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from the Dominican monastery until 1575. The *Real y Pontificia Universidad de Mexico* lasted without much interruption until the period of the French Intervention. Then it was closed for many years; became the *Universidad Nacional de México* in 1910; and in 1929 was chartered as the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*. The University of Lima became the *Universidad Mayor de San Marcos de Lima* in 1574, and has continued ever since, with major interruptions only during the War for Independence and again just a few years ago.

In final summary one can say that, of the New World institutions of higher learning, the College of Santa Cruz was first founded and opened; the University of Michoacán has had the longest history; the University of Lima probably has been open the most years, has been at her present site longest, and has retained present form of name longest; and the University of México has had the greatest number of students, graduates, and faculty members and was the first to actually open of the formally constituted universities. The most famous internationally of old New World institutions have been: Santo Domingo (1538, 1558), México (1551, 1553), San Marcos de Lima (1551, 1571), Bogota (1571, 1573), and Quito (1596). Nevertheless, the palm for antiquity goes to Michoacán. Incidentally, the Mexican government has recently issued a set of stamps commemorating the founding of the Michoacán institution. Among these stamps are five-, twenty-, and forty-cent airmail, and the ten-cent regular—all of which bear the inscription "IV Centenario del Primitivo y Nacional Colegio de San Nicolas de Hidalgo. El Mas Antiguo de America 1540-1940."

A NAVAJO MYTH FROM THE CHACO CANYON

GRETCHEN CHAPIN

A short myth, basic to Chaco Canyon and so located whenever and wherever it is told over the Navajo Reservation, is the Gambler story. When the Navajo relates with what finesse Gambler won all bets but one, and how the pueblos were built to pay off gambling debts, it can be imagined that the old ruins of Pueblo Alto, Pueblo Bonito, Peñasco Blanco, Shabik'eshchee, Chetro Ketl, and Wiji are re-peopled. That the Gambling God is an important figure in Navaho mythology is evidenced by the space accorded him in Washington Matthews' Origin Legend.¹ "Some time before, there had descended among the Pueblos, from the heavens, a divine gambler, or gambling god, named Nohoilpi, or He Who Wins Men (at play); his talisman was a great piece of turquoise. When he came he challenged the people to all sorts of games and contests, and in all of these he was successful."² The

1. Washington Matthews, "Navaho Legends," *Memoirs of the American Folk-lore Society*, vol. 5, 1897. E. Stechert and Co., New York, pp. 81-87.

2. *Ibid.* p. 82.

Matthews version, with its characters, action, document, and finale, is an admirable pattern upon which to impose variations, as they may some day be catalogued, by locale. This paper may serve as a step in that direction.

Perhaps the Chaco interpretation is the true one, by reason of birth; however, to dig so deep, one needs much more time and *entr e* than can be managed in a month's field work. In addition, Gambler and all his fellow-gods, as well as Coyote and all his "cousins," are temporarily buried and forgotten each summer, and to tell of them is to invite striking lightning or rattle-snake bite to oneself or to any member of one's family. The restriction was sufficiently alive that only one out of five informants dared to break it, in favor of Gambler. This was done unwillingly, by resorting to a sort of pseudo-safety that rested in intermittent omissions in the course of the story. Money failed to loosen their tongues in regard to Gambler, although all the informants were willing to exchange bits of the great number of Coyote tales for silver.

Of the five informants, all of whom knew the Gambler story but refused to tell it in summer, the obliging one was an extremely intelligent Navajo and an accomplished interpreter. He was forty eight years old, belonged to the Sour Water Clan, and learned the story from a Navaho now dead, who belonged to the Black Sheep Clan and who knew Hunting Way and Game Way. He was reluctant to tell the Gambler story, and, in an attempt to sidestep it, he threw out the suggestion that a story of La Fajada, a prominent sandstone butte in the Chaco, might do just as well. He perhaps felt that he would avoid danger if he told only a portion of the stories he knew, for he prefaced his account of Gambler with promises of gaps here and there in the continuity of the tale.

It is as follows: The time was way back behind the time when the Navaho started to live on the earth. Gambler lived in here at Chaco, at Pueblo Alto, away by himself so that he could keep his gambling tools, his hoops and sticks. He had a good home to keep these things all to himself. No one else knew how to play with them. There were four games that he could play, the three-stick game, the hoop and two-long-stick game, the ball game, and the seven cards in a basket game. The ball was made of wool covered with buckskin.

There were people living all around, to the east, north, west, and south, and they had some things of their own to bet with. Gambler gave his games to the people. The three-stick game was given to the women and it is called the women's game. The men have nothing to do with it. The other games belonged to the men.

Some of the people lived down in Chaco Canyon below Pueblo Alto, and they raised different kinds of plants. They were farmers. One family, the Rabbit People, wanted to play with Gambler. They started first and were beaten. Then each family of all the Animal People played with Gambler and lost. The women played with Gam-

bler's wife and they were beaten too. That is the way they had been playing and losing until they had nothing left to bet with. Even their food was gone.

Some of the Holy People wanted to play with Gambler. So they started in and bet with all different colors of turquoise, blue, black, red, and other colors. And they had other things to bet with. (The informant didn't wish to name them.) But the Holy People lost. Then the Animal People wanted to play and bet one person at a time, so they started in again. Soon Gambler had won ten people, then more and more. He won a lot of people but he couldn't afford to feed them. He sent them to Pueblo Bonito in the canyon below. He told them to build themselves homes, so all the people began to build walls and rooms at Bonito, Chetro Ketl, Peñasco Blanco, Wijiji, and Shabik'eshchee. They ate wild seeds and ground them on four flat stones. There were two on each side of the canyon on top of the cliffs. The chaff that was left from the grinding turned into little flat stones and rocks which are along the bottoms of the cliffs today.

The people continued to lose every day and every night when they played with Gambler. It was because he always had something in his game that the Animal People didn't have, so he always won. In the three-stick game, Gambler had three sticks made of three different kinds of lightning. He had a big snake in the hoop and two-long-stick game, and his circles were always made of turquoise. When the people played with Gambler they played under a cover of buckskin or a blanket, for it is dangerous to play without a top. When Gambler had won all the people, the Holy People began to think among themselves. They wanted to win back all the people and everything that they had lost.

There was still another way by which Gambler had been winning. He had four race tracks, one up canyon, one down canyon, one to the north, and one through the gap to the south. Both the Animal People and the Holy People had lost when they had raced with Gambler. When Gambler found out that the Holy People wanted to bet again, he suggested a game to take place on the north track. He drew a starting line and at a distance from it he put up a covered hoop with a small hole in the middle of it. He bet the Holy People that they couldn't throw a ball through the little hole. Before the game started Gambler got together some weeds and let all the people smell of them. (The informant wouldn't tell what kind of weeds, for he said it was bad to know them and even worse to know how to use them.) They all went a little bit crazy. They didn't have the mind that they had had, and they wanted to play all the more. So all the Animal People and the Holy People and Gambler went out to the race track. Gambler threw his ball first and it didn't go through the hole, for the people had made him crazy too. His legs were stiff and he said, "Oh, I'm not feeling very well." But the people paid no attention and prepared to throw their ball. They had made sure that they would win, for they

had asked Shrew to get inside the ball and they had left two tiny slits for him to see through. When they struck the ball slightly, Shrew hopped forward toward the hole and went through it easily. Gambler's ball had not gone through the hole because the people had tangled it with cobwebs. The bet was that if the people's ball went through the hole four times, all the Animal People would be returned to the Holy People and all their possessions would be given back. Since Gambler had agreed to all this, he lost everything except his home when the Holy People won the bet. He was very angry.

The Holy People met together and said, "We must do something to get rid of him, for he will do something else to harm us." So they chose a plant in the shape of a long reed and decided to shoot him straight up into the air. They told him, "We'll put you some place where you will have something good to start with again." All Gambler could say was yes. All the people gathered together and shot him like a bullet into the air. Just before he disappeared from sight he spoke a word that sounded to the people like a white man's word. And the Navaho believe that the white people began with Gambler in the new home that he was shot away to. After Gambler had gone, the Holy People sent the Animal People away, some to Jemez, some to Zuñi in the south, some to the west of Hopi, and some north to Utah and Colorado. And that is why the white people will never find many bones in Chaco Canyon, for the people went away in the four directions.

Just at the time that Gambler was shot away into the sky, the people saw an old woman and a little boy in the northeast. They invited them to come into their village and they stayed four days. Then the people didn't want to feed them any longer, and chased them up on top of the cliff. The old woman was mad. She took an arrowhead and pushed it four times into the cliff until she had split a large piece of rock away from the face of the cliff. She wanted to make it fall down on the people and destroy the village. The Holy People warned her not to do it, and told the Animal People to fill the crack with tiny grains of turquoise and shell right away. They told them also to give the old woman four baskets full of turquoise and shell with a pile of cornmeal on the top of each one. Then they asked, "Are you satisfied, old woman?" She agreed not to do anything more and to go away, but there was so much she couldn't carry it all. She was forced to leave behind a pile of cornmeal, and said, "That will turn into sand—it will be used as days go on." And that is what we see today in the shape of the sand dunes in Escavada Wash. The old woman and her son went away and never returned, and the people in the canyon moved out to the east and the west and the north and the south.

An example of the distaste on the part of the informants to impart mythology in summer was the particular kind of evasion practiced by one old woman, who counted off the usual pitfalls of lightning and rattlesnake and bear-bite, all of which would be eliminated as soon as the frost hit the corn. She was alert, industrious, and a

matriarch unquestioned, who belonged to the Bitter Water Clan. Though she observed the taboo almost perfectly, she told, after explaining that it was so small it could do no harm, a fraction of the story of Pueblo Bonito, more for her own enjoyment than for my information. This impression was created by the part she chose to tell, with an added moral. With no good intent, she began: It is of the time when people were living in Pueblo Bonito. The rock began to split and the people were afraid that it would fall on their village. They saw one day an old woman walking back and forth along the edge of the cliff above them. They asked her if she could do anything to stop the rock from falling on them. She said, "Bring up to me two baskets full of blue turquoise. I will drop it down in between the cliff and the rock that has split away. Then bring me two baskets full of white shell and I will drop that." The people took the four full baskets to the old woman who did as she had promised. And the rock was firm after that. But the Navaho believe that the rock is again falling away from the cliff because the people who are digging in Pueblo Bonito have stolen all the turquoise and the shell.

This paper has meant to record one variation of the Gambler story, which will be of value when the same tale is gathered from widely separated parts of the Navajo country and comparisons and conclusions may be drawn. The recording is presented with the full realization that it can produce only statements of provincialism; it is known by all the informants and it is taboo in summer. How the story fits into the whole body of Navajo mythology the author has not pretended to answer, nor could anyone presume to do so until more informants and additional territory have been reached. Boas sets forth the law of such investigation: ". . . we now desire that each tale be obtained from several informants and from several places, in order to gain an impression of its importance in the tribal lore, and to insure the full record of its contents and of its relations to other tales."³ The Gambling God merits such treatment from the hands of more ethnologists than have noticed him.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article by Gretchen Chapin (now Mrs. Alden Hayes) is based upon information gathered in connection with the ethnography course taught by Dr. Leland Wyman at the August, 1940, Field School of the University of New Mexico, in Chaco Canyon. It was felt that the portions pertaining to the Threatening Rock would be timely in this issue since this rock fell on the 22nd of January. Also, see L. W. Wetherill and B. Cummings, "A Navajo Folk Tale of Pueblo Bonito," pp. 132-136, *Art and Archaeology*, vol. 14, 1922.—D. D. B.]

3. Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940. p. 452.