2000 Census, most of the land area of the Navajo Reservation was covered at least twice on the ground by census field workers during the listing operation and the census enumeration. In 1990 there was no Address Listing operation prior to the census enumeration.

The first operation to list housing units on the reservation took place during the summer and fall of 1998 when we conducted the Address Listing operation. At that time, more than 300

field staff listed all the places people lived, or could live on the reservation. The Bureau also updated maps to reflect new or deleted road and other features that were not shown on the maps. Each place where people lived, or could live were "map spotted" on the Census maps, and then geocoded into our master address file. In the spring of 2000, census enumerators used these maps and address lists to visit each place people lived or could live and enumerated the inhabitants during an operation titled Update/Enumerate.

Reviewing Maps and Location of Housing Units on the Reservation

The Local Update of Census Address program (LUCA) took place in 1999, following the completion of the Address listing in 1998. In addition to the regular LUCA program, the Bureau instituted a special review process where each of the 567 address areas that were field listed in 1998 were reviewed, first by the crew leader, then taken by the crew leader to the chapter house to be reviewed by sworn chapter officials to make sure the address listing was complete and accurate. This would allow chapter officials to use resources in the chapter house, such as maps and lists of people living in the chapter boundaries, to check the Bureau's map-spotted maps and address listings and indicate where we may have missed housing units.

Update/ Enumerate

During the Update/Enumerate operation, maps were updated and new housing units or missed housing units from the address listing of 1998 were map spotted and added to the address registers. The census enumerator conducted the census enumeration at each of the housing units on the reservation. The Census Bureau therefore had two passes on the ground to find all housing units.

During the 1990 Census there was only one pass of each housing unit during an operation called List/Enumerate. This 1990 List/Enumerate operation called for the enumerator to list housing units on an address register and map spot the unit, then enumerate the unit, all at the same time. It is believed that this change in methodology in 2000, allowing for an address listing in 1998, a review of the lists by chapter and Navajo Nation officials in 1998 and 1999, greatly improved the coverage of housing units and the overall enumeration on the Navajo Reservation.

Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation (A.C.E.)

The Census Bureau conducted the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation (A.C.E.) program, an independent evaluation of the accuracy of the decennial census throughout the nation. This large scale survey was conducted to determine the number of housing units missed, and in household errors on the decennial census. There were five major operations of A.C.E. including a Listing of Housing Units, Housing Unit Followup, Person Interview, Person Interview Followup and

Final Housing Unit Followup. During the largest field operation on A.C. E, Personal Interview, there were about seventy enumerators working on the Navajo Nation.

Hopi Partition Lands

The Hopi Reservation, encompassing 2,439 square miles in northeastern Arizona, is considerably smaller than the Navajo reservation and is bounded on all sides by the Navajo Reservation. The Hopi Indians have lived on their lands longer than the Navajo and have had an uneasy history with the Navajo. Navajo and Hopi have lived on lands surrounding the Hopi Reservation known as the Hopi Partitioned Lands (HPL). This 1.8 million-acre area of land has been involved for the past century in controversy and court battles. This history dates back to the establishment of the Hopi Reservation in 1882 during the administration of President Chester A. Arthur. Over the next eighty years there was a continual problem with allotments of land, Navajo encroachment, government response to trespassing, and court battles.

Finally in 1974, the Navajo Hopi Land Settlement Act was passed with the intention to correct the historical problem. This act ordered 10,000 Navajo and 100 Hopis off of each other's lands, and provided for a significant financial settlement as well. This relocation of population took place shortly thereafter, and was the largest population relocation since the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Not all Navajo families left, and a number of Navajo families still were living on these lands at the time of Census 2000. Those families that had not signed a 75-year accommodation agreement (which said they agreed to leave the HPL in 75 years) were to leave the land in 2000, or be removed. The Navajos who had not signed the agreement are referred to by the Hopi government as "resistors." The Census Bureau worked with the Navajo and Hopi governments to develop a way to count the Navajo population living in this area. There was a real concern that the potential for non-cooperation and even violence existed by those Navajo resistors who were residing in the HPL.

The methodology agreed to by the tribes, and jointly coordinated by the Window Rock, AZ Local Census Office (Navajo) and the Flagstaff Local Census Office (responsible for enumeration of Northern Arizona including the Hopi Reservation) was to provide team enumeration of the HPL. The team consisted of a Hopi enumerator and a Navajo enumerator, along with a monitor from the Office of Hopi Lands, and a Navajo guide. This four-person team would then enumerate residents of the HPL. This operation started in March 2000 and was completed successfully without incident in April 2000.

Census Results

Many of the modified procedures, the partnerships, extra recruiting and outreach activities outlined in this paper were also implemented on the other ninety one (91) American Indian Reservations in the Denver region. It should be noted that more than 77 percent of all American Indians living on reservations reside in the Denver region. All of the extraordinary activities to better count American Indians paid off in a much improved count in 2000. Of the total population in the United States of 281.4 million persons, about 4.1 million, or 1.5 percent of the population were American Indians. The American Indian population increased faster than the total population of the nation. About four out of ten American Indians live in the west. Approximately 79 percent of all respondents who reported themselves as American Indian reported a tribal affiliation. According to results from Census 2000, Navajo Indians comprise the second largest group of American Indians in the country. Reviewing tribal affiliation where American Indian tribal grouping was reported alone, there were 281,069 Cherokee Indians and 269,202 Navajos in the United States. The total number of Navajos counted was up by 61,871, or 28 percent from the 1990 population count of 219,198.

The estimated net undercount of American Indians from Census 2000 was 3.44 percent which is a significant improvement in the undercount of American Indians in 1990 of 4.5 percent. In 1990 it was estimated that the undercount of American Indians living on reservations was 12.2 percent. The preliminary estimate of the undercount of American Indians living on reservations in 2000 was 4.7 percent. This represents a tremendous national improvement in the census count from 1990 to 2000.

Suggestions for 2010

A thorough debriefing of staff was conducted after Census 2000 to determine areas of improvement for 2010 on the Navajo Reservation. Managers, the partnership specialist, and the tribal liaison were debriefed.

All parties believe that the Update/Enumerate field operation was a success in 2000, and should be used again in the future. This was thought to be a much better way to enumerate the population on the Navajo Reservation rather than the List/Enumerate methodology of 1990.

However, confusion was caused in some small areas that had other types of enumeration on the reservation. There was a List/Enumerate operation in a portion of the Alamo Chapter of the Navajo Nation in Socorro County, NM (less than 600 housing units). There was an Update/Leave operation where maps from 1998 Address Listing were updated and census questionnaires were left at the households for about 3,500+ housing units in McKinley, Cibola and San Juan Counties in NM. These households were to complete the questionnaire and return it by mail to the processing office. A little more

than one-half of these households in Update/Leave did not complete and return their census questionnaire, so enumerators were hired and trained to complete the Non-Response Followup operation in these areas. For the 2010 Census, it was recommended that the entire reservation have the same type of enumeration, and that enumeration would be Update/Enumerate, or something similar to that type of enumeration.

There was concern that pay rates were lower on the Navajo Nation (Window Rock, AZ) Local Census Office than in the surrounding Local Census Offices of Albuquerque, NM and Flagstaff, AZ. This issue should be reviewed and addressed prior to 2010.

Maps were a big concern on Census 2000. Because of vast distances involved on this reservation, it was rather common for an enumerator to have hundreds of map sheets to review and to work one Assignment Area. These 8 1/2"x11" maps were very difficult to use because of the large number of map sheets that were required to make up a single assignment area. It was strongly suggested that in 2010 we should use, if possible, a single large map sheet for a single assignment area.

The President of the Navajo Nation prepared and submitted a proposal to Census Headquarter to establish a Data Center for the Navajo Nation. The Census Bureau has since established a Census Information Center (CIC) on the Navajo Nation. The Denver Regional Office has assisted in efforts to train staff, to provide expertise in using data products and to conduct basic data analysis.

Other key recommendations about the 2010 Census made by the Navajo Nation and the Complete Count Commission included:

- Designate a permanent Tribal Liaison two years before the decennial count.
- Authorize necessary funding for the 2010 Complete Count Commission and Convene the Complete Count Commission one year before the decennial count (May 2009). Provide matching grants to support the commission activities.
- Assure participation of the Navajo Nation leadership.
- All chapters should be mandated to assist the Census Bureau in 2010.
- Provide a Tribal Leadership Conference in all five agencies in the Navajo Nation.
- Establish a permanent Census Office on the Navajo Nation.
- Reestablish a Local Census Office in Window Rock, and expand sub-offices to all five agencies.
- Provide more funding for local advertisements geared toward the Navajo population.

- Allow more time for cultural sensitivity and doorstep approach training, and develop more enumerator training geared toward working in remote and rural areas.

Summary

By all accounts, Census 2000 was a success on the Navajo Nation. The Census Bureau must continue efforts to improve the government to government relationship with the Navajo Nation and work toward an even better census count in 2010.

(This paper report the results of research and analysis undertaken by Census Bureau staff. It has undergone a Census Bureau review more limited in scope than that given to official Census Bureau publications. This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress.)