# The People

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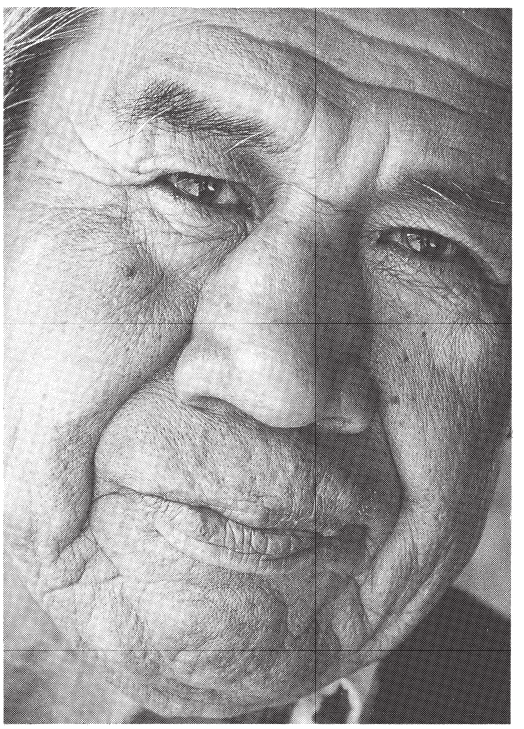
# Words and Photographs by Stephen Trimble



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# The People

## Indians of the American Southwest

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FOR ALL MY RELATIONS

especially for my daughter, Dory Trimble,

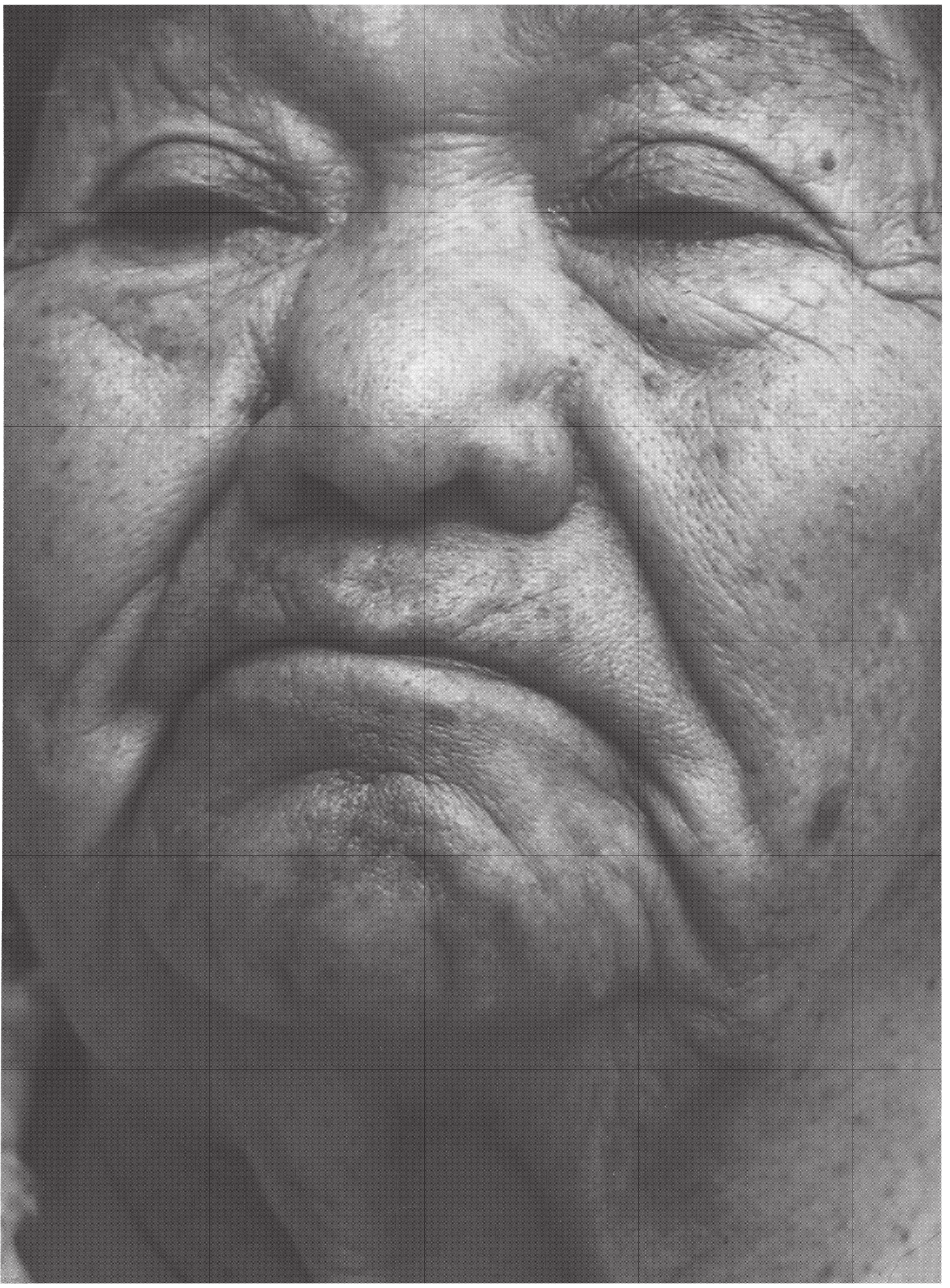
her mother, Joanne Slotnik,

and her grandmothers,

Isabelle Trimble and Beatrice Slotnik,

in whose strength and love live our family's

past, present, and future



Being Indian, from Acoma to Pine Ridge, Tahlequah to Tacoma, Wounded Knee to the Hopi mesas, upstate New York to down-home Ohio, would seem, finally, to be doing something about seeing or being or defining oneself Indian. It can be working with Headstart children from farming communities to urban poverty areas. It can include bringing goods and concern to the old ones, staying to listen to their memories and wisdoms. Being Indian is as much behavior and attitude, life style and mind-set, as a consequence of history or bloodline . . . Being a "now day Indi'n" would seem, as with most positive human values, more active than passive, although the past obviously informs tribalism through cultural continuity and a sense of common heritage.

Dawson No Horse told his people, gathered in a Lakota *yuwipi* ceremony the summer of 1981 at Wakpamni Lake, Pine Ridge Reservation: "We're gonna make it as we go along, generation to generation, addin' on an' addin' on."

Kenneth Lincoln, *Native American Renaissance*, 1983

# Contents

# Preface

This book, despite its heft, is an introduction. I am an outsider and a student, not an anthropologist. I came to Indian Country to listen and have tried to learn from both the words and the silences. I write for other beginners, for nonspecialists.

While reading about and listening to Indian people over the last ten years, I have been astonished at my own ignorance. Though I have lived in the Four Corners states all of my life, remarkably little about the Indian peoples of my home ever reached me. The dominant culture has other stories to tell. It has been an honor to have this opportunity to construct for readers a story about the People from what I have found in libraries and from what Indian people have wanted me to hear.

Native words for tribal groups usually mean "The People" or "The Human Beings." Hence my title for this book. Today, the People call themselves "Indians" more often than they use the term "Native Americans," and so I use this misnomer without apology.

The vitality of the People is exhilarating. They remain fiercely dedicated to preserving their lands, their families, and their ethnicity. Even with all of the challenges they must deal with — economic, cultural, social — I have no doubt that in one hundred years, the Indians of the Southwest will remain unique and distinct. I believe that is a good thing.

The Southwest. We all have unique images triggered by these words: secret places, memory-laden smells, piquant tastes, unforgettable people. Where does this place begin, where does it end? Anthropologists have one definition, historians another, and naturalists still another. Every defining factor changes with time. Look at Southwestern peoples in A.D. 1200, and one boundary seems to make sense. Look at tribal territories interacting with Spanish colonialism in the 1700s, and another definition results. History unreels, people move, and cultural geography evolves.

To define the Southwestern landscape, begin with its rivers. They flow from the mountains to the sea — and in doing so, make sense out of a major sweep of the continent. Two great river systems, the Colorado and the Rio Grande, flow through the arid lands. Rivers, mountains, climate, and vegetational history define the limits of agriculture, forming yet another boundary for the region — one with powerful meaning for native peoples.

The River of the West, the Colorado, tumbles down from the Rocky Mountains in a red torrent and plunges southwestward toward the ocean. The River of the East, the Rio Grande, arcs away from the Colorado Rockies and then runs due south, bisecting New Mexico. Trace the basins drained by these rivers and their tributaries, and much of the Southwestern landscape is clear. Desert lands away from the rivers include the harshest terrain on the continent. The Southwest also contains peaks rising to fourteen thousand feet, crowned with near-permanent snow and alpine tundra — watersheds to the great rivers.

On the eastern boundary of the Southwest runs the Pecos River, leading south from the Rockies between the Basin and Range deserts and the beginnings of the flat inland sea of grass at the heart of the continent. On the western boundary, beyond the Colorado River, lies California, a different place.

The Southwest extends deep into Mexico. (Mexican historians would rephrase this: "The Mexican Northwest once extended north to the Grand Canyon.") The international border slices through desert basin and mountain range, bisecting the homelands of the Cocopah, O'odham, and Apache peoples. In this book, I focus on that part of the Southwest within the United States. This "American" Southwest omits the "other" Southwest's Tarahumara, Mountain Pima, Paipai, and many other Mexican native peoples with strong linguistic and trading ties north of the border. (Another Southwest definition, however, is "the area of close and continuous contact between Hispano-American, Anglo-American, and Amerindian" — a definition that excludes these Mexican tribes beyond continuous Anglo contact.)

On the north, some historians limit the Southwest by the northward limit of Spanish influence, though Spanish missions and place names, of course, reach to San Francisco. In *The People*, my boundary for the Southwest penetrates Colorado from New Mexico to include the San Luis Valley and the drainages south of the San Juan Mountain crest. In Utah, the Southwest includes the drainage of the San Juan River to its confluence with the Colorado River and southwestern Utah along the base of the High Plateaus. Southernmost Nevada hovers on the edge of the Southwest, with Las Vegas sitting smack on the boundary. Northward beyond this line, not only do Indian communities disappear for a long distance, but, historically, Hispanic influence is minimal.

Two cultural groups commonly left out of the anthropological Southwest live in this Southwest of *The People*. The Southern and Ute Mountain Utes skirt the southern foot of the Colorado Rockies. And Southern Paiute territory connects the north rim of the Grand Canyon and the High Plateaus of Utah with oases in the Nevada desert. Archetypal Southwestern places lie within Ute and Paiute homelands, both

historically and today — Las Vegas, Zion Canyon, Navajo Mountain, Glen Canyon, Mesa Verde, the Sangre de Cristo Range. I include these peoples here.

Change runs through the history of both Southwestern peoples and landscape. Southwestern deserts have existed for less time than humans have lived here. Once, Southwestern people hunted mastodon and mammoth and lived by wetlands where today there are only dry *playas*. Only later did they find it necessary to adapt gradually to the desert.

Today, the People adapt to the booming Sunbelt economy, to ever-challenging swings in federal policy, and to continuing ignorance (with the potential for paternalism and racism) on the part of many non-Indians. I hope this book can dispel a little of that ignorance blocking the path of Southwest native peoples by increasing awareness of their lives and hopes and dreams — and by recounting enough history to make sense out of the present. As I finished the book, I realized how many stereotypes and naive notions of my own I lost in the course of research; every issue was more complicated than it initially seemed.

My emphasis is contemporary; I do not include complete ethnographies of each tribe's pre-contact lifeways or extensive recounting of tribal myths. As readers will discover in the text, I have talked with several hundred Indian people in the fifty reservation communities across the Southwest, as well as in the region's major cities. I deeply appreciate the generosity extended to me when I showed up on doorsteps unannounced. I apologize to all of the members of these tribes I did not seek out or missed. I have tried to emphasize the positive statements made to me and avoid either romanticizing the People or ignoring the huge problems they face. As Stan Steiner said of his 1968 classic, *The New Indians:* "What I have written is not a study, but a book of people full of the truths and lies people tell." Those "truths and lies" are simply the stories every person tells in his or her own way. Other members of their communities would tell different stories. I try to provide a chorus of stories that, together, communicate the distinct personality of each people.

Though *The People* includes events through 1992, this book will inevitably be out of date even before it reaches your hands. The interviews span eight years, concentrated in the late 1980s. Economic plans change quickly; events like the 1990 flash flood at Supai in Havasu Canyon alter the course of tribal history in one afternoon. People leave jobs and move from state to state; *The People* provides a snapshot of their lives and homes at the moment I happened to intersect them. For further developments in Indian Country, read periodicals such as *High Country News*, *The Navajo Times*, and *The Indian Trader*.

I have tried to photograph with care, to refrain from taking advantage of people. Except for my photographs of participants in public events, I have received permission from my subjects. At the end of the four-day White Mountain Apache girl's puberty ceremony that resulted in the pictures in this book, I asked my companion, the late San Carlos Apache medicine man Philip Cassadore, whether it was really acceptable to publish these images. With a wry spark in his eye, he reassured me: I had a wordless model release from the entire community. "You took the picture there at the ceremonial ground in front of two hundred Apaches, and no one stopped you. If somebody is going to stop you, they'll stop you right there. Nobody stopped you; that means okay."

There will be Indian individuals and entire communities who will read this book and feel that I have divulged too much, that a white man should not be treading this territory; I regret offending them. And there will be Indian people who resent other members of their communities speaking about their shared culture, though virtually all the people I interviewed made clear that they spoke only for themselves. In interviews, I did not pursue such sensitive subjects as ritual and ceremony. If one of the People chose to share sacred aspects of culture, he or she did so, and I took notes. Hopi and Zuni people talk openly about katsinas; Acoma, Santo Domingo, or San Felipe Pueblo people would never talk about such matters with anyone outside the pueblo. In my text, I have tried to strike a middle ground. I know I have taken some risks. Everett Burch, language and education coordinator for the Southern Utes at the time I visited him, said to me: "We've given you a piece of our lives. You then have the responsibility to give something in return."

This book is my gift. I have done my best to honor my responsibility, to speak fairly. I cannot truly repay Southwest Indian people, but each year I share royalties from *The People* and from the annual calendar based on it with the Native American Rights Fund, the Indian Law Resource Center, and other organizations working to preserve and protect Native American rights through education, policy, and the law.

Several people, both Indian and non-Indian, deserve individual recognition. First comes my friend Robert Breunig. In 1984, Bob invited me to work on the audiovisual program that introduces the "Native Peoples of the Southwest" wing at The Heard Museum — a program that became the show and the book *Our Voices, Our Land*. That fieldwork — and Bob's guidance — introduced me to contemporary Indians in my home landscape, and *The People* grew from that initial experience.

I often found a pivotal teacher whose thoughtful words guided me in my search for the distinct spirit of each tribal group. Some of these teachers and scholars I have

only read, others I have interviewed once, and still others have become friends. Some, alas, are no longer with us. At times, local contacts, both Indian and non-Indian, took charge of my schedule to make sure I spoke to the "right" people. On the road, many friends gave me shelter and moral support.

For such help, the following individuals deserve special thanks: Barney Burns, Philip Cassadore, Steven Darden, Vine Deloria, Jr., Rick Dillingham, Jan Downey, Joseph Enos, Amelia Flores, Bunny Fontana, Bob Helmer, Richard Howard, Elbys Hugar, Peter Iverson, Joe Keck, Kathleen and Reed Kelley, Pat Mariella, Nancy Cottrell Maryboy, Kalley and Jan Musial, Gary Nabhan, the Nahohai family, Nora Naranjo-Morse (and the rest of her remarkable family, especially Rina Swentzell), Floyd O'Neill, Alfonso Ortiz, Malinda Powskey, Holly Roberts, Bertha Russell, Joe Sando, Susan Shaffer, Stan Steiner, Abby Stevens, Gregory Thompson, Gary Tom, Octaviana Valenzuela Trujillo, Tom Vigil, Dave Warren, Cindy and Philbert Watahomigie, and Verna Williamson.

I thank The Heard Museum and the School of American Research for permission to quote from interviews conducted under their auspices while working on previous projects. Bea Slotnik made it possible for me to work without interruption when she joined our household to await the birth of her grandson, Jacob.

For their time and care spent in critiquing early drafts of all or part of the text, I thank Keith Basso, Janice Colorow, Raymond J. Concho, Jr., Jennifer Dewey, Tony Dorame, Amelia Flores, Peter Iverson, David Lavender, Nancy Maryboy, Gary Nabhan, James Officer, Sally Pablo, Tim Priehs, Joanne Slotnik, Bill Sutherland, Gregory Thompson, Gary Tom, Don Trimble, Octaviana Valenzuela Trujillo, Harry Walters, Dave Warren, and Cindy Watahomigie. L. Edward Purcell edited the completed text with consummate professionalism; all writers dream of such intelligent and critical attention applied to their manuscripts. Joan O'Donnell applied her attentive eye to the last copy-edit, further improving the manuscript. Remaining misinterpretations, naivetes, and omissions, of course, remain my own.

I am delighted to once again work with Rich Hendel, the finest book designer I know. Ben Altman, in Salt Lake City, made the black-and-white prints of my photographs with care; I thank him for maintaining his cheerfulness and enthusiasm for this project through five years of running back and forth to my house. Deborah Reade loves maps as much as I do, and I thank her for caring about getting the details of our maps exactly right. T. J. Priehs, executive director of Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, originally commissioned this project; I thank him for his vision and trust.

From the moment he first heard about this project in The King's English

bookstore in Salt Lake City, James Freed, board member of the Quinney Foundation, has voiced his morale-building enthusiasm. I deeply appreciate his conviction that the book merited the foundation's financial support.

And lastly, to Jane Kepp, Joan O'Donnell, Deborah Flynn Post, and Peter Palmieri at the School of American Research Press: it was a thrill to have such care and expertise applied to my book during production. Thanks for understanding so clearly what I was trying to communicate after this long, enlightening, and satisfying journey.

Stephen Trimble
Salt Lake City

# Introduction

## WE ARE THE PEOPLE

From the doorways of hogans and cinder-block ramblers, elders still pray at dawn to the spirits of sacred mountains — here, Four Peaks in the Mazatzal Mountains, seen from the Fort McDowell Yavapai Reservation, Arizona, 1988.

*We have lived upon this land from days beyond history's records, far past any living memory, deep into the time of legend. The story of my people and the story of this place are one single story. No man can think of us without thinking of this place. We are always joined together.*

Taos Pueblo man, in an appeal for the return of Blue Lake, 1968

"We are the People. We were here." George Rocha, a middle-aged Hualapai man, smiled at me. "I'm real proud. I love this land. I've been back East. It's beautiful, it's green. But after three or four days I feel everything closing in. And when I arrive back in Arizona, especially back to the reservation, I feel real loose and comfortable.

"This is my land."

A modern map of the United States includes both large and small "Indian reservations" clearly distinguished from surrounding areas. Fifty of these Indian nations lie within the Southwest. Drive from Las Vegas, Nevada, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, from El Paso, Texas, to Cedar City, Utah, or from Yuma, Arizona, to Durango, Colorado, and you still can experience this land as an Indian land.

Imagine this Indian Southwest. Conjure the continent before these reservation boundaries. Imagine the grasslands unbroken and regularly burned. Imagine the forests huge, their plants and animals managed to increase the diversity and yield of wild foods. Imagine the rivers restored. Chant the litany of tribal names covering the land. The land regains, once again, its mythic and native proportions.

Native cultures multiplied and migrated, ebbed and flowed — covering the Southwest with a skein of stories that marked sacred places in forty languages. People wandered far beyond their homes, trading, visiting, and exploring. Choose most any nook or cranny of this land, and some hunter, fisherman, or seed gatherer knew its plants and animals. Native residents learned how to manage those wild beings to create an abundance of food, construction and craft materials, and habitat for other desirable creatures.

Today, Southwestern Indians remain vital, their lives rich. They make saguaro cactus fruit into ceremonial wine. They mourn their dead in the old ways. Sacred mountains stand in black silhouette above Indian homes; elders stand at dawn in the doorways of both hogans and cinder-block ramblers to pray to the spirits of those mountains. Rain clouds follow, in response to faith, respect, ritual, and receptivity — and the beat of the drum.

The People value their history, but they must forge a workable present to survive into the future. They are physicists, Episcopalians, and suburbia dwellers as well as shamans and farmers. Sometimes, one person may be all of these. Native peoples are

constantly challenged by the dilemmas of finding a livable path between two opposing worlds.

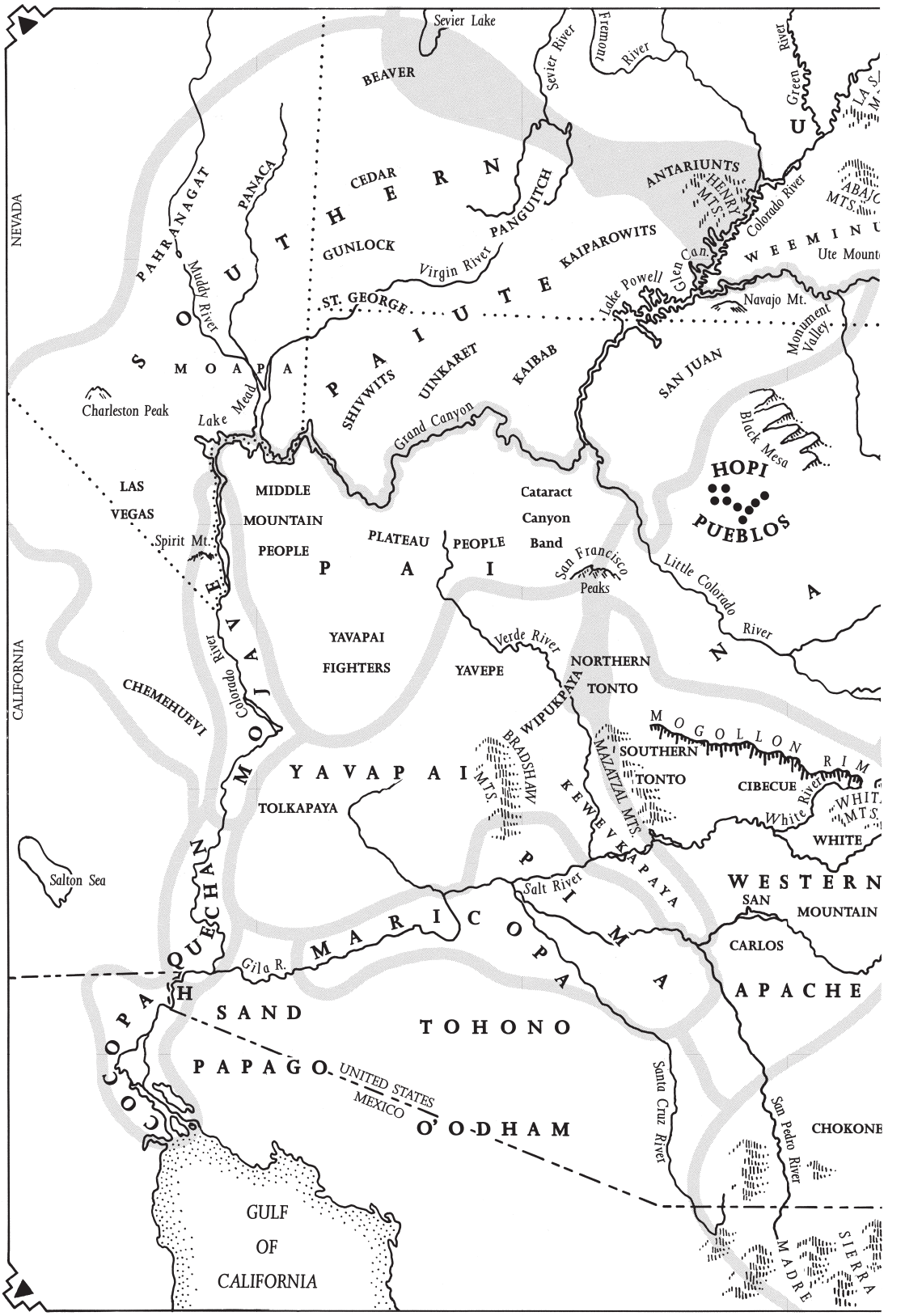
Landscape sustains them: plateau, mountain, and desert. Their ancient connection with *place* abides — an intimacy that helps define them as unique peoples. As Indian communities maintain and modify old lifeways while adopting new ones, the land continues to run through their days and their lives, helping to make them Indians of the Southwest.

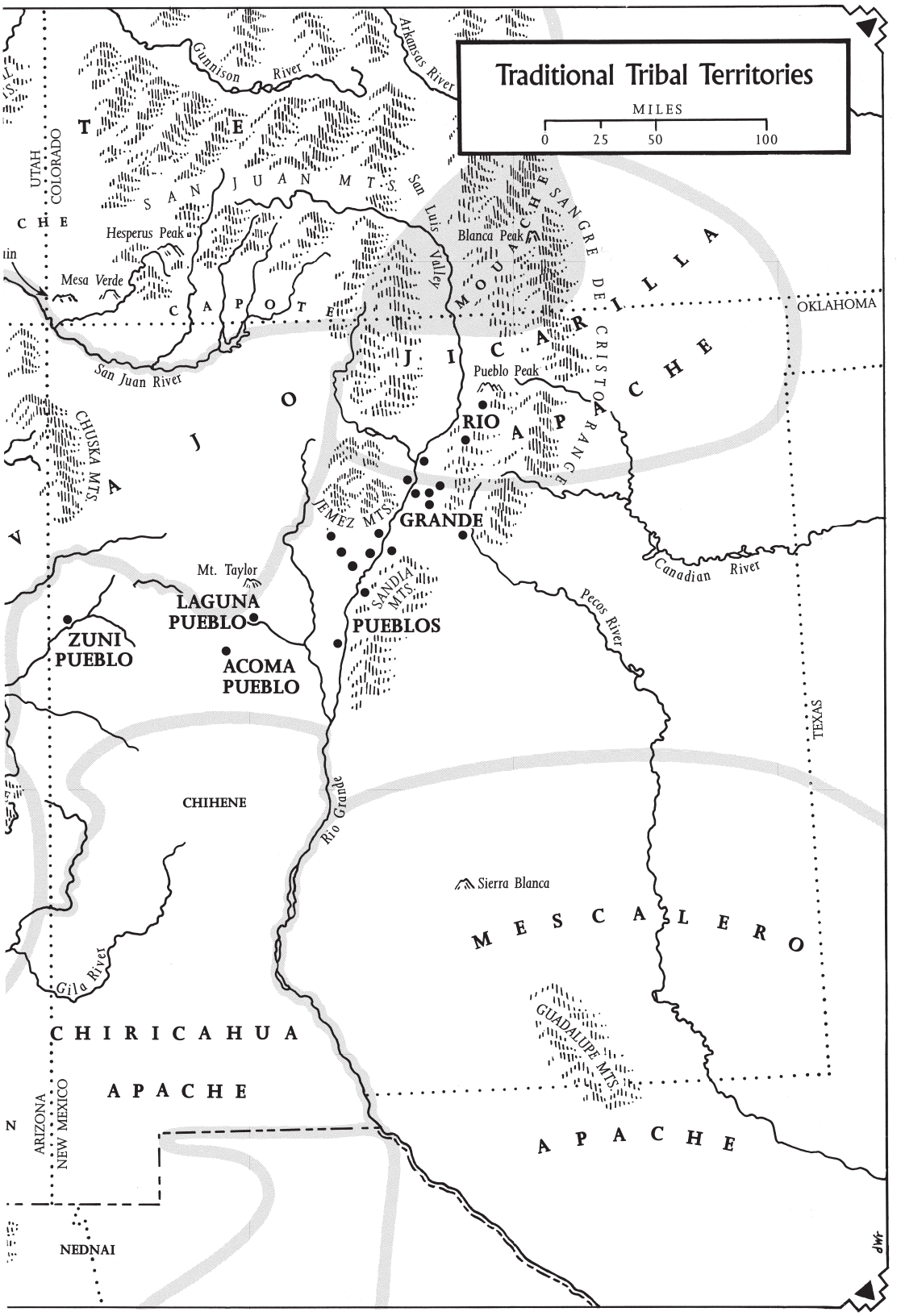
### Plateau, Mountain, Desert

At the heart of the Southwest lie the canyons and mesas of the Colorado Plateau surrounding the Four Corners. Here the village-dwelling Pueblo people span the continuum from prehistory to history to modern times in ancient villages: Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and the Rio Grande communities in New Mexico. Despite their sharing of culture, modern Pueblo people speak half a dozen different languages and live in more than thirty villages in twenty modern reservations scattered from Taos to Hopi (with one remnant southern village, Tigua Pueblo at El Paso). To their west, along the southern rims of the Grand Canyon, live the Pai, today's Hualapai and Havasupai, who speak a Yuman language. The Navajo, Athapaskan speakers who came late to the Southwest, perhaps about A.D. 1400, have made their home in the vast plateau lands between the Rio Grande pueblos in New Mexico and the Grand Canyon, filling in the wild spaces between the old villages.

Mountains rise on most every Southwestern horizon: islandlike from the northern plateaus, in a band of highlands across central Arizona and New Mexico, and from the low deserts of southern Arizona. These dry mountains gave life to tribes who cycled with the seasons of hunting and gathering. Bands of Yavapai (speakers of nearly the same dialect of Yuman as their traditional enemies, the Pai) held central Arizona's rugged interior. The Southern Paiutes and Utes lived on the High Plateaus and on the flanks of the Southern Rockies at the northern edge of the Southwest, along the borders of today's Utah and Colorado; their cultural and linguistic connections lie to the north, in the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains. After the 1500s, the Athapaskan-speaking Apaches filtered into mostly unclaimed country through most of the rest of the upland Southwest.

Below, in the deserts, two primary language groups covered southern Arizona. The O'odham, speakers of Piman, lived along the Gila River (the Pima) and in the Sonoran Desert to its south (Tohono O'odham — proper name for the Papago — and Sand Papago, or Hia-Ced O'odham). Along the Colorado River, an oasis of moisture


NEVADA
CALIFORNIA
Sevier Lake
BEAVER
Sevier River
Fremont River
Green River
PAHRANAGAT
PANACA
CEDAR
GUNLOCK
PANGUITCH
SOUTHERN PAIUTE
ANTARIUNTS
HENRY MTS.
ABAJO MTS.
Colorado River
KAIPAROWITS
WEEMINU
Ute Mount
Muddy River
Virgin River
ST. GEORGE
Glen Can.
Lake Powell
Navajo Mt.
Monument Valley
SAN JUAN
SHIVWITS
UINKARET
KAIBAB
Grand Canyon
Charleston Peak
Lake Mead
SOUTHERN PAIUTE
Black Mesa
HOPI PUEBLOS
LAS VEGAS
Spirit Mt.
MIDDLE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE
PLATEAU PEOPLE
Cataract Canyon Band
San Francisco Peaks
Little Colorado River
NAVAJO
YAVAPAI FIGHTERS
YAVEPE
Verde River
NORTHERN TONTO
CHEMEHUEVI
Colorado River
MOJAVE
WIPUKPAYA
MOGOLLON RIM
SOUTHERN TONTO
CIBECUE
White River
WHITE MTS.
WHITE
YAVAPAI
BRADSHAW MTS.
MAZATZAL MTS.
KEWEVKAPAYA
TOLKAPAYA
Salton Sea
Salt River
WESTERN
SAN CARLOS
MOUNTAIN
APACHE
COCOPAH
MARICOPA
PIMA
Gila R.
SAND TOHONO
PAPAGO
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
O'ODHAM
Santa Cruz River
San Pedro River
CHOKONE
GULF OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA MADRE


Traditional Tribal Territories
MILES
0 25 50 100
UTAH
COLORADO
Gunnison River
Arkansas River
San Luis Valley
SAN JUAN MTS.
Hesperus Peak
Mesa Verde
Blanca Peak
SANGRE DE CRISTO RANGE
OKLAHOMA
San Juan River
Pueblo Peak
RIO GRANDE
CHUSKA MTS.
JEMEZ MTS.
SANDIA MTS.
Mt. Taylor
LAGUNA PUEBLO
PUEBLOS
ZUNI PUEBLO
ACOMA PUEBLO
Canadian River
Pecos River
TEXAS
CHIHENE
Rio Grande
Sierra Blanca
MESCALERO
Gila River
GUADALUPE MTS.
CHIRICAHUA
APACHE
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
NEDNAI

*In canyons and mesas at the heart of the Southwest, the Pueblo people span the continuum from prehistory to modern times in ancient villages like Walpi on the Hopi Mesas in Arizona. Photo by John K. Hillers, 1873. (Smithsonian Institution photo no. 1851)*

threading the continent's harshest deserts, River Yuman–speaking tribes divided the bottomlands: the Mojave in the north, the Quechan (Yuma) in the south, and the Cocopah near the delta. One River Yuman group, the Maricopa, migrated up the Gila to live with the modern Pima on the Gila and Salt rivers. A Paiute-speaking group, the Chemehuevi, came to the Colorado River to live with the Mojave. Finally, Cahitan-

speaking Yaqui refugees escaping north from Sonora's Rio Yaqui country at the end of the nineteenth century established small colonies near Phoenix and Tucson, eventually to become the Pascua Yaqui tribe.

Anthropologists remain vague on a definition for "tribe." The word describes a social group with a distinctive language or dialect, a group that practices a distinctive culture — more than a band but less than a chiefdom (the latter requiring a redistributive economy). In the real world, tribes create these distinctions, incorporate them in their identities, and change them as necessary through time. For Indians, communities are defined by family relationships, not by place of residence or "culture."

Analysts of United States census data similarly gesture with frustration when they attempt to define the "Indian" population. Race, ethnicity, blood quantum, biological definitions based on physical characteristics such as earwax type or blood peculiarities all have their limits; in the end, an American Indian is anyone who identifies his or her race as Indian and who is recognized as such by Indian communities.

As Native American anthropologist Jack D. Forbes writes: "The behavioral pattern systems of human groups are like currents in the ocean. It is possible to point out generally where a particular current exists, especially at its center or strongest point, but it is not ordinarily possible to neatly separate that current from the surrounding sea."