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"THE GOOD-BRINGING"

A Tale From the Hopi Pueblo of Oraibi

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the nature of an epilogue to the preceding document is the following account which illustrates the early relations between the Hopi Indians and the Spaniards at Santa Fé. It is the story of how an Indian of Oraibi was given the name of "The Good-Bringing."

The story is contributed by Mrs. Isis L. Harrington, of the U. S. Indian School at Albuquerque, as it was given to her by Robert Ermatewa, 16 years of age, and as he had heard it from his great-grandfather, the old man Loma-Week-Va-Yah, who died at Oraibi in 1926. A grandfather and a grandmother of Robert were two of the small children who were carried away by the "traders."

It would be interesting to know who the governor at Santa Fé was, but the story has no date and it can only be estimated that the affair occurred about a hundred years ago.

* * *

Long ago when I was a young man, and all the Hopis lived at Oraibi, there came to our village one evening many strange men. The men wore beards and were not Indians. They did not speak our language. They drove mules and rode horses. They made signs to tell us they had come to trade for baskets, sheep and other things.

I remember how I watched the strangers as they ate the food set before them by my pretty young wife and the other women and girls. I wondered where such men lived. They stayed in our village two days, seeming to be much interested in our people and sheep. The second evening after supper the visitors lay down for the night. It was not a dark night, and from where I slept, near my house, I could see the men raise their heads often and look about them. I could not go to sleep, so I walked quietly out of the village and down by the water-hole. I do not know how late it was, but as I sat there watching the moon slip down behind the high mountain, two of the strange men came down to the spring. I hid behind an old wall.

The two filled their water-bags and went on down the cliff trail. I ran back to my house. Everybody was up, and there was much noise. The strangers were robbing the houses. Some of the strangers held guns against our men while others drove some women and children to the sheep pens. The women were made to let the sheep out, and many women, girls, and a few men had to drive the sheep away.

When the sheep and the people whom the strangers had stolen were loaded into carts and gone for some time, the two men with the guns made our fathers look the other way while they dropped from the cliff and made off toward the east.

I returned quickly to my hiding place and watched them. I could hear their hard shoes on the trail as they hurried away, but soon there was no sound any more. I ran to my house. It was empty. My young wife was among the women carried away by the robbers. As soon as it was day my grandfather and two others went to the highest places to watch. They dared not follow, for the robbers had guns and would kill the women and children.

At evening when the watchers returned they had seen the yellow dust cloud rise far to the east and float on and on, then disappear.

That night we did not have any supper. We had food, but no one cared to eat. Even the little children pushed away the bread their fathers gave them. There was much crying that night, and in the darkness I slipped out of the village and ran for the house of a white man I knew who lived far off. I knew this was a good man, for he had come to the village to talk to us many times. I reached his house the second night, and told him what had happened at Oraibi.

This good man gave me food and water and made me lie down to rest till day should come.

I woke early the next morning. The man was writing something on a piece of paper. He folded the paper and slipped it into my belt, saying, "you are a brave man, and a good runner. You know how to hide yourself in the desert. You must go far, far to the south and east. There is a river to cross. It comes from the north. Cross that river and keep on for a half a day's fast journey more. There you will find a village. It is Santa Fé. Ask for the Governor. Keep on asking till you find him. Give him the paper."

The man tied some dried meat in a small cloth, fastened it to my belt, and I started off with the sun no higher than

my head. Day and night I ran, resting under a ledge or among the bushes when I grew too tired to keep up, and on again. The third day, as the sun stood at mid-day, I reached the river that came from the north. It was not deep, but wide. Green trees grew along its banks as far as I could see to north or south. I drank much, and lay among the willows to rest for a short time, then crossed the stream and went on. Keeping the sun at my back, I knew I was going in the right direction, and that I should come to the village by dark unless forced to hide from savage Indians, or other persons like those who had robbed my people. Such thoughts made my feet light and my eyes keen.

Leaving the beautiful valley through which wound the wide river and the cottonwoods, I climbed over a high range of mountains. From the top I had a last look at the sun half hidden in the west. I could see another tall mountain far to the east and took that as a mark to guide me. On I hurried, that darkness might not hide my mountain peak too soon.

Not far from the foot of the eastern range, I saw the village. I sat down among the dwarf cedars that grew all over the smooth slope I had just reached. I could see crooked trails leading into the village from all directions and soon found the one to lead me in. Then I waited.

When it was dark and quiet, I walked along the trail that led to a large square place in the middle of the village. Around this square were thick-walled, low houses that looked like the ones at my home. A few men walked back and forth along the sides of this square. They carried guns as the robbers had done. I dared not let them see me, so I slipped from one dark corner to another until I was behind the long, low building that stood on the north side of the square. From a small opening in the back wall of this building came a dim light. It was the only light I could see. I crept toward it, keeping close and flat to the ground. Before I reached the light I came to a door. I pushed it open. A woman such as I had never seen before looked up as I came in. "Governor, Governor," I whispered, pushing the door shut behind me. The woman said something. "Governor, Governor," I repeated.

She rose, at last, and carried the light into a distant part of the long house. I followed.

We came to a large square room. The woman set the light on a table and stepped out, closing the door.

On a bed near where I stood lay a man. As the woman stepped out he had risen and sat up. He was a kind looking man with large dark eyes and white hair. He spoke softly to me. I handed him my paper. He read it and called to the woman.

"Make this young man a bed," he said to her, as she came in, "and send my orderly to me." The orderly came. He was not Indian. He was like the robbers.

"Get this boy food," the gray-haired man ordered, "and see that he is cared for." Turning to me he said kindly, "we shall attend to your errand in the morning," and lay back upon his bed.

The night passed as an hour, and when morning came the orderly took me to eat in a large hall with many men. While we were still eating the kind man with gray hair came in. The men all stood up. I stood. They touched their foreheads.

"Return every Indian taken from Oraibi," said the white-haired man to one nearest him. "Escort them back to their own grazing ground. Pay for the sheep with bacon and sugar. Send the robbers to the guard-house." Then the old man touched his forehead, turned quickly and was gone.

It took but a few days for the fast traveling mules to bring us to the valley below Oraibi. There the drivers let us out of the noisy wagons, turned about and disappeared.

The people in the village ran down the cliff to meet us. Not one of those carried away was missing.

In the council house that night my old name was taken away. No more was I to be Quots-ku-ya-va-yah, as I had been, but Loma-week-va-yah, meaning in our language, "The Good Bringing."

The deepest mark on that tall cliff there shows the time. Every rainy season since I was a boy I have made one mark. There are fifty-eight now.