

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NAVAHO HOGANS FROM
CANYON DE CHELLY NATIONAL MONUMENT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL reconnaissance during the summer of 1941 at Canyon de Chelly National Monument disclosed the location of two groups of Navaho hogans built in 1758, 1766, and 1770.¹ The significance of these dwellings lies in the fact that they definitely establish Navaho occupation of the area west of the Chuska Mountains in the middle of the eighteenth century. In addition to the early dates and the architectural details, the sites produced a large series of Navaho painted sherds and several glass trade beads.

Canyon de Chelly is located in the approximate center of the Navaho Reservation, on the west side of the Defiance Plateau, in northeastern Arizona. The first group of hogans, the Spider Rock hogans, lay at a distance of 2.7 miles from the Chinle-Defiance road, along the small spur going to the Spider Rock Overlook; the second group was situated further along this by-road at a distance of 3.3 miles from the road. The first site included three conical hogans, a sweat house, and several areas of refuse; the second contained a six-sided,² a conical and a possible square hogan. Associated with the first hogan group was a small Developmental Pueblo ruin, located at a distance of some 150 feet to the northwest, while .3 of a mile further north on the road was another small pueblo ruin. Near the latter was another sweat house that did not appear to be very old, since the dirt covering was still present. Surrounding the old hogans was a thick pinyon-juniper forest associated with sage and rabbitbrush.

In the first group of hogans, all of which dated 1758, one structure, No. 1, was still standing, giving a good impression of the type of house construction during that period. It was of the "pile stick" or conical hogan type, called *xóyan? alci? adezi?* by the Navahos. Three interlocked poles, oriented north, south, and west, were used as the main building supports, and on top of them to the east was placed the two

¹ Harold S. Gladwin, personal communication August 17, 1941. I wish to express my great appreciation to Charles D. Wyatt, Custodian of Canyon de Chelly National Monument, for the opportunity to investigate the hogan sites; to Harold S. Gladwin and Deric Nusbaum of Gila Pueblo for dating the wood specimens; to A. Wetmore, C. W. Gilmore, and Kellog of the United States National Museum for identifying the bones; to Arthur Woodward of the Los Angeles Museum for identifying the beads; to Leland C. Wyman for visiting and checking the sites; and to Richard Van Valkenburgh for his valuable suggestions.

² This hogan had only five wooden sides, but if the doorway is considered as another side, it would be classified as a six-sided hogan.

of mano was not very thick. Examples of the second group, however, were very thick, and had rounded corners, rectangular shape with flat bottom, and convex top. The last type had a flat bottom and top, and a rectangular form with rounded corners.²³ The majority of the manos were made of sandstone and may have been found at the nearby Developmental Pueblo ruin by the Navahos and re-utilized. One mano of the latter type was made of lava, a type of stone not observed in the de Chelly Pueblo runs by the writer. Because of this fact, it has been classified as a Navaho-made mano.

✓ Glass beads from the main refuse area of the Spider Rock hogans included two types: a minute globular shape, in white, blue, or green; and a cylindrical form colored black or pink on red. According to Woodward,²⁴ the beads were of a generic type that might be as old as 1758 or as late as, or later than, 1860. The mono-colored seed beads had been made in the form found at the Spider Rock sites for two or three hundred years. "The small red ones with the light pinkish exterior are of a type known as the Cornaline d'Allepo. They vary in size from tiny round ones . . . to large cylindrical beads. The exterior may be either a dull opaque brownish red or a translucent bright red. The interior ranges from white through pink and pale yellow. As a rule, the opaque reddish brown beads are older. The seventeenth and eighteenth century beads are usually this color. Late eighteenth century on through the nineteenth have the translucent red exterior. . . . Practically all of the beads of this type came from Murano, near Venice."²⁵ While it is not possible to state that the beads were definitely associated with the Spider Rock hogan sites, they gave every appearance of having been so associated.

Animal bones from the refuse areas near Hogan Group 1 included, according to Gilmore, modern horse (*Equus caballus*) represented by one upper cheek tooth and a few bone fragments; and modern deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*?) represented by skull and jaw parts, vertebrae ribs and numerous fragments. Those from the refuse areas by Hogan Group 2 included modern horse, represented by upper and lower teeth, fragments of skull, and sesamoid; and modern deer (Kellog says probably *Odocoileus hemionus*) represented by a portion of the right ramus with four teeth. It was from an aged individual. There were also a few undetermined fragments, probably deer.²⁶ In view of the fact that Rabal

²³ This mano is similar in appearance to another found at Big Bead Mesa (*ibid.*, Fig. 5, No. 2).

²⁴ Arthur Woodward, personal communication, September 24, 1941.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ A. Wetmore and C. W. Gilmore, personal communications, September 11 and 12, 1941.