

Navajo

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, Inc.
1000 Madison Avenue, New York

REPORT ON THE FIRST NAVAJO TRIBAL FAIR, WINDOW ROCK, SEPTEMBER 16, 17, 18.

MARGARET MCKITTRICK

As the site for and purpose of the Navajo Tribal Fair have already been reported on by the Field Representative for the Association, this report will be limited to observations on the actual conduct of the Fair, and my impression of the Indians' reactions to it.

Although beforehand several of the government officials predicted an attendance of ten thousand Indians, I would say that five thousand is a generous estimate of those present. I do not know whether there are any accurate figures available, or whether there was any attempt to check up on the actual numbers of Indians and white visitors present. Generally speaking the Indians gave the impression of being of a much more substantial class than the ones seen at the Ceremonial in Gallup. There seemed to me to be a preponderance of middle-aged and older men, and fewer of the younger, poorer type of Navajo that is usually seen hanging around Gallup.

The opening day the crowd seemed interested, but appeared to be reserving judgment on the whole thing. But by the afternoon of the second day, the crowd had increased considerably, and the applause and response to the events was markedly more spontaneous and enthusiastic.

Except for special classes for government range riders, events were open only to Navajos. These consisted of bronc riding, bull riding, calf roping, wild cow milking, and flat racing. The events were run off quickly and efficiently. In fact there could be no criticism of the management of the arena. The announcing in Navajo and English over the loudspeakers was good and was evidently much appreciated by the crowd.

The roping and riding events for the government range riders were interesting and provided much amusement for the Navajos, especially the few failures when the second man of the team failed to catch the cow's hind legs with his rope.

It was regrettable that a greater number of contestants were not attracted.