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ABSTRACT

Utilizing 52 black and white photographs, the book tells a story about the Navajo people, their hopes and problems, the strategies they have adopted to cope with the problems, their interactions with each other and with the land, and their feelings about the land which provides a basis for their livelihood. Part of a series of curriculum materials for Navajo and other Native American students, the book commences with a brief narrative of the Navajo's historical background. This brief narrative covers the Navajo's oral account of their emergence from a series of underworlds, presence in Dinetah ("Navajo homeland") in northern New Mexico, expansion into northeastern Arizona, conflicts with the settlers and other tribes, return to and resettlement of 3.5 million acres within their former range, and attempt to develop new economic alternatives. Next, the book provides 48 photographs depicting people, the land, the sky, and plant and animal life (e.g., a Rough Rock moonrise, cacti in bloom, juniper trees, the canyon walls of Rough Rock Springs, homestead of a Rough Rock councilman, a mud oven, goats and cattle, rock formations, and various community leaders). The book concludes with brief information about the photographer and a listing of 12 references.
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Of Mother Earth and Father Sky

Produced by
TITLE IV-B NAVAJO MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
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ROUGH ROCK, ARIZONA

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Front Cover. The interaction between Mother Earth and Father Sky sustains all living things.

Back Cover. Rock formation overlooks the Rough Rock High School, trading post and Friends Mission.

Of Mother Earth and Father Sky

A Photographic Study of Navajo Culture

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED BIA

Text by T. L. McCarty

Editorial Assistance by Regina Lynch

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It is rewarding to know that photography is being applied to the Cultural Program at the Rough Rock Demonstration School. Not only is photography an important art medium but it is capable of bringing the land to the people, and people to people. It thereby enlarges human understanding and communication.

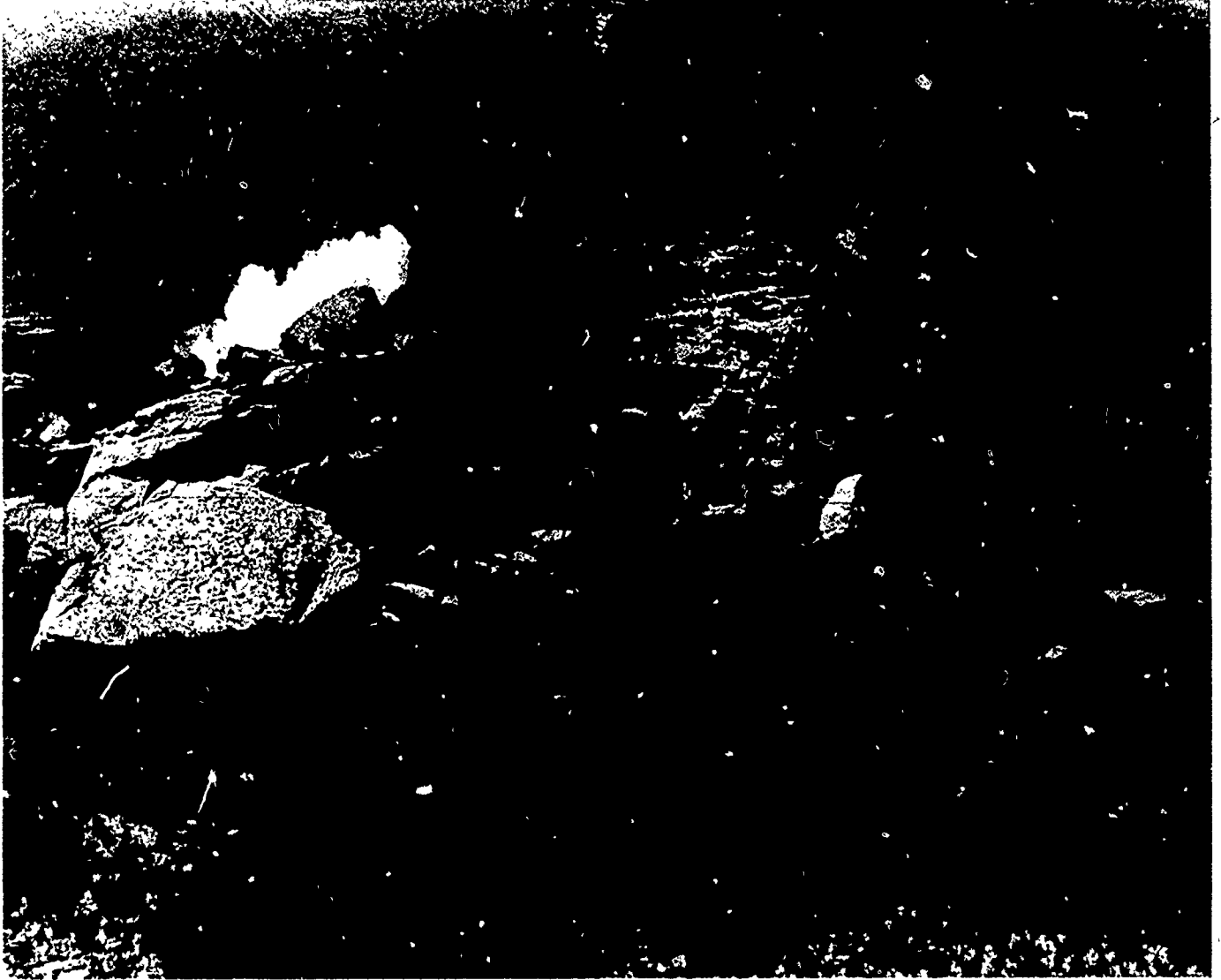
—Ansel Adams
February 25, 1983

We are all aware that photography is one of the most effective means of communication. It is certainly one of the best methods to convey a message about a group of people, their interests, and their causes. Therefore I feel that many more Indian people should go into this medium as one vehicle to express their feelings about their people. Through photography, they can show others their experiences, what they have gone through, and how they view the world. This task should not be left to just a few individuals. Many more Indian people should become involved in the medium.

—Cole Weston
March 31, 1983

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Rock formation near Rough Rock High School.

Foreword

IN JULY, 1980 THE ROUGH ROCK School received a three-year grant under the Indian Education Act for a "planning, pilot and demonstration" project in bilingual-bicultural education. A major goal of that project was to produce high quality curriculum materials for Navajo and other Native American students. This book is one of a series of publications designed to realize that goal.

The photographs on the following pages tell a story. It is a story about Navajo people, their hopes and their problems, the strategies they have adopted to cope with the problems, and their feelings about the land which provides a basis for their livelihood. The story unfolds through the camera lens of a Navajo photographer.

To the non-Navajo reader, the juxtaposition of images in this book may seem awkward, even startling. A formal portrait on one page followed by a sheep corral or mud oven on the other, may appear to be an artificial association. But when the Navajo view of picture-taking is considered the juxtaposition becomes more intelligible. The photographer recently attended a workshop at which aspiring and established photographers were represented on an international basis. Part of the workshop involved a group critique of each participant's work. When Fred Bia presented one of his portraits for review, several participants advised him to make the subject look "more natural" and less "posed." Abiding by these criteria, however, would have destroyed the meaning of the photograph, since to most Navajos "having your picture taken" means a formal sitting, complete with traditional dress and jewelry. This was their experience historically, as the photographs of Edward Curtis so beautifully illustrate, and this is what is expected today, both by the Navajo photographer and the subject.

Hence, the reader will note the presence in this book of formal portraits next to, for example, a landscape. Far from an "artificial" association, this represents the natural connection between people and the land. The fact that the portrait is formal reflects only the Navajo perspective on the medium used to convey the message.

While the photographer visually relates the story's plot line, it is the writer's obligation to highlight visual images and thereby increase their impact. In this case the writer is not a Navajo and the textual information is thus an "outsider's" interpretation. We hope that the synthesis of two cultural backgrounds in this volume will add depth and make it useful to a broad range of readers.

In achieving the latter goal we are especially indebted to Ansel Adams and Cole Weston. Each provided suggestions and training to the photographer. This training, sponsored by the school and the Title IV project, has been an asset to the development of the project's curricula and by extension, to others who benefit from this book's photographic content. In addition, Mr. Adams and Mr. Weston took a personal interest in this project and its objectives, for which we are extremely grateful.

Mr. Ben Bennett also contributed to this publication by arranging for photographic sittings and assisting in the photographing of Michelle ("Speedy") Woody and Lynnette Yazzie. More significantly, as an administrator for the Rough Rock School since its inception in 1966, Mr. Bennett has provided outstanding service to the local community.

Finally, we thank the representatives of the Rough Rock community and its leaders, the school board, for continuing to support opportunities such as this to demonstrate a bilingual-bicultural educational alternative.

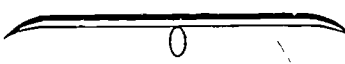
— T. L. M.
Rough Rock, AZ.
March, 1983

Rough Rock School Board: Wade Hadley, Teddy McCurtain, Thomas James, Simon Secody, Billy Johnson. Jimmie C. Begay, Executive Director.

PART I. *History*



Navajo homestead at the foot of Black Mesa, in northeastern Arizona.



THE NARRATIVES OF NAVAJO MEDICINE MEN and philosophers describe Navajoland as lying between two protective entities, Mother Earth and Father Sky. The earth is considered female and called mother (*Nihodzáán*) because it nurtures life, providing water, food, energy and the means for livelihood. The sky (*Yádihiit*) is male. From it comes life-giving rain which nourishes and allows the earth to offer up her bounty. The two entities, earth and sky, are reciprocal; without the one the other would be meaningless.

While earth and sky provide the bases for life, it is the job of human beings, Navajo elders say, to maintain a proper balance within the two. The kinship terms used in referring to earth and sky give some idea of man's perceived relationship to them. It is a relationship imbued with respect and mutual responsibility. While man demonstrates proper respect for the life-sustaining elements, these will continue to provide their blessings. If man becomes greedy, taking more than his share or using the elements in an exploitative way, he will be punished and the blessings withdrawn.

All things are animate in this view. Land forms, weather, plants, animals and humans function together in a dynamic balance. A key Navajo concept, *k'é*, informs this dynamic. Sometimes translated as "peace" or "friendship," *k'é* is more generally interpreted as "right and respectful relations with others and nature."

This book is a portrayal of life between earth and sky, and of man's relationship with all things that inhabit that space. It is a book about Navajo people, their interactions with each other and with the land. Through photographs, the artist, a Navajo, reveals his perception of man's role in the natural world. Enveloping this perspective is a vision of harmonious, ordered relationships which are maintained by adherence to the principle, *k'é*.

To make these images more meaningful, particularly for non-Navajo readers, this book begins with a brief history. To Navajos, this commences with their emergence from a series of underworlds. The story of Navajo origins dates back to time immemorial, long before there was a written record. As it was told and retold, the story was no doubt embellished and modified. Today, like the biblical creation story, the Navajos' account of their origins includes many "versions," and no single version is considered absolute. A universal element in the oral narratives, however, relates to human struggles and the ability to overcome great obstacles. As will be seen, this theme continues into the period of written history and to a large extent, characterizes many aspects of contemporary Navajo life.

The Emergence

In the beginning — a timeless period known by spirit beings and Holy People — there existed a place which is called today, the Black World. This first world "was small in size and was much like a floating island in a sea of water mist."¹ Here, there was no sun, only "curtains of light" which filtered upward from each of the four directions.² This underworld was marked by four columns of clouds: white in the east, blue in the south, yellow in the west and black in the north. The white cloud was called Folding Dawn, the blue cloud, Folding Sky Blue, the yellow cloud, Folding Twilight, and the black, northernmost cloud, Folding Darkness.

Within these four directional points lived *Áłtsé Hastiin* — First Man — and *Áłtsé Asdzáán* — First Woman. But First Man and First Woman were separated. First Man lived to the east, representing Dawn or the Giver of Life, and First Woman dwelled in the west, representing Darkness and Death. The two were united when First Man burned a crystal (symbolizing the mind's awakening), and First Woman burned a turquoise. Seeing the other's fire, the two sought each other and after four attempts, were united.³

Insect beings also lived in the First World. Soon, these beings began to argue and quarrel. As a result, all creatures were forced to leave the First World through an eastern opening. When they emerged, they found themselves in the Second, or Blue World.

Bluebirds, blue hawks, blue jays, blue herons, Coyote and many larger insects inhabited the Blue World. Again, the beings quarreled and fought. Seeing this, First Man gave them wands on which they left this world through an opening in the south.

Entering the Third, Yellow World, the beings found two immense rivers which crossed each other: one female, which flowed north to south, and the other male, flowing east to west. Within this larger world were six directional mountains, still sacred today: *Sisnaajini* (Blanco Peak, Colorado) to the east, *Tsooqzít* (Mount Taylor, New Mexico) to the south, *Dook'o'oostiid* (San Francisco Peak, Arizona) to the west, *Dibé Ntsaa* (in the La Plata range, Colorado) to the north, *Dzítina'oodítii* (Huerfano Mesa, New Mexico) to the center, and *Ch'óol'íí* (Governador Knob, New Mexico), the inner mountain.⁴

Trouble arose in the Third World when Coyote stole the child of Water Monster. It is said that Water Monster, in anger, caused the waters to flood. As the beings vainly attempted to flee the rising waters, First Man tried three times to free them by planting a cedar tree, a pine tree and a male reed. These did not grow high enough to allow the beings to climb to safety. On his fourth attempt, First Man planted a female reed, and this grew to the sky. The beings "crowded into the great female reed and began to climb up."⁵ They were closely pursued by foaming flood waters, however, until Coyote was persuaded to return Water Monster's child. Appeased, Water Monster permitted the tide to recede and the first people were safely transported to the Fourth, White or "Glittering" World. This is the surface on which all beings live today.

At that time, some Navajo medicine men say, the earth's surface was covered with water.

¹ Ethelou Yazzie (ed.), *Navajo History Vol. I* (Rough Rock, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press, 1982), p. 9.

² C. J. Frisbie and D. P. McAllester (eds.), *Navajo Blessingway Singer: The Autobiography of Frank Mitchell* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), p. 170.

³ Yazzie, p. 10.

⁴ Yazzie, p. 13.

⁵ Yazzie, p. 15.

By some unknown power, the water was drained into what are now oceans. Then, the Holy People sang the first song and offered the first prayer, allowing plants to grow. The songs became the heart of the Navajo Blessingway (*Hózhóǫ́jí*), a life-giving and protective ritual which continues as a vital ceremonial practice today. And, from these songs came the seasons of the year. The late Frank Mitchell, a highly respected Navajo medicine man, says:

*It is through this that we have summer and winter. In the springtime everything comes up from the ground just the way it happened in those first days, when it was all made in the beginning. In the wintertime the plants all die and are buried under the snow, and then late in the spring they all come back up again to make all the crops in the summer.*⁶

Receiving sustenance from the plant life around them, First Man and First Woman began to settle in this world and established the foundations for life as Navajos know it today. From the Third World they had brought pinches of earth representing the east, south, west and north. With this soil, the Holy People shaped mountains in each of the four directions. Then, songs were sung "to make those mountains holy and strong."⁷ The four sacred mountains, like sentinels, mark the boundaries of contemporary Navajoland and are still considered guardians of the Navajo people.

As First Man and First Woman began planning their first home, they pondered where to build it. A home site was selected at *Dzitna'ooditii*, and all who had emerged from the underworld joined to build it. This first home, constructed of three supporting poles and covered with mud and brush was called a "forked-stick hogan" and was considered male. Its doorway faced the east to welcome the early morning light (as all hogan entrances do, today), and it was used only for ceremonial purposes. But First Man and First Woman lacked a dwelling where they could conduct the affairs of everyday life. A second, female hogan was constructed for this purpose. This circular or octagonal structure became the place where "the children could play and cry, the women could talk and entertain themselves, and the men could tell stories and laugh."⁸ This type of hogan, made of logs and mud chinks, remains a common Navajo family residence.

From their home at *Dzitna'ooditii*, First Man and First Woman saw a cloud over nearby Gobernador Knob (*Ch'ool'íí*). As they watched the cloud, they heard from within it a baby's cry. Curious, First Man climbed to the top of *Ch'ool'íí* and there, found an infant girl. Carefully lifting the child into his arms, First Man brought her home. With the assistance of the Holy People, First Man and First Woman raised the child, naming her Changing Woman (*Asdzáán Nádleehé*).

The infant was to play a crucial role in the destiny of the Navajo people. As an adult, Changing Woman traveled to the Western (Pacific) Ocean. There, she rubbed various parts of her body to create the first humans, the ancestors and ancestresses of four major clans. These people, known as *Dine'é* (literally, "The People"), then began a long journey eastward. They continued their travels for many days, and finally reached *Ch'ool'íí*. There they found Puebloan peoples and other Navajos living in hogans and rock villages built into the sides of canyon walls. Uniting with these people, the four original clans began to multiply.

⁶Frisbie and McAllester, p. 168.

⁷Frisbie and McAllester, p. 170.

⁸Yazzie, p. 20.

In Dinétah

It is at this point that Western historical and scientific accounts merge with those of Navajo oral tradition. In the canyonlands and on the mesa tops near *Ch'ól'íí*, the Navajos established their first permanent occupation in the American Southwest. The entire area, located near the present town of Farmington, New Mexico, became known as "Dinétah," meaning "Among the People" or "Navajo homeland."

Anthropologists claim the Navajos came to Dinétah from the north some time between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. The path of their migration, these scientists say, is not necessarily dissimilar to that described in the native narrative for the first people who left the Western Ocean. Navajos speak an Athapaskan language, and linguistically are related to groups now living along the Northwest Pacific Coast and in Canada, as well as to Apaches living south and east of the present Navajo Reservation. These linguistic connections, coupled with evidence from archaeological sites, have led scientists to posit a migration of Athapaskan-speaking peoples from the north, along the Rocky Mountain cordillera, or perhaps, through the Great Basin and into the Southwest mountains and deserts. There, various bands began to disperse, seeking land which could provide a basis for their subsistence and which was not already occupied by others.

The Navajo-Athapaskans found a niche, scientists say, in Dinétah. Pinyon and juniper dot the region's high plateaus, providing fuel for heat and food from the trees' ripening berries. Deep canyons offer up water for farming. In addition, the land was once rich in wild game and other plant products which could have afforded a protein-rich diet for the early Navajos. Life in Dinétah was not without hardships, however, not the least of which was a climate which brought blistering daytime temperatures in the summer months, and freezing days and nights during winter. The Dinétah Navajos were probably also plagued by raids on their settlements from tribes to the north and east. That warfare was an ever-present threat is evidenced by their choice of architecture: in addition to the forked-stick hogan, they lived in fortified stone and mud structures called *pueblitos*. Many of these were accessible only by ladders which could be pulled up when the last resident had climbed to safety. Immense stone walls and towers surrounded some *pueblitos*, providing protection and lookout points.⁹

In Dinétah, the Navajos developed an increasingly complex social and religious organization. It was here, Navajo elders say, that their ancestors first learned the arts of sandpainting and performing the elaborate curative rituals which are still practiced today. On the canyon walls, these early Navajos carved and painted images of their deities — Humpback God, Talking God and Monster Slayer — and of the sustaining elements of life: corn, wild deer and antelope. The elaborate rock art in Dinétah is rapidly being defaced by vandals and scavengers, but much of it remains, a vivid expression of native ceremonialism.

The canyon walls tell another story — that of the coming of the first Europeans. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spanish explorers, missionaries and settlers entered the area, bringing with them horses, sheep and other livestock and bringing to a close the earliest chapter in recorded Navajo history. By 1750, livestock had become an accepted and indeed, integral part of the Navajo economy. In addition, the Navajos had developed a system of

⁹ Remains of these ancient defensive settlements can be observed in the Dinétah area. For a comprehensive description and photographic account of the region's archaeology, see *Dinétah, Navajo History Vol. 1* by Robert A. Roessel, Jr. (Rough Rock, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press, 1983).

agriculture to such an extent that a Spanish scribe reported the name "Nabaju" to mean, in one Pueblo language, "great planted fields."

Expansion, Conflict and Defeat

Scholars do not agree on the length of time the Navajos stayed in Dinétah. Some claim the Navajos began living there as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century A.D. Others believe the Navajos could not have entered the area until well into the sixteenth or seventeenth century.¹⁰ The Navajo "calendar" has no dates in the Western sense, but its chronology of events and genealogical reckoning of family histories suggest the Navajos were in Dinétah for many centuries. Despite ambiguities regarding the time of the Navajos' arrival in the region, it is clear that by the eighteenth century they began to leave. Driven by drought, continuing Ute raids and an increasing dependence on a pastoral (livestock) economy, the Navajos migrated to the vast grassy plains farther west. By the mid-1700s, they had abandoned Dinétah for the fertile valleys and mountains surrounding Canyon de Chelly in north-eastern Arizona; some families made their camps between the red rock walls of the canyon itself.

The testimony of contemporary Navajos and documents of explorers, soldiers, missionaries and others in the area during this period afford a view of eighteenth century Navajo society. The Navajos did not live in "communities" or constitute an organized "tribe" as they do today. Instead, families were scattered over a wide, rugged territory, and their dwellings consisted of the quickly erected forked-stick hogan. These were temporary residences which were frequently abandoned as families moved in search of better grazing and farming land.

This type of settlement pattern, in part, reflected the Navajos' generally low population density at the time. Scholars estimate that by 1800-1850, the Navajos numbered 7,000 to 10,000, and occupied an area that extended east and west from the Rio Grande Valley to the Hopi Mesas, and north and south from the San Juan to the Little Colorado River near modern Holbrook, Arizona.¹¹

A dispersed settlement pattern was also the consequence of the need to move stock as pasture in one area became depleted. Many families stayed in the low grasslands during winter, returning to their camps near cool mountain pastures in the summer months. Others maintained winter camps at higher elevations, where they could be certain of finding timber for fuel, and planted their fields in the lowland valleys during the summer. Thus, although they ranged over a wide area, the Navajos were never truly nomadic for in general, they returned to the same region — and often, the same dwelling or home site — over the course of a year.

Use of the land in this way did not entail concepts of ownership. Families simply used what land they needed and their right to do so was not questioned. When land remained unused for a season, it was considered available and accessible to others. That an individual would claim ownership of a particular piece of land was a totally alien concept.

¹⁰ Roessel (*Ibid.*) reviews the archaeological evidence and scientific theories which have been advanced to account for the time of the Navajos' arrival in the Southwest. Based on data from several fourteenth and fifteenth century sites uncovered by archaeologists in northwestern New Mexico, the chronicles of Spanish scribes and stories told by Navajos themselves, Roessel claims the Navajos may have entered the area as early as 1100 to 1300 A.D. Certainly they were in Dinétah, he states, by the time of Spanish arrival in 1540.

¹¹ Edward Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), p. 214. Ruth Underhill, *Here Come the Navaho!* (Lawrence, KN: Haskell Institute Print Shop, 1953), p. 103-110; and Lawrence Kelly, *The Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy 1900-1935* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968), p. 4.

During this period, contact — and conflict — increased rapidly between the Navajos and their neighbors. Navajo territory was bordered on the west and north by bands of Upland Yuman and Ute hunter-gatherers, and on the east and south by Pueblo and Mexican villagers. The latter, like the Navajos, had adopted a livestock economy. Unlike the Navajos, however, they tended their flocks and fields within a limited area, preferring to live in villages and towns, many of which were situated atop mesas and along the Rio Grande.

To increase their herds and obtain food and other goods, the Navajos and villagers began to raid each other's settlements. This was perhaps less difficult for the Navajos, who had a more sedentary "target" in the Pueblo villages. But as the Navajos acquired more sheep and horses through raiding, they, too, became more sedentary and vulnerable to counterattack. Simultaneously, increased numbers of horses acquired in raids afforded them greater mobility and therefore the opportunity to intensify raiding. Captives were taken by both groups, and the Navajos, according to the historian L. R. Bailey, "found a ready use and market for captives taken from Spanish settlements."¹² Spanish and Pueblo villagers retaliated, taking Navajo captives, often women and children. By the early 1800s, writes anthropologist Edward Spicer, "Hundreds of Navajo boys and girls ... were growing up in Spanish homes as servants."¹³

Although the Spanish government, in theory at least, controlled the Southwest during this time, they were unable to control the pattern of reciprocal warfare which had become commonplace and which also involved the Utes to the north. The Navajos had never been subject to religious domination by Spanish missionaries, nor had they been conquered militarily or forced to reduce their territory. While they had adopted items of Spanish culture (livestock, weaving, silverwork, material goods) and had incorporated some aspects of Puebloan society (farming, certain ceremonial practices), their social and political life was autonomous and relatively free from external or imposed interests.¹⁴

Until the nineteenth century, then, the Navajos remained socially and politically independent. Indeed, their dominance of what is now northern Arizona and New Mexico earned them the title of "Lords of New Mexico."¹⁵ They had encountered few Anglo-Americans and even as late as 1850, many Navajos had never seen or met a "white man." Hence, the events of the next few decades, which would drastically reduce the Navajo population and territory and forever alter their social and political organization, were unexpected and sudden — the outcome of conflict and compromise between two alien governments which sought to control the American Southwest.

The compromise occurred in 1846, when the government of Mexico relinquished the Southwest territory to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. That August, the United States sent its soldiers to Santa Fe to take possession of the newly acquired lands. As part of its plan, the government's soldiers were to establish and maintain peaceful relations between the rival tribes in the region. In Santa Fe, Brigadier General Stephen W. Kearney initiated this plan by attempting to ally the Pueblo and Mexican villagers with his troops, against the Navajos.

What ensued instead was a cycle of even more frequent and vicious outbreaks followed

¹² L. R. Bailey, *The Long Walk* (Pasadena, CA: Westernlore Publications, 1978), p. 2-3.

¹³ Spicer, p. 213.

¹⁴ Spicer, p. 213-214.

¹⁵ Bailey, p. 1.

by the signing of peace treaties between Kearney's troops and local Navajo leaders, whom the soldiers mistakenly assumed could speak for the entire tribe. The Navajo leaders (known as headmen or *naat'áanii*) who signed these treaties, though they were respected by residents of their locality, generally had no influence over Navajos in other areas. Hence the treaties, written in a language which only a few Navajos could understand and which fewer still could write, and signed by individuals who lacked the means to enforce the documents' terms, were virtually meaningless.

Moreover, most Navajos remained unconvinced of the need for "peace" as it was stipulated in the treaties, or of the federal government's right to attempt to impose such changes. In a now famous speech delivered to U.S. soldiers by an influential headman named Zarcillos Largos, the Navajos' appraisal of the situation was very eloquently expressed:

Americans! You have a strange cause of war against the Navajos. We have waged war against the New Mexicans for several years. We have plundered their villages and killed many of their people, and made many prisoners. We had just cause for all this. You have lately commenced a war against the same people. You are powerful. You have great guns and many brave soldiers. You have therefore conquered them, the very thing we have been attempting to do for so many years. You now turn upon us for attempting to do what you have done yourselves. We cannot see why you have cause of quarrel with us for fighting the New Mexicans on the west, while you do the same thing on the east.¹⁶

When it became clear to federal officers that "paper agreements" would not terminate intertribal rivalries in the Southwest, the government invoked a more powerful force. A military post was erected at Ft. Defiance, in the center of Navajo territory, and its troops were ordered to shoot any Navajo livestock grazing in the vicinity — an act which, as Spicer notes, "the Navajos regarded as ruthless appropriation of (their) land."¹⁷ Navajo-Anglo conflicts continued until 1860, when several Navajo leaders decided to unite and expel the Anglos from Navajo country altogether. In April of that year over 2,000 Navajo warriors, "armed more with bows and arrows than guns" attacked Ft. Defiance.¹⁸ But the soldiers, with their more effective artillery, killed many and drove the others off.

The army's show of strength climaxed three years later, when Colonel Kit Carson (known as *Bi'éé Łichí'íi*, "Red Clothing," to the Navajos) was ordered to kill Navajo males old enough to bear arms and to capture the women and children. In the autumn of 1863, Carson and his troops marched through Navajo country, burning the Indians' fields and hogans and slaughtering thousands of their sheep, "leaving them in piles to rot."¹⁹ Several months later, Carson finalized what came to be called a "Scorched Earth" campaign by marching through Canyon de Chelly with a corps of some 700 men and destroying Navajo fields and homes. With winter upon them, little food and the means to obtain it destroyed, their homes in ruins, and intimidated by the soldiers' demonstrations of military might, many Navajos immediately surrendered at Ft. Defiance. Within weeks over 8,000 Navajos, including many prominent

¹⁶ Bailey, p. 9

¹⁷ Spicer, p. 217

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Spicer, p. 218

headmen, had given themselves up to army officials at Ft. Defiance.

No doubt the soldiers like Carson who implemented the government's plan, believed that their actions were legitimate, even morally "right." It is clear that their actions were underwritten by a federal policy of expansionism. General James Carleton, Carson's commanding officer, writes of his vision of this policy and the means he undertook to realize it:

.... A country as rich, if not richer in mineral wealth than California, extends from the Rio Grande northwestwardly ... If I could have but one first-rate regiment of infantry, I could brush the Indians away from all that part of it east of the Colorado River. The troops for the fight against the Navajos take the field next month ...

.... Captain, ... send a company of infantry from your post to scour the eastern slope of the Sandia Mountain country ... with instructions to kill every male Navajo or Apache Indian who is large enough to bear arms.²⁰

When the Navajos were defeated, Carleton was able, at least for the written record, to justify his actions:

.... In all that I have had to do in this command, so far as the Indians are concerned, I have (tried) to treat them justly, and I point to this record of over three years of anxiety and toil, mostly on their account, as one of which I do not feel ashamed.²¹

The sequel to the Navajos' surrender at Ft. Defiance, however, was more difficult for them to accept. From that military post they were forced to trek some 300 miles across wintry plains to their new reservation at Ft. Sumner, New Mexico (also known as Bosque Redondo and called *Hwééldi* by the Navajos). The journey to *Hwééldi* on foot is still referred to as "The Long Walk," and is viewed by Navajos as a tragic turning point in their history. Many died along the way, some of dysentery, others of frostbite from the snow-piled trails. Bailey writes that, "The route of the Long Walk was marked by the frozen corpses of Indians, who, too fatigued to go on, had crawled to the wayside to die."²² Perhaps even more disturbing are the accounts of Navajos who died at the hands of soldiers. Howard Gorman, a former Navajo Tribal Council member, relates this incident:

This is how the story was told by my ancestors ... those ancestors were on the Long Walk with their daughter, who was pregnant and about to give birth. Somewhere ... south of Albuquerque, the daughter got tired and weak and couldn't keep up with the others ... So my ancestors asked the Army to hold up for a while and to let the woman give birth. But the soldiers wouldn't do it. They forced my people to move on, saying that they were getting behind ...

"Go ahead," the daughter said to her parents, "things might come out all right with me." But (she) was mistaken ... Not long after they had moved on, they heard a gunshot from where they had been ...

²⁰ Rock Point Community School, *Between Sacred Mountains* (Rock Point, AZ, 1983), p. 143.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Bailey, p. 170.

"Maybe we should go back and do something, or at least cover the body with dirt," one of them said.

*By that time one of the soldiers came riding up from the direction of the sound. He must have shot her to death. That's the way the story goes."*²³

The incredulity with which the victims viewed these atrocities renders the acts even more meaningless, and illustrates the Navajos' political impotence. Gorman states:

*These Navajos had done nothing wrong. For no reason they had been taken captive and driven to Hwééldi. While that was going on, they were told nothing — not even what it was all about and for what reasons. The Army just rounded them up and herded them to the prison camp. Large numbers of Navajos made the journey. Some of them tried to escape. Those who did, and were caught, were shot and killed.*²⁴

The hardships and deprivation did not lessen at Ft. Sumner. With several hundred Apaches, the Navajos were crowded into the fort and given daily rations of food. The government's intention was that they would learn to become settled farmers, but the dry, alkaline soil produced few crops. The Indians were plagued by dysentery and syphilis, and a smallpox epidemic took over 2,000 lives within a few months. Moreover, they and their diminished herds, which they had been allowed to bring with them, were the targets of chronic raids by Comanches who considered the reservation an intrusion into their territory. Demoralized by disease, confinement and repeated crop failures, the Navajos had little incentive to realize the government's goal that they become villager-farmers. Nevertheless, they were required to put in a 12-hour work day, and those who refused were "forced to work at bayonet point."²⁵

By 1867, it was clear that the government's experiment at Ft. Sumner was failing. A Congressional investigation, launched in response to rumors of deplorable reservation conditions, turned up evidence that "Ft. Sumner was little more than a concentration camp."²⁶ When an Indian Office representative visited the reservation, he was told by a headman:

*Notwithstanding the cold and heat we have worked and we will work, but poor as we are we would rather go back to our country. What does the government want us to do — more than we have done? Or more than we are doing?*²⁷

Return and Resettlement

In June of 1868, 29 Navajo headmen signed the "Old Paper" (*Naaltsoos Sáni*), or treaty with the United States which gave the Navajos 3.5 million acres within their former range. This was about one-fifth the land they had used before their internment. Nearly 7,000 Navajos then left Ft. Sumner and began the journey back to their homes. It is likely, however, that many did not understand the requirement that they reside within the boundaries specified

²³ Ruth Roessel (ed.), *Navajo Stories Of the Long Walk Period* (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1973), p. 130.

²⁴ Ruth Roessel, p. 131.

²⁵ Bailey, p. 225.

²⁶ Bailey, p. 226.

²⁷ Bailey, p. 231.

by the treaty, and this requirement was, at any rate, at variance with their traditional settlement patterns and livestock economy. Thus, many Navajos returned to their former home sites regardless of whether these were included in the new reservation.

The government issued approximately two head of stock to every Navajo adult, and with this they began rebuilding their lives. Within a few years, they had increased their herds more than 40 fold, raising the total to approximately 1,500,000 sheep and goats. As the stock population increased, so did the number of people and the need for more land. In response to these pressures the government expanded the reservation 19 times between 1878 and 1964. Today, it stretches over parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, covering an area the size of the State of West Virginia.

In the years following the 1868 treaty, livestock played a growing role in the Navajos' economic and social life. Though some families also maintained farms, livestock was the major source of livelihood. Family movements were scheduled according to the need for water and better pasture, and many families maintained summer and winter camps to facilitate this.

Each family member contributed to the livestock enterprise. Children were taught to herd sheep at an early age, and this became a focal point in a child's socialization experience. Mrs. Dorothy Begay, a grandmother and long-time resident of the Rough Rock area, describes her experience as a child:

Once we awoke in the morning, the first thing that came to our minds was herding sheep, taking out the sheep, what are the sheep going to eat? When we had our breakfast (and many times we didn't eat breakfast), there was always someone who was going to tend the sheep. You didn't wait for someone else to do it. There was always someone there, willing to help. You shared the herding.

Products from the animals, such as wool, were recycled into the family income. Mrs. Begay continues:

At the same time, we were taught to weave all day and even at night, carding and spinning the wool for the next rug. Once the rug was completed and sold, you would be ready to begin another one. Young girls and women did this into the late hours of the night. Even then, we were able to get up before the sun rose, when it was still dark, and herd sheep. We were always told that herding sheep and weaving rugs were the ways we would survive in this world.

Boys also learned the importance of sheep and goat herding at an early age. Mr. Kit Sells of Rough Rock discusses his training as a child:

Our parents and grandfathers told us never to let the sheep stay in the corral after sunup. "Always let them out before the sun comes up," they said. So we were out there in the early dawn with the sheep, because they told us that if you let the sheep and yourselves sleep when the sun comes up, you're going to starve.

Herding taught responsibility and application of the concept *k'é*. At the age of four to six, children were often given the gift of a lamb by parents. The lamb received the child's own notch or ear mark, signaling the beginning of his or her formal training for adulthood. Parental

lectures and stories repeatedly reminded children to "Let the hogan be your thought . . . Let the land be your thought . . . Let this livestock which has been given to you be your thought . . ."28

By the early part of the twentieth century then, the Navajos had re-established themselves in their old country and had developed a new lifeway based on livestock. Family residence and daily activities were centered around the herd. Wealth was measured in terms of animals, and good relations with one's kinsmen and neighbors were expressed in the exchange of animals. Perhaps most informative is the fact that livestock and their care were integral to the socialization experience of children. A new, but transitory balance — between people, animals and the land — had been established.

The Navajo population continued to grow but unlike the past, the Navajos were now limited in their ability to expand territorially. As their population and herds grew, the pressure on their land increased and the land itself began to deteriorate. The balance between man and nature which the Navajos sought and expressed philosophically in the principle *k'é*, was being lost.

Meanwhile, federal officials began to worry about overgrazing and damage to the reservation's rangeland. A government survey conducted in the 1930s indicated the reservation could support only half its stock population. In consequence, a program of stock reduction and range management was instituted. Each household head was required to reduce his or her herd by a certain percentage. In some cases government officials purchased and marketed "surplus" stock, but often the cost of marketing was greater than the animals' market value, so many animals were simply slaughtered and left — a practice which horrified the Navajos because it constituted tremendous waste, and which led many to boycott the program. Mrs. Agnes Begay of Many Farms, Arizona, describes her recollection as a young girl during the stock reduction period:

My dad had a lot of sheep. When that (stock reduction program) came up — that was 1933 — I remember, I was herding sheep when they came around and counted the sheep, and told my daddy how much more to sell. They used to take (the stock) to Rough Rock. We used to cry, my sister and I. We herded sheep, and when they took the sheep, we didn't want to see it. We depended on the sheep for our living. And some of them weren't even high yet. They were just little goats.

A New Balance

The land, people and animals were out of balance, and the Navajos were forced to look elsewhere for the means to sustain them. A new balance, with different factors, had to be discovered. The problem in accomplishing this, however, was the basic lack of human resources capable of developing new economic alternatives. Although their treaty with the federal government promised education and vocational training, as late as the mid-1940s the Navajos' mean level of formal education was less than one year.²⁹ In response to this

²⁸ Shirley Begay, *Kinaaldá: A Navajo Puberty Ceremony* (Rough Rock, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press, 1983).

²⁹ This was compared to 5.7 years for the Indian population in general and 8.4 for the national population. (George Boyce, *When Navajos Had Too Many Sheep*, San Francisco, CA: The Indian Historian Press, 1974, p. 138; and Robert Young, *Navajo Yearbook*, Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Agency, 1961, p. 14.)

situation, a delegation of tribal leaders traveled to Washington, D.C. to plead for more and better educational facilities. Chee Dodge, then Chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council, told officials in Washington:

*We have been told that our ranges are overstocked and that we must reduce our livestock to prevent total destruction of our range. . . . We therefore ask that . . . means be provided for people without sufficient livestock to make their living in some other manner. . . . We need the schools so that our children can compete with other children. . . .*³⁰

In 1950, the means was provided to honor the government's treaty obligations and to at least begin to fulfill Chee Dodge's request. In the Navajo-Hopi Long Range Rehabilitation Act, \$25,000,000 was allocated for school construction and expansion. In the next six years, "emergency" trailer schools were opened in isolated areas across the reservation, and Navajo students in greater numbers began to attend off-reservation public schools. Deteriorating school buildings were closed or improved. By 1960, over 29,000 Navajo children were attending school.³¹

The educational system which the Navajos turned to, while it was necessary to develop human resources, was an alien force geared toward assimilation into the dominant society at the expense of the native language and values. In achieving this objective, formal education often set young against old and in many ways was disruptive of what harmony still existed in Navajo life. Growing out of the resulting tensions was a movement by Navajos to take greater control over their education. Their aim was a more harmonious blend between the elements brought in from the outside by formal education, and the resources they had developed in the history of their own experience.

This aim began to be realized with the initiation of community-controlled schools such as Rough Rock, at which the school board has a locally-elected Navajo membership, and the curriculum incorporates Navajo language and culture. As Navajos have taken greater responsibility for their schools, including policy, operation, staffing and curriculum, the schools have become better integrated into their communities. In places like Rough Rock, the school is no longer an alien, intrusive element, but is an accepted part of the local environment. Both entities — the school and the community — have adjusted and coordinated their functions, and the school is a significant aspect of Navajo social and economic life. Helen Woody, a Rough Rock resident who is pictured in this volume, expresses her view of this blend:

We never got a chance to go to school. We were hidden or kept away for some reason we didn't understand. Even though I don't know what education is all about, I feel it's necessary, because things aren't going backward. Now children can better cope with what's in the future for them. They are learning and they are retaining their cultural heritage. I always tell my children, if you go to school, finish and get the most out of your education, you can have a nice job and won't have to look around to see where your next meal is coming from. If you have a good education, that's your key to everything.

³⁰ Boyce, p. 172-173.

³¹ Young, p. 61.

I know we can't duplicate the way the culture was taught 50 years ago. We can't do that. We have to teach it to fit this day and age. We can't teach it the way it was taught way back because that was oriented to that period of time. We must stay abreast of new events. The years don't go backward — they go forward — and we must, too.



The preceding pages have described a portion of Navajo experience. A basic theme has been struggle and adjustment. Throughout their history, the Navajos have attempted to make adjustments by finding a balance between elements in their environment.

The photographs in this book reflect the background of an individual who grew up in this environment, and who is now a part of the blend symbolized by a bilingual-bicultural school. Through pictures — of people, the land, the sky, plant and animal life — the artist shares his vision of balanced, harmonious relationships. In this view, the photographer is intrinsically linked to the images he records. It is this which makes his art unique.

PART II. *Photographs*

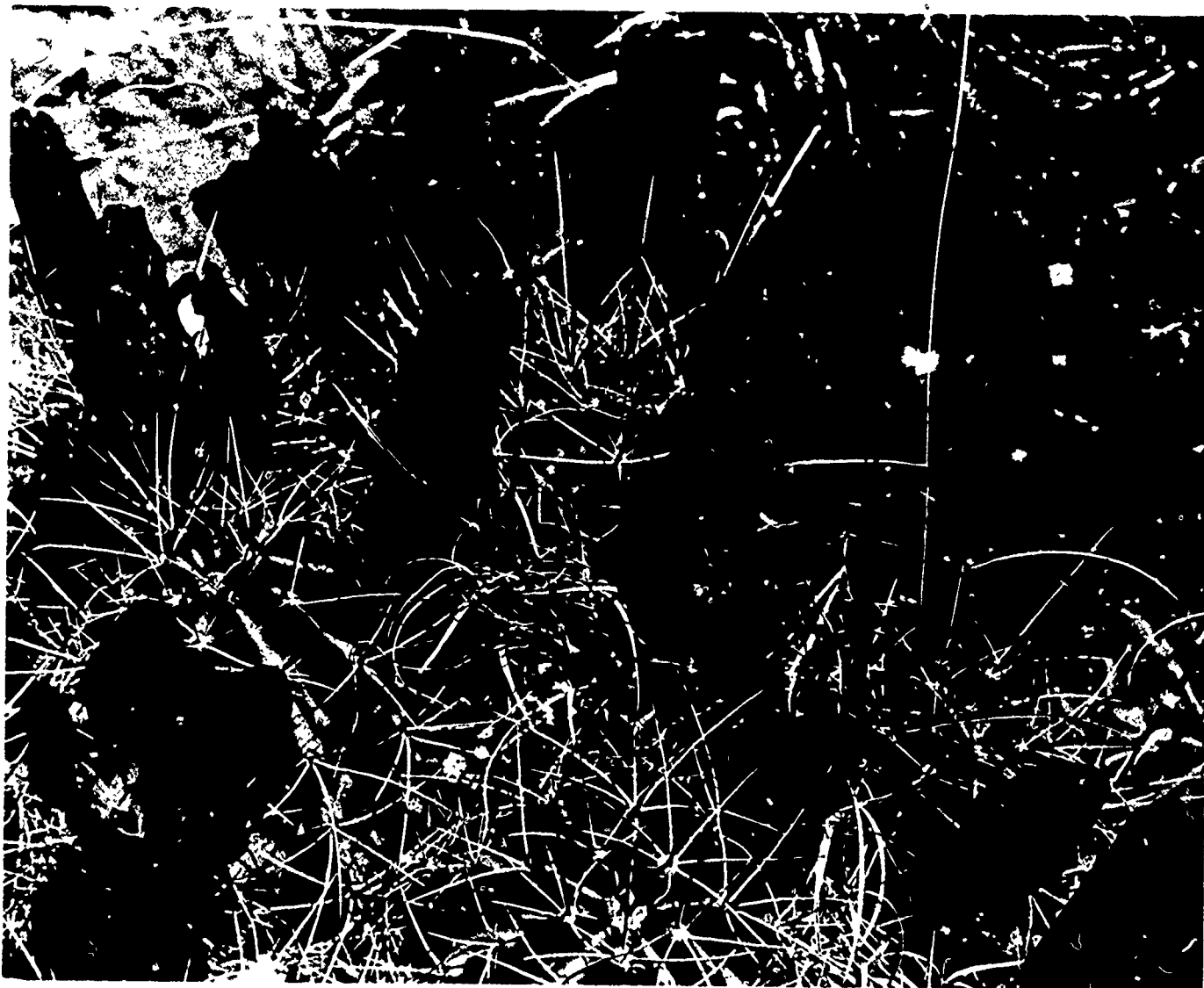
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Rough Rock moonrise.



The remnants of lightning's action coexist with plant and animal life near Black Mesa.



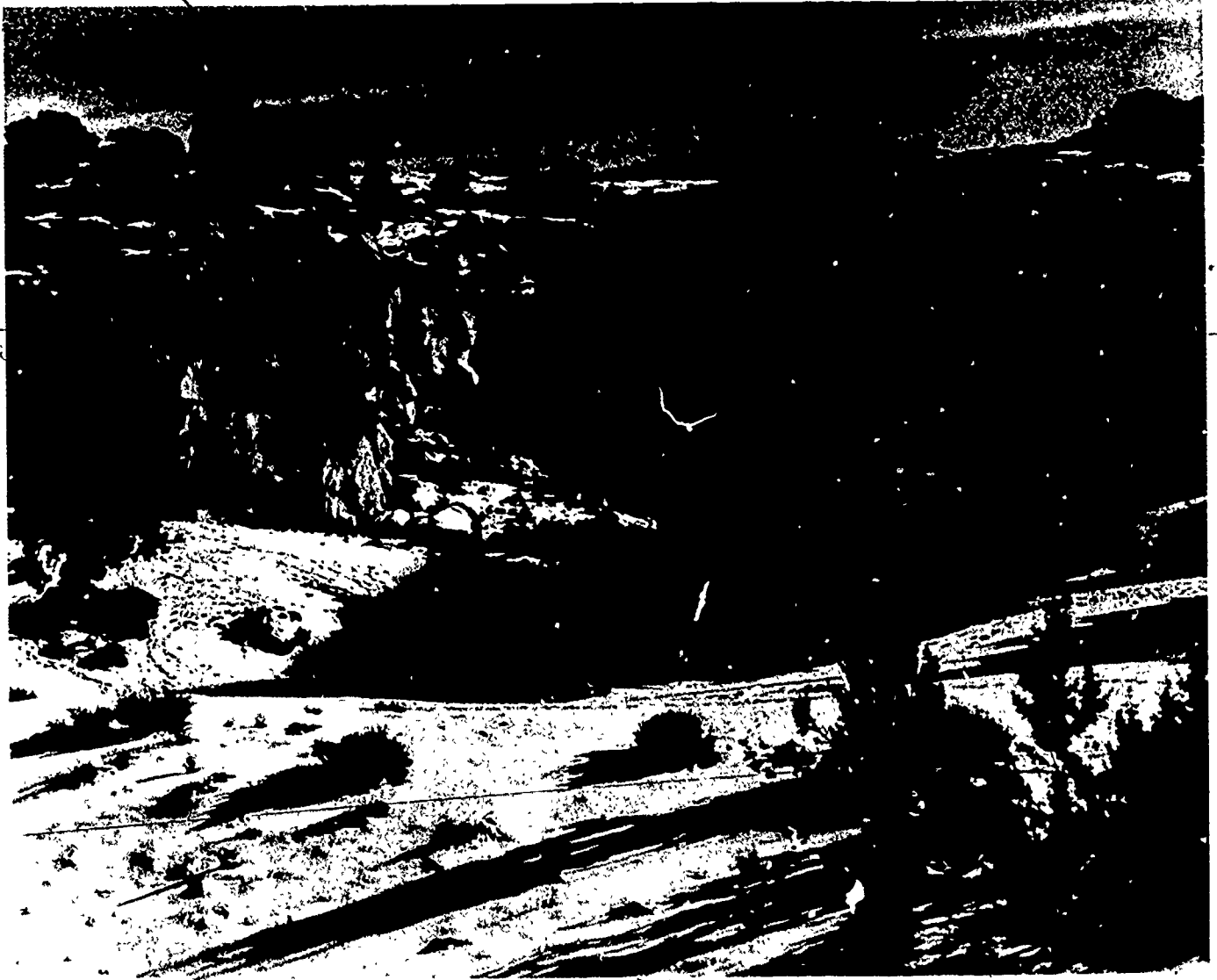
Hosh, cactus, in bloom during early spring.



Tsá'ászi', yucca, bears delicate flowers on dramatic spikes.



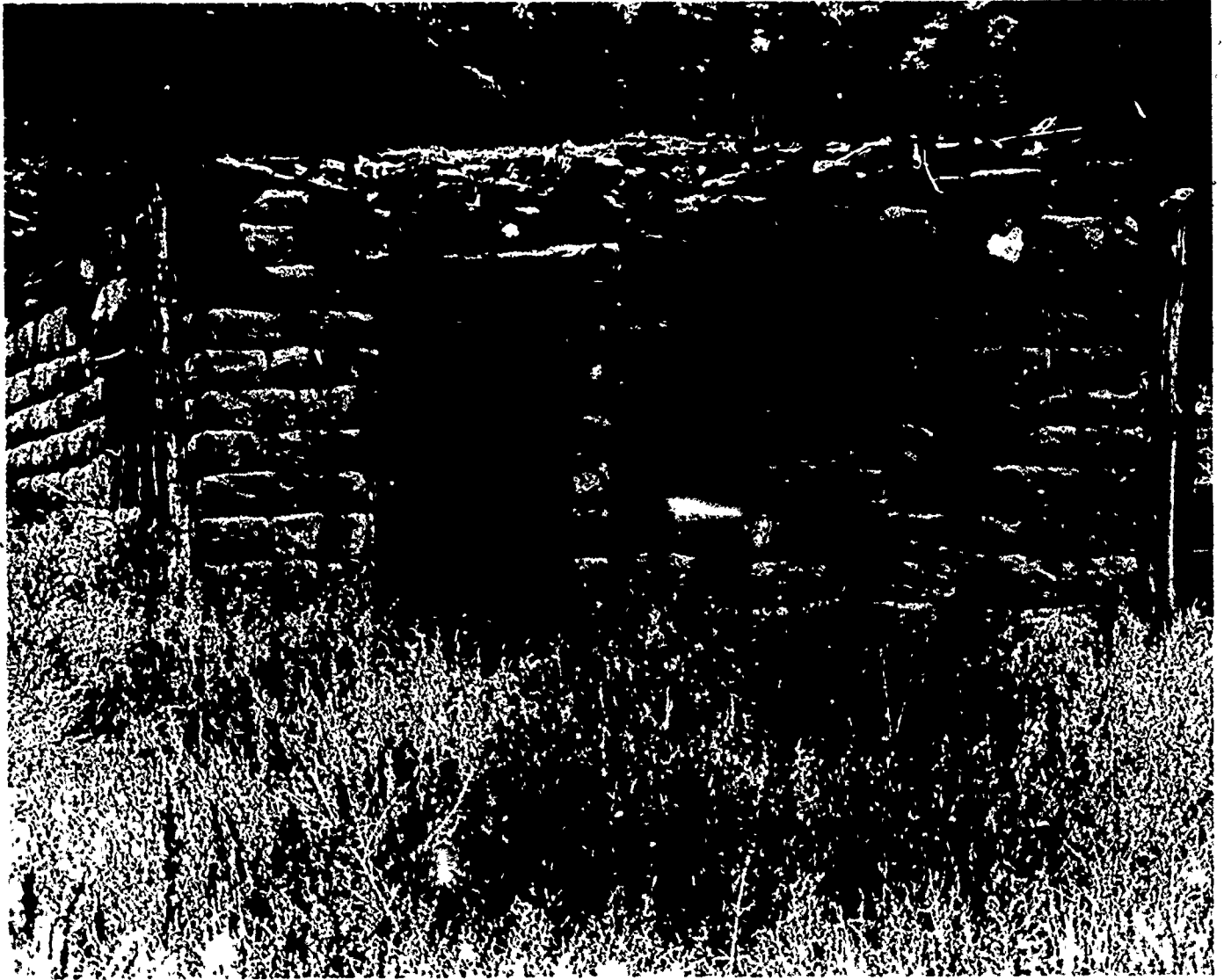
Juniper trees provide a cache for snow and fuel for humans during winter months.



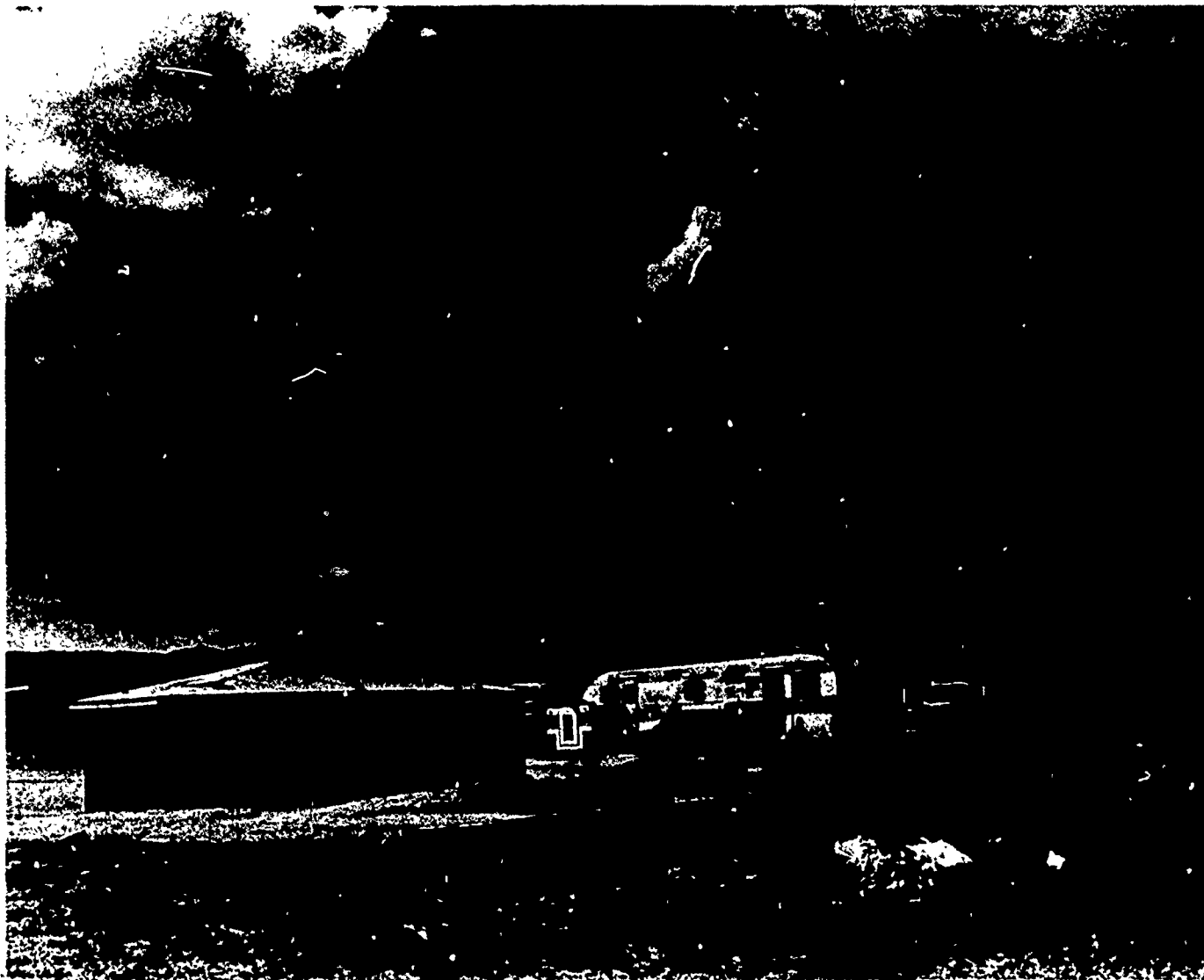
Snow blankets the canyon walls of Rough Rock Springs, the site for which Rough Rock was named.



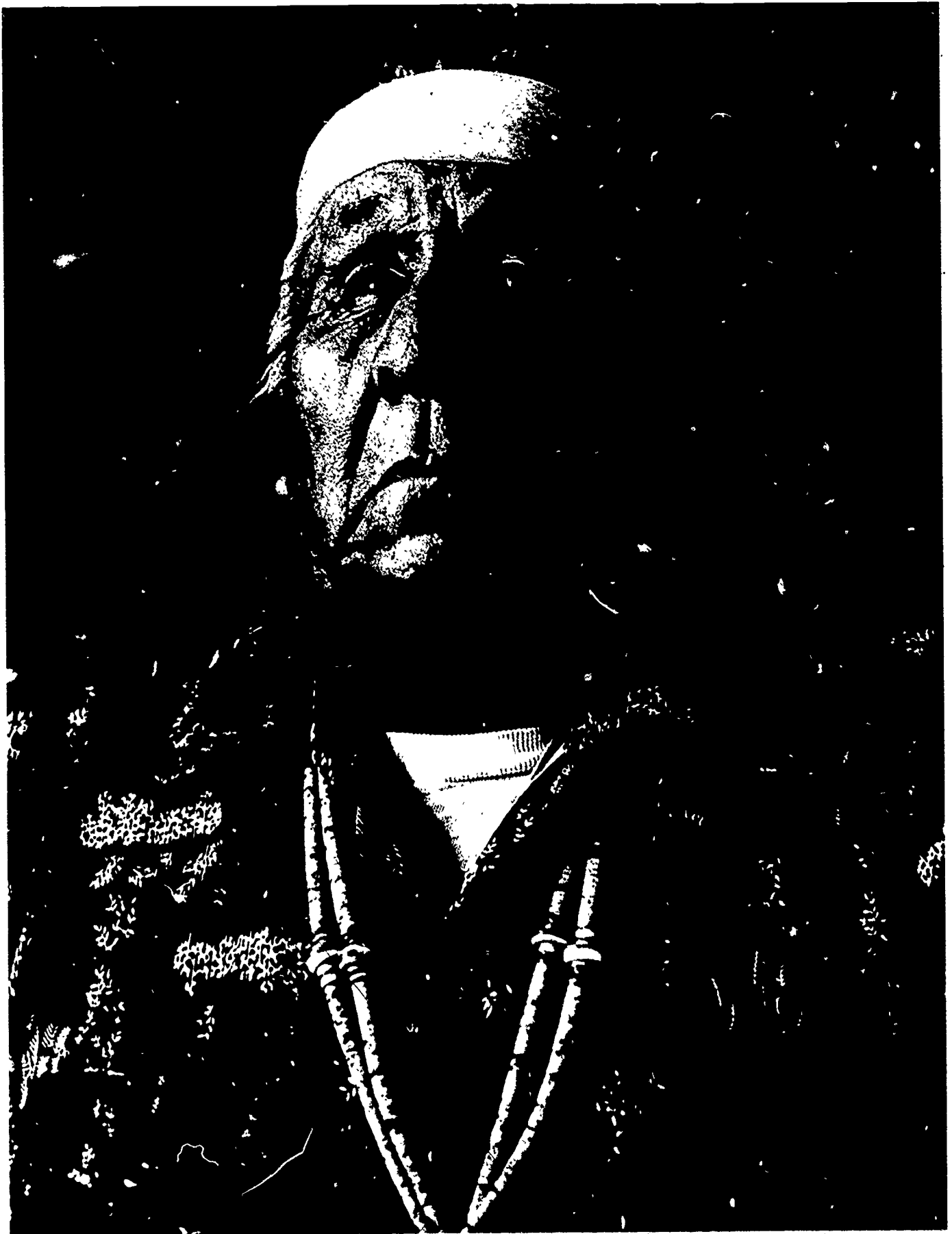
Water trough in Rough Rock Springs canyon.



The Rough Rock trading post is located near the springs. This original stone and adobe structure, once part of the store, is now unused.



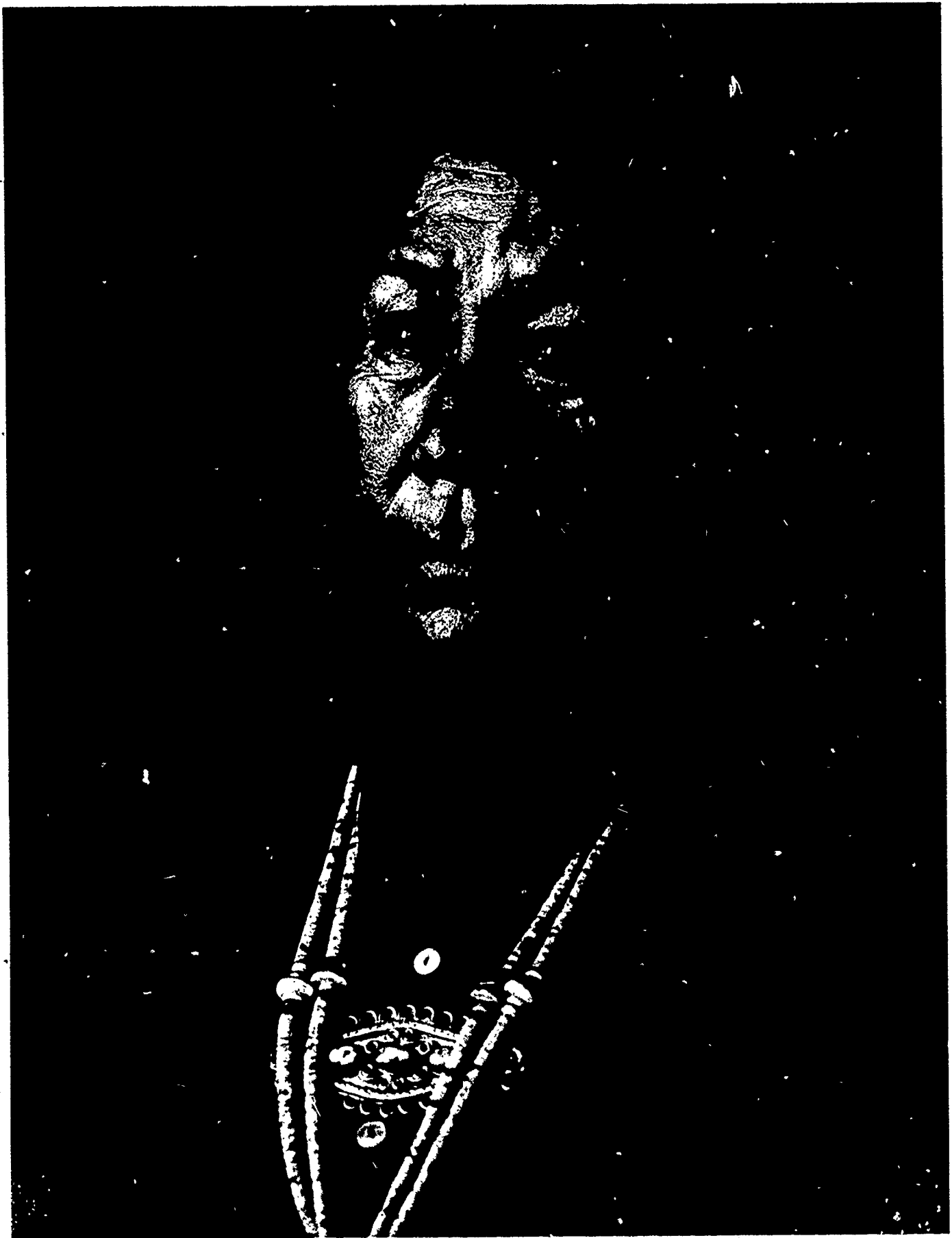
Homestead of Rough Rock Councilman.



Simon Secody, Rough Rock School Board member.



Traditional outdoor oven made of mud, water and rocks, is used to broil corn and bake yeast bread and kneelown bread.



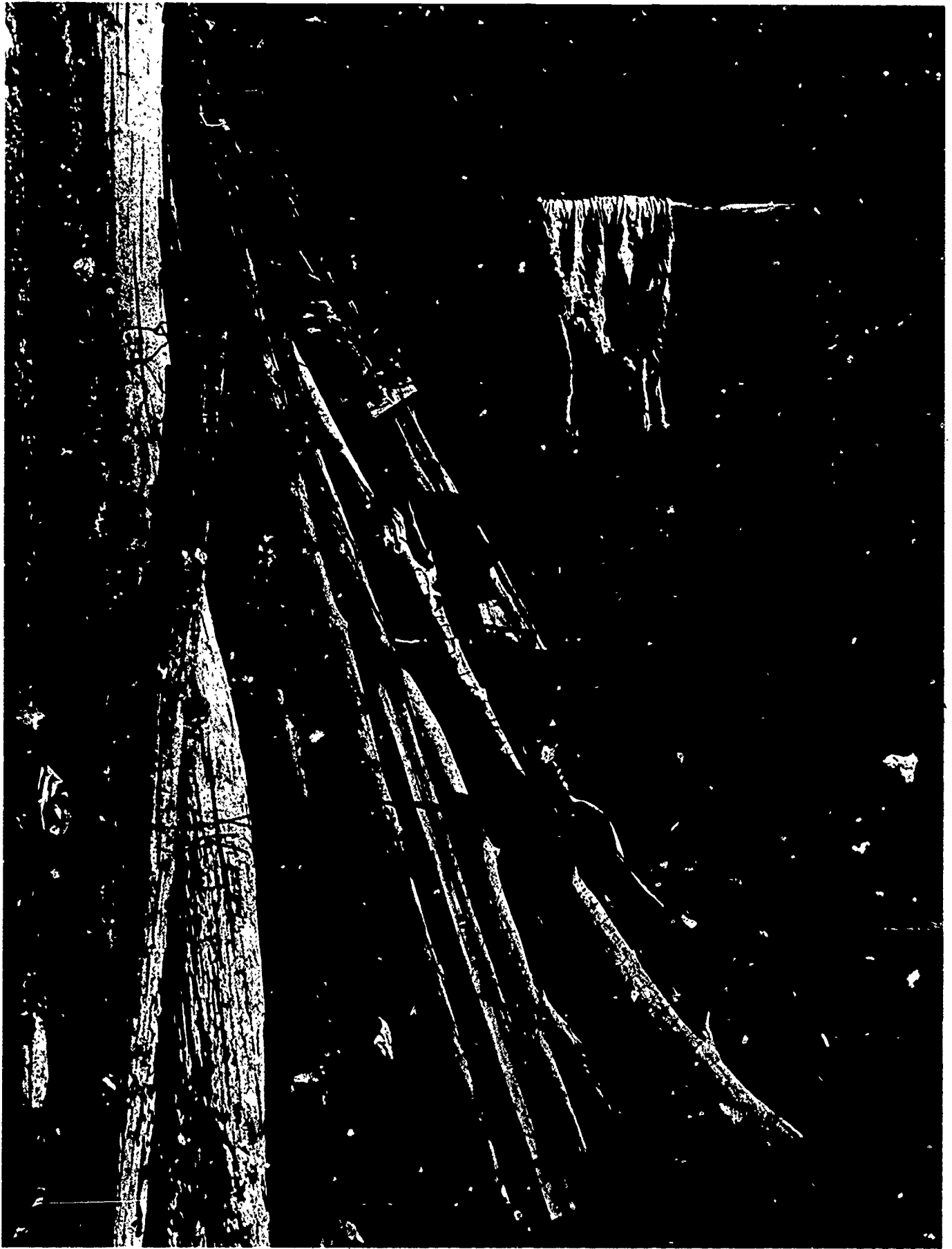
Helen Woody considers her lifestyle and values to be "traditional," but sees the benefits of a good formal education.



During winter, tumbleweed is used to protect sheep and goat corrals from biting northerly winds.



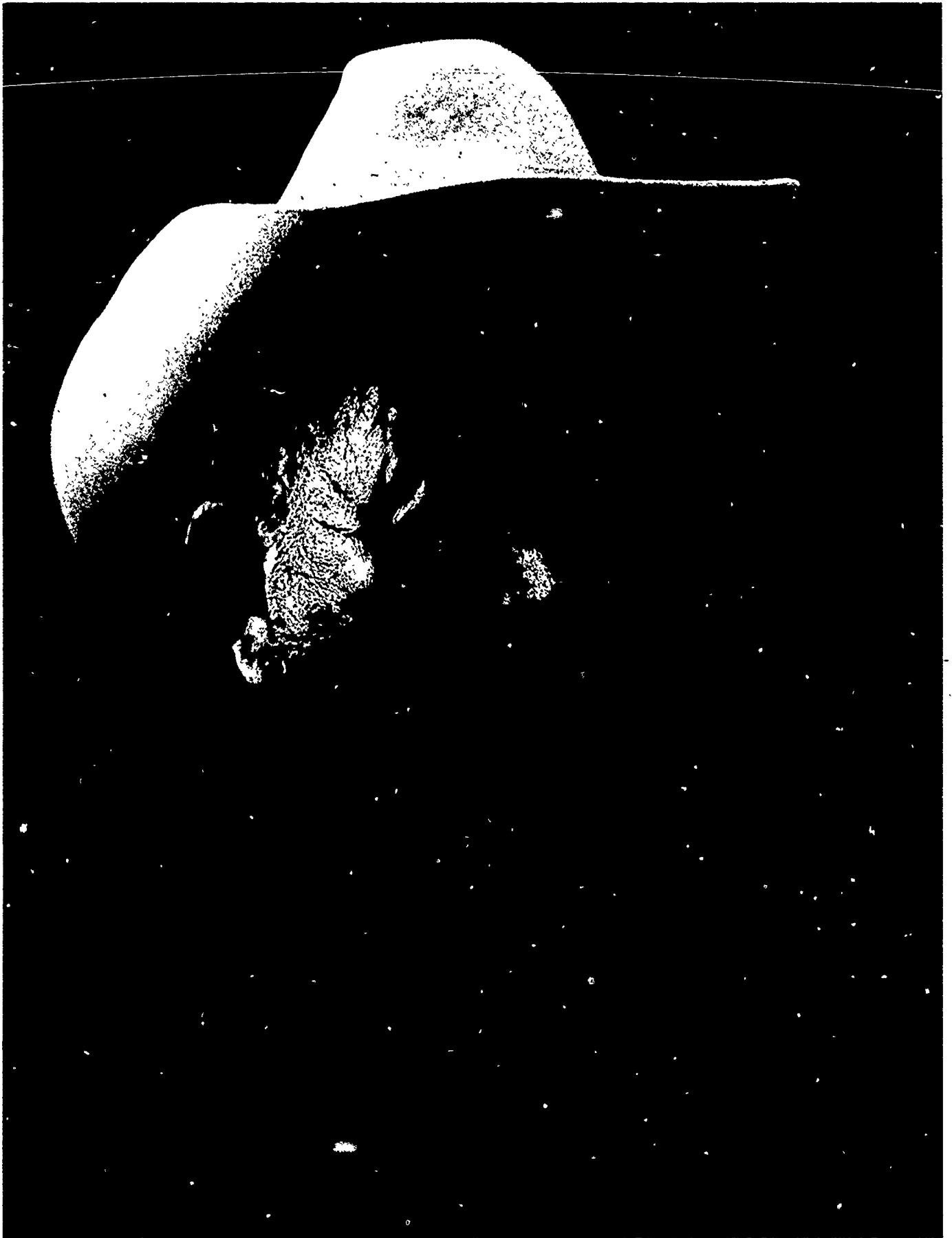
T'izi, goats, in early morning, hear the jingle of tin cans which tells them the herder is coming to let them out.



Goat skin dries against the doorway of a summer shade house. The skin will be used to make leggings or perhaps as a rug.



Bá na'illso'i or "orphans" are kept near the home until they are strong enough to survive with the rest of the herd.



John Dick, Rough Rock community leader and stock man.

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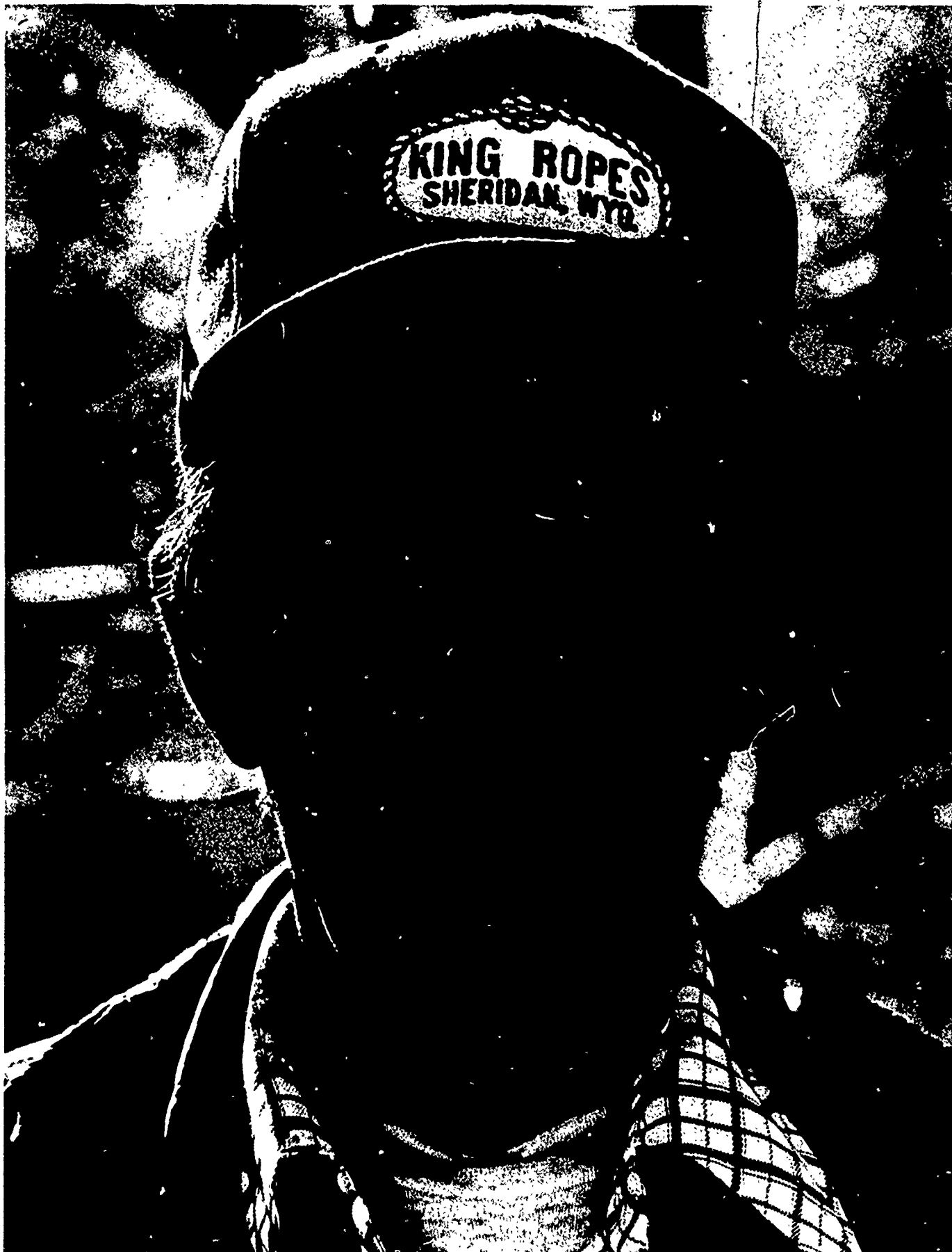
The four elements — water, earth, sun and air — combine to provide the basis for life.



Future champion at the rodeo.



Various stock companies contribute stock for the rodeo. "Adios" waits in the foreground.



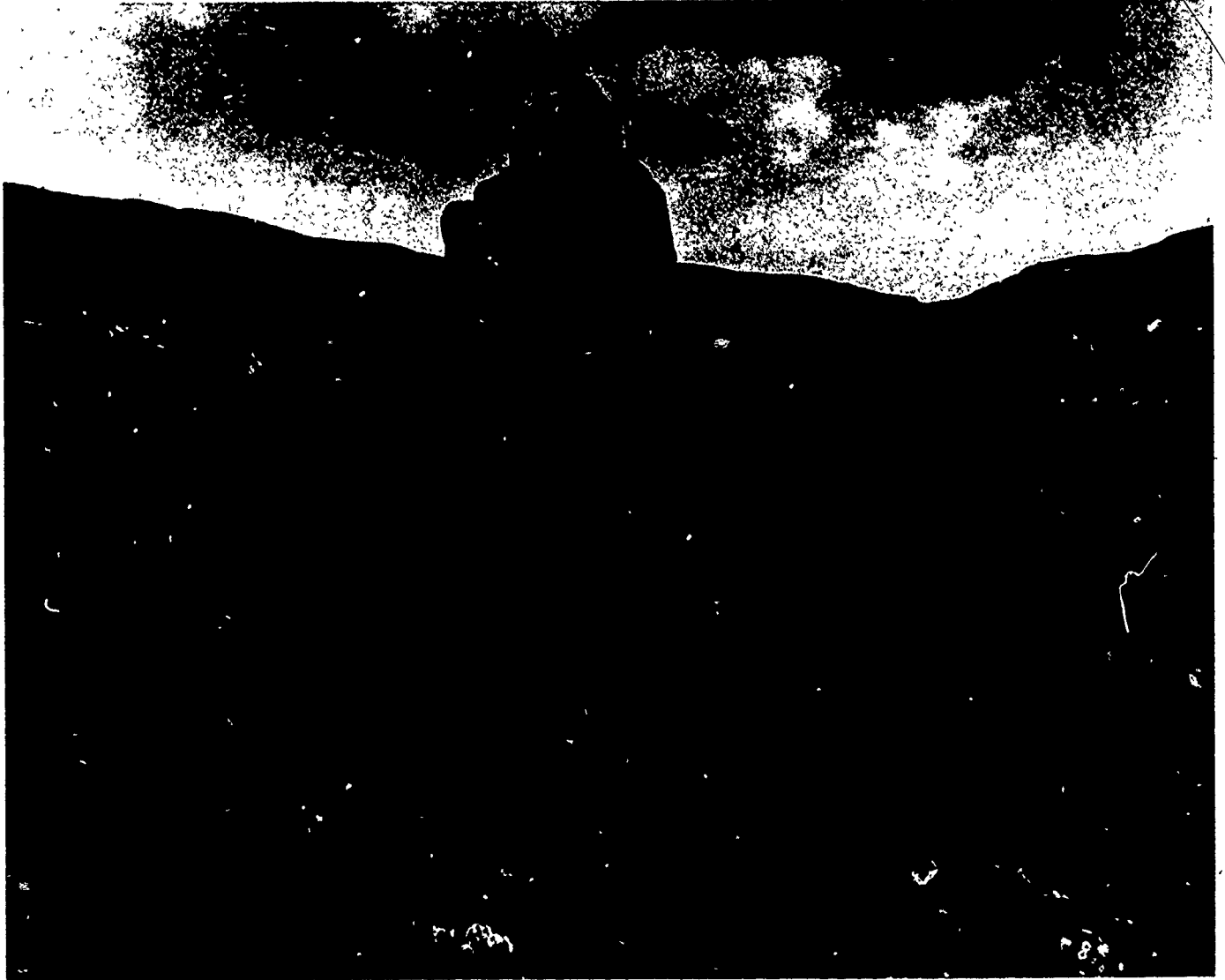
Thomas James, secretary on the Rough Rock School Board.



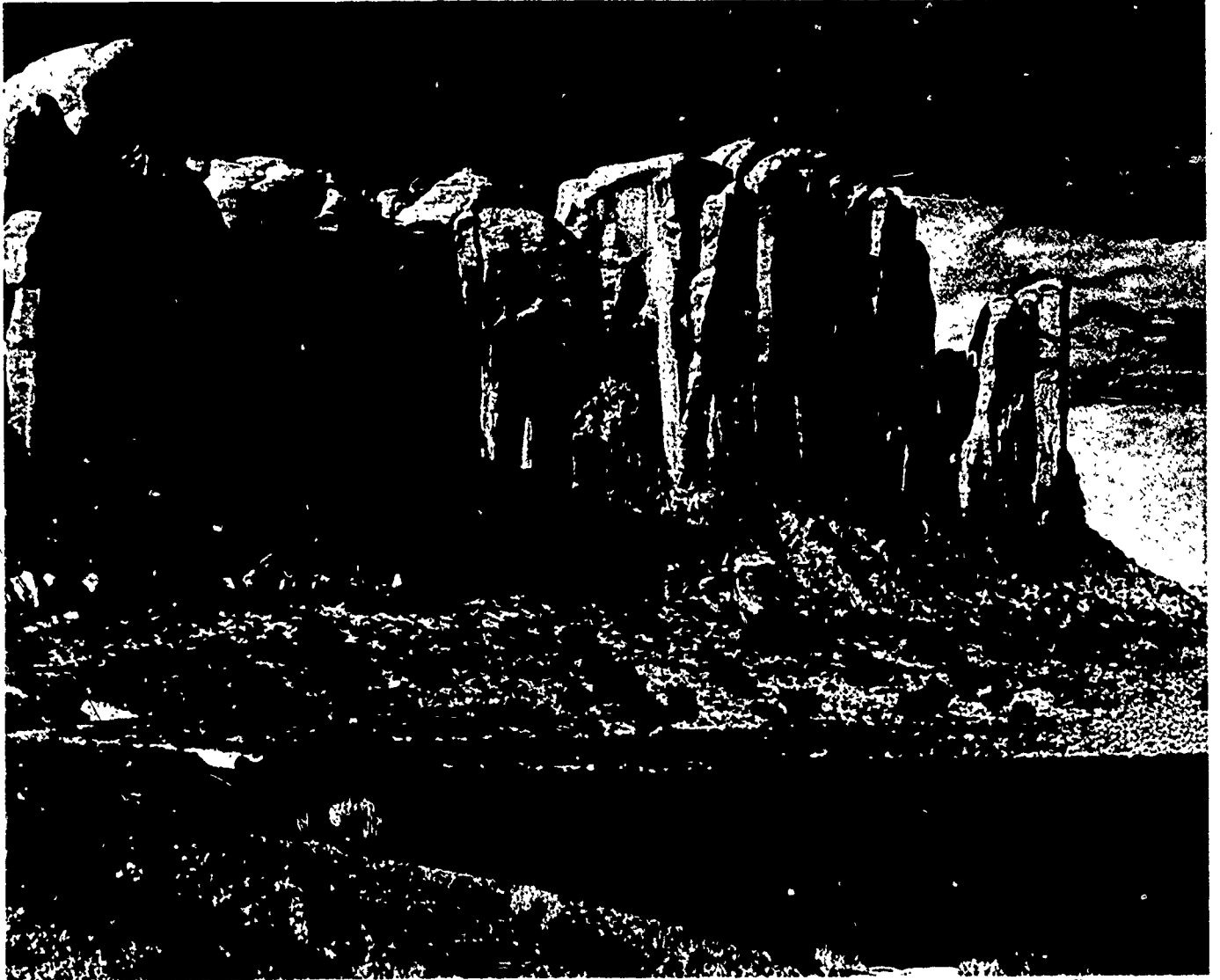
Irene and George Nez's place, near Rough Rock.



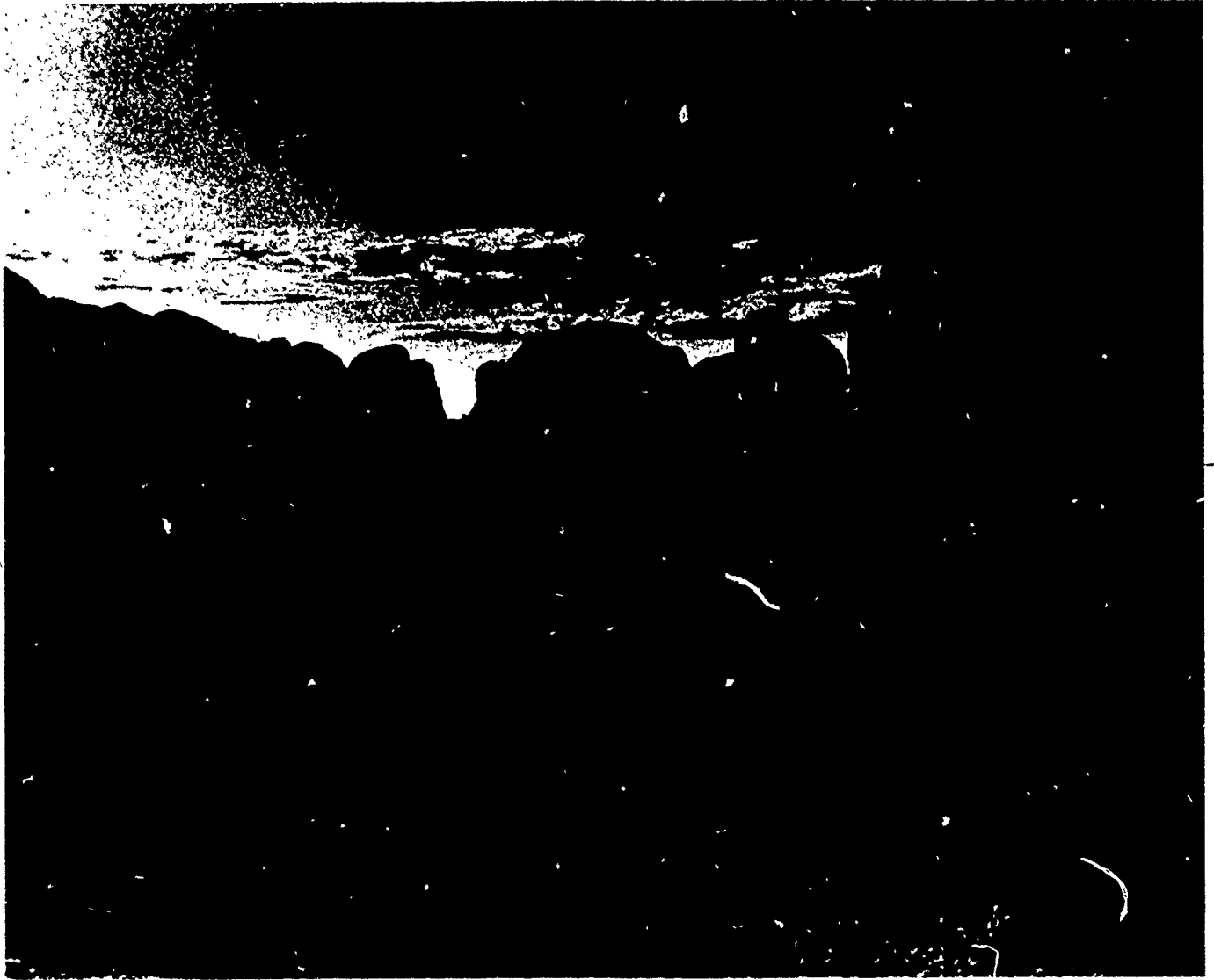
Racy, a student at Rough Rock Elementary School.



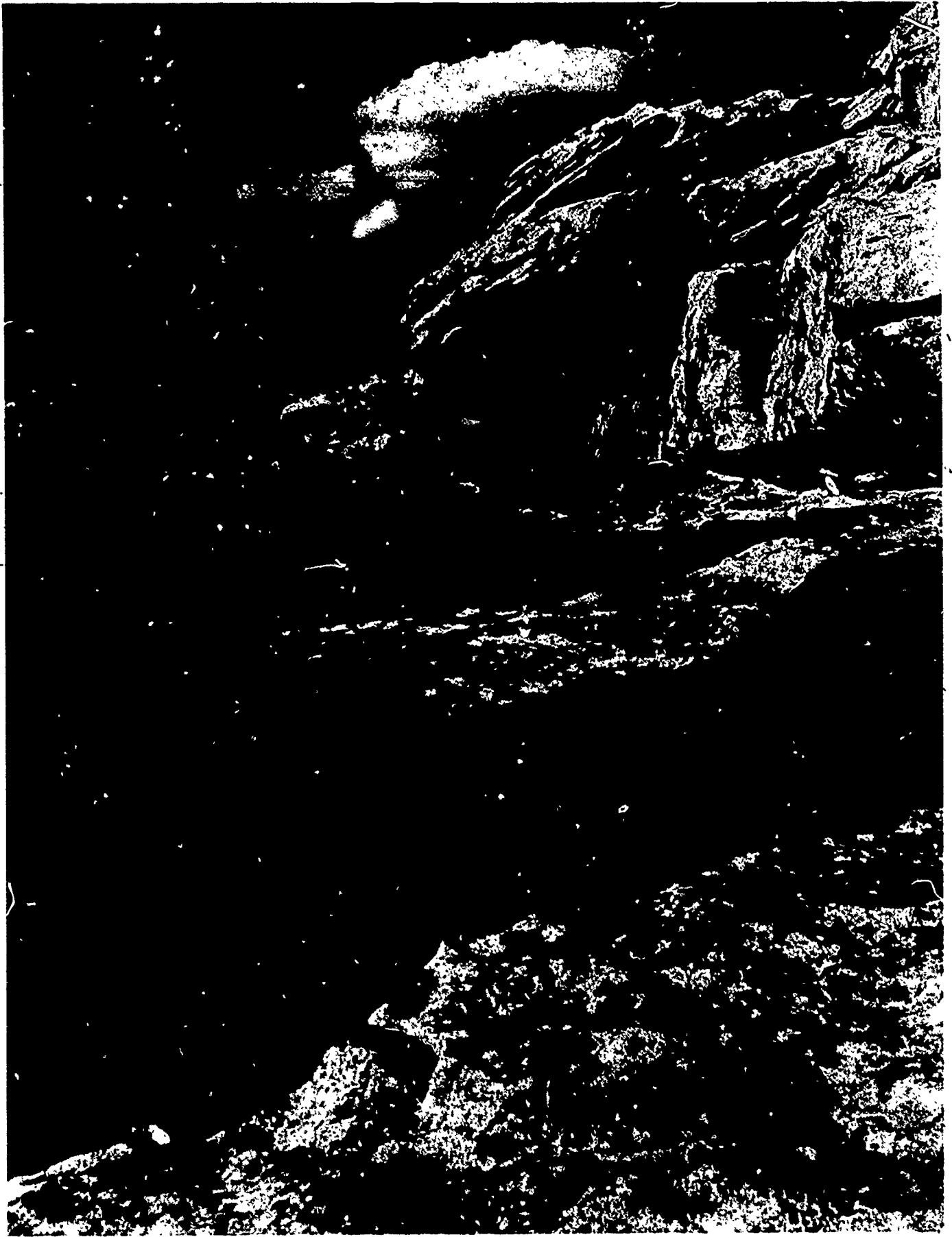
Standing Rock, partially surrounded by a corral, marks the roadside between Rough Rock and Many Farms.



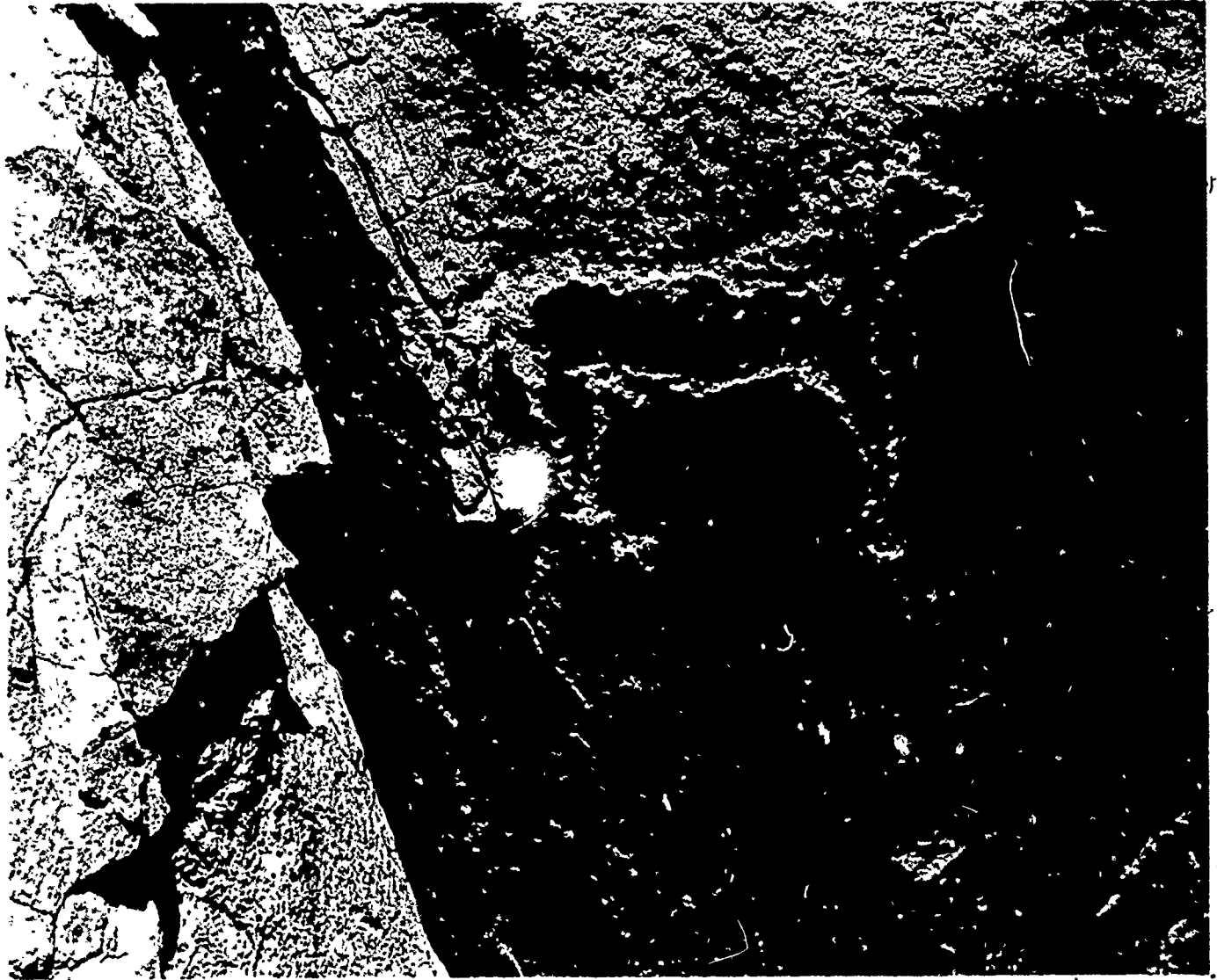
Dramatic buttes rise from the sandy floor of Monument Valley, in northern Arizona and southern Utah.



Tsé Bii'niidzizgal, "White Streaks Inside Rocks," is the Navajo name for Monument Valley.



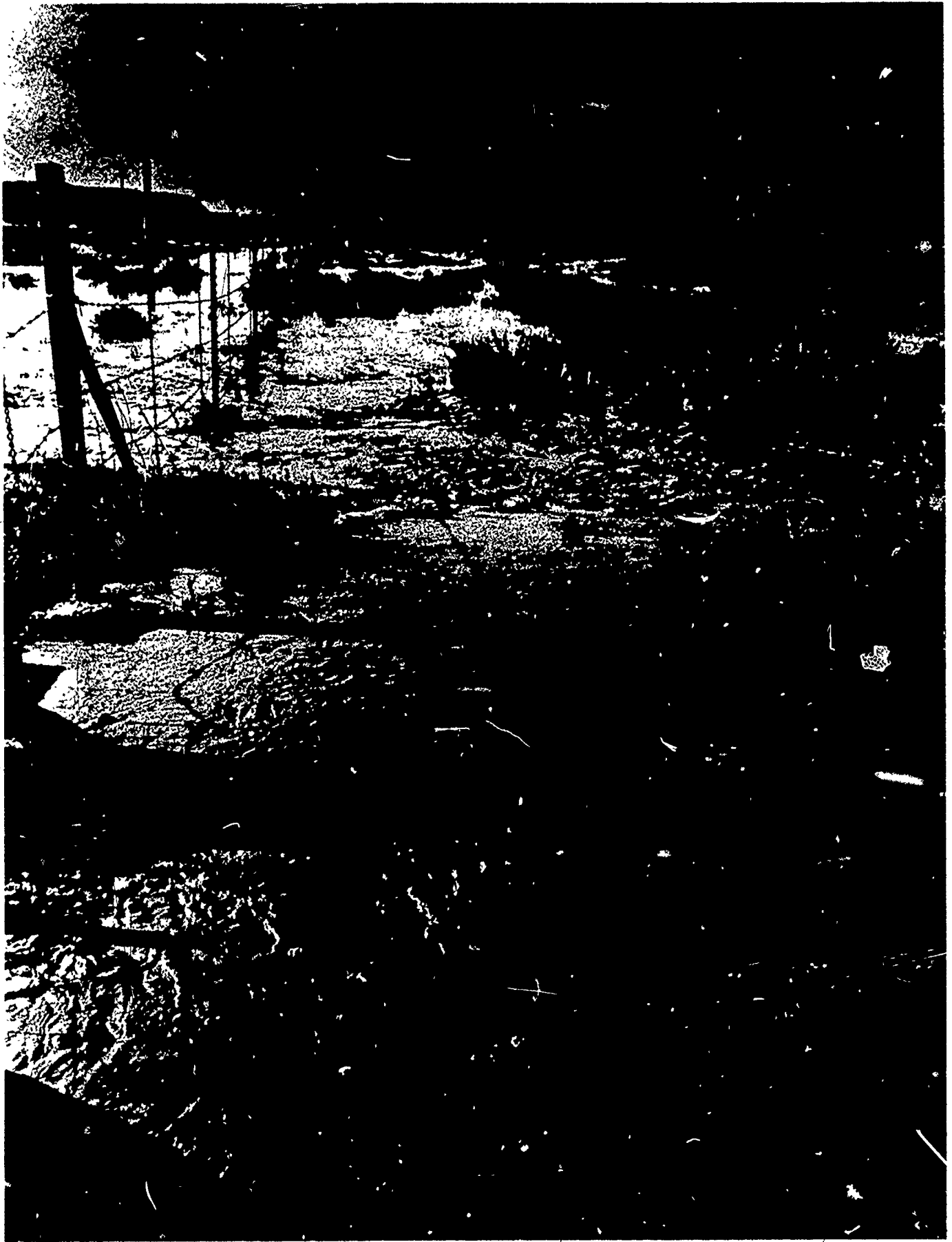
Rock formation atop Canyon de Chelly, about 35 miles southeast of Rough Rock.



Petroglyph depicts a horse; near Rough Rock.



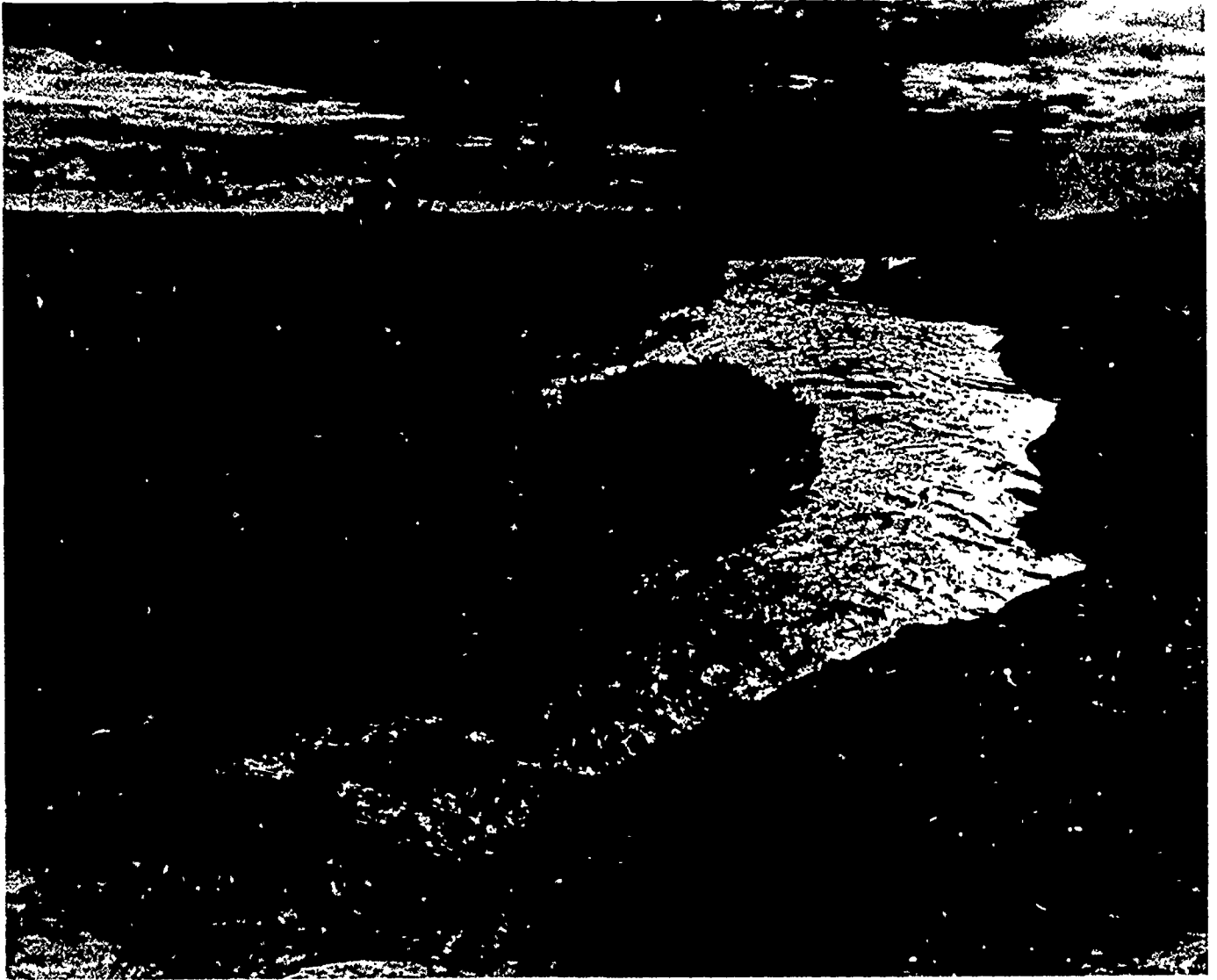
In inclement weather, even pickup trucks sometimes fail to navigate the reservation's many unpaved roads.



Torrential summer rains send flood waters rushing down the Chinle Valley.



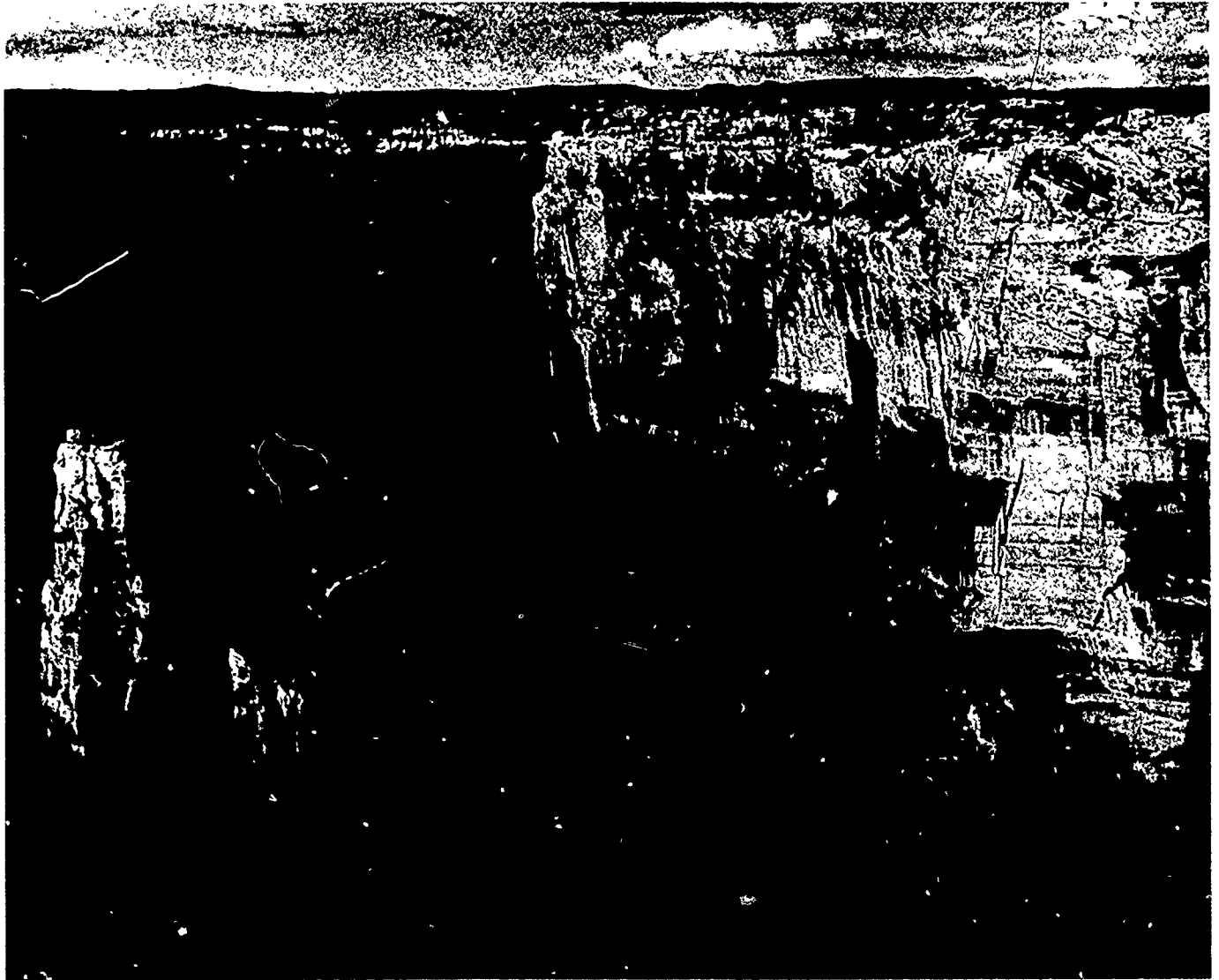
Rising waters leave many families unable to drive to or from home.



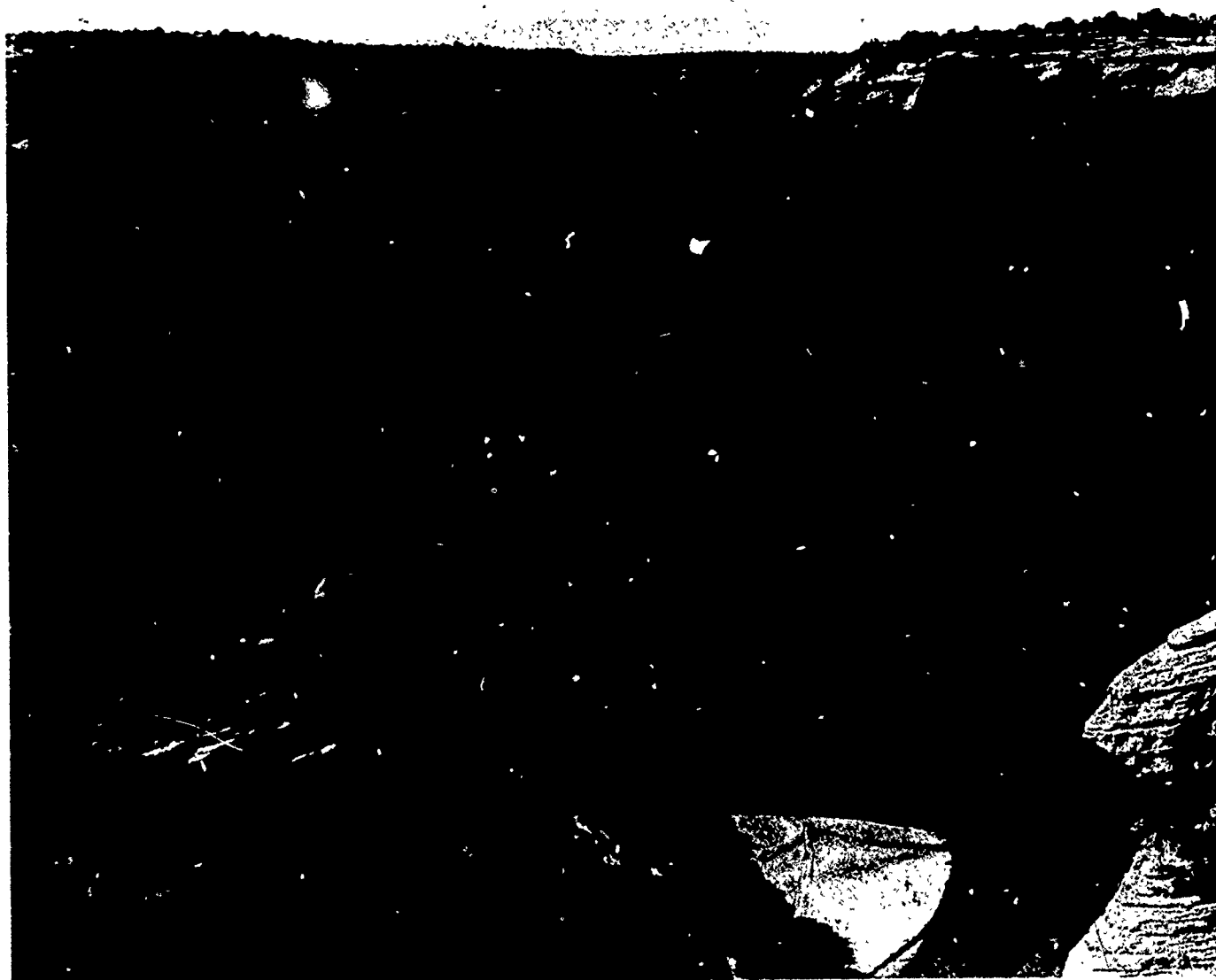
Summer flood waters fill washes and merge at the mouth of Canyon de Chelly (Black Mesa in far right background).



In *Tseyi*, Canyon de Chelly, light and dark create striking portraits against the canyon walls.



Spider Rock (*Na'ashjéé'tsé*), in Canyon de Chelly, casts a shadow across the canyon.



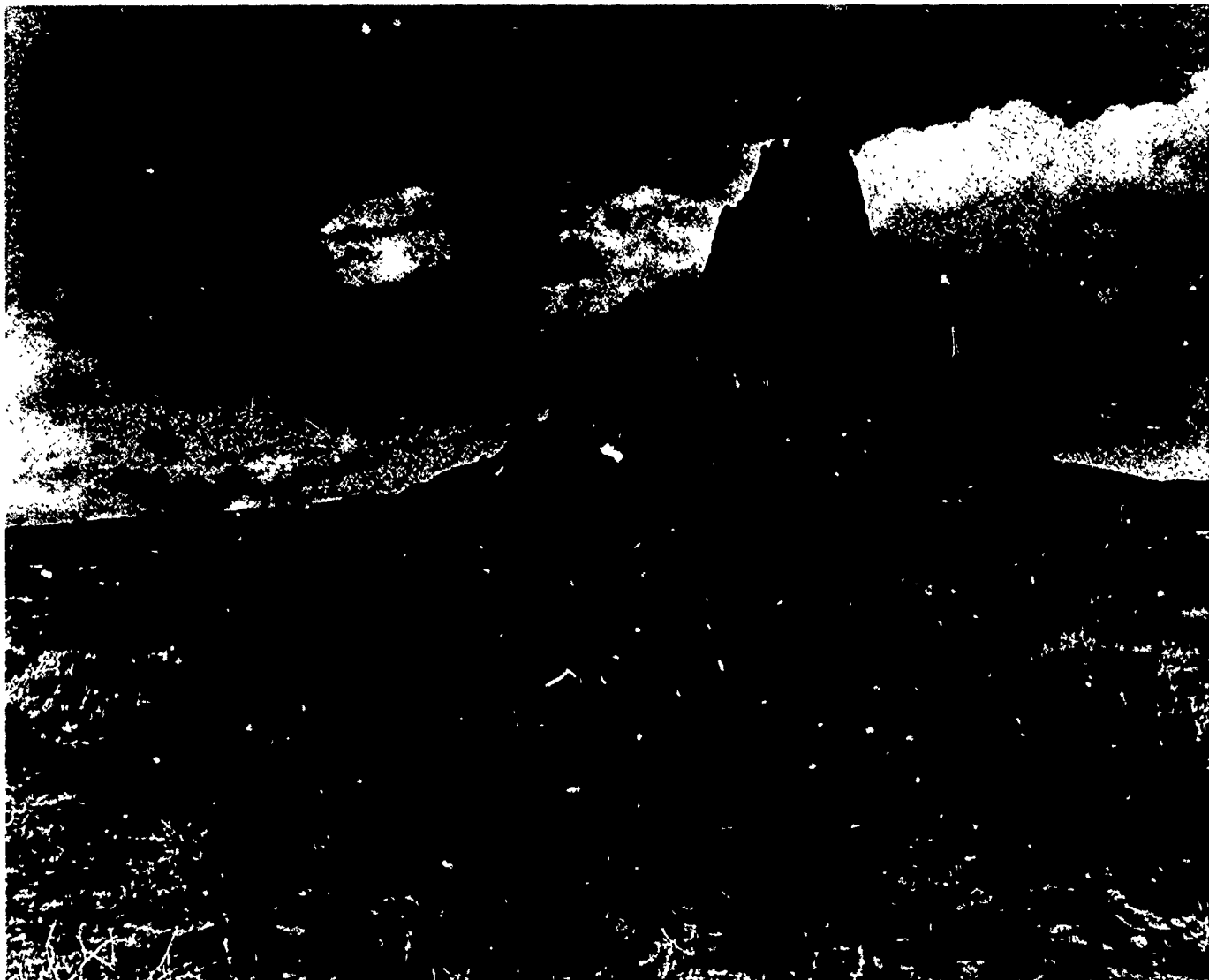
Wash circumvents an imposing rock formation near Antelope House, one of several ruins in the canyon.



Navajos maintain farms in the bottom of the canyon, and washes are dotted with apple and peach orchards.



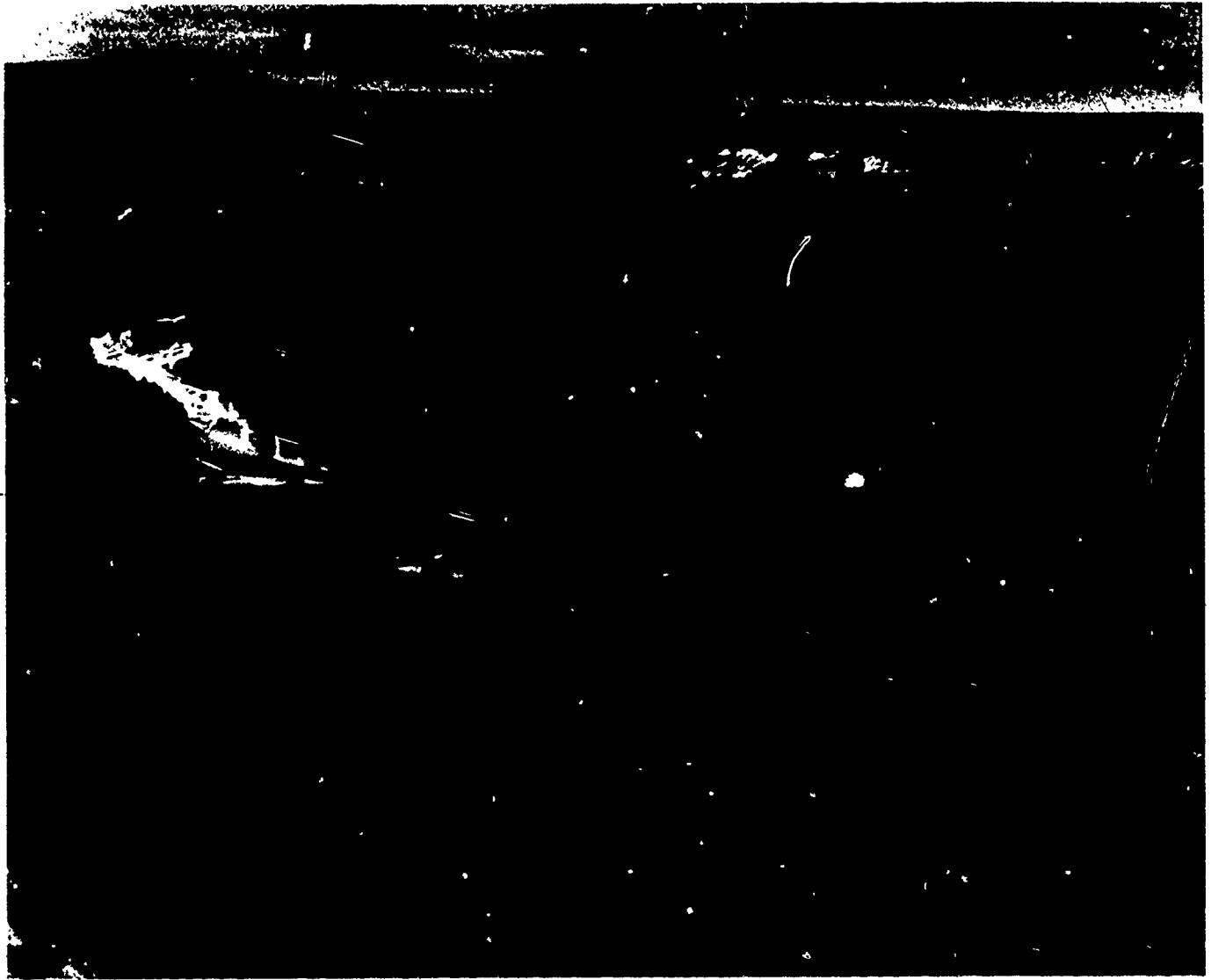
Evening storm near Round Rock, Arizona.



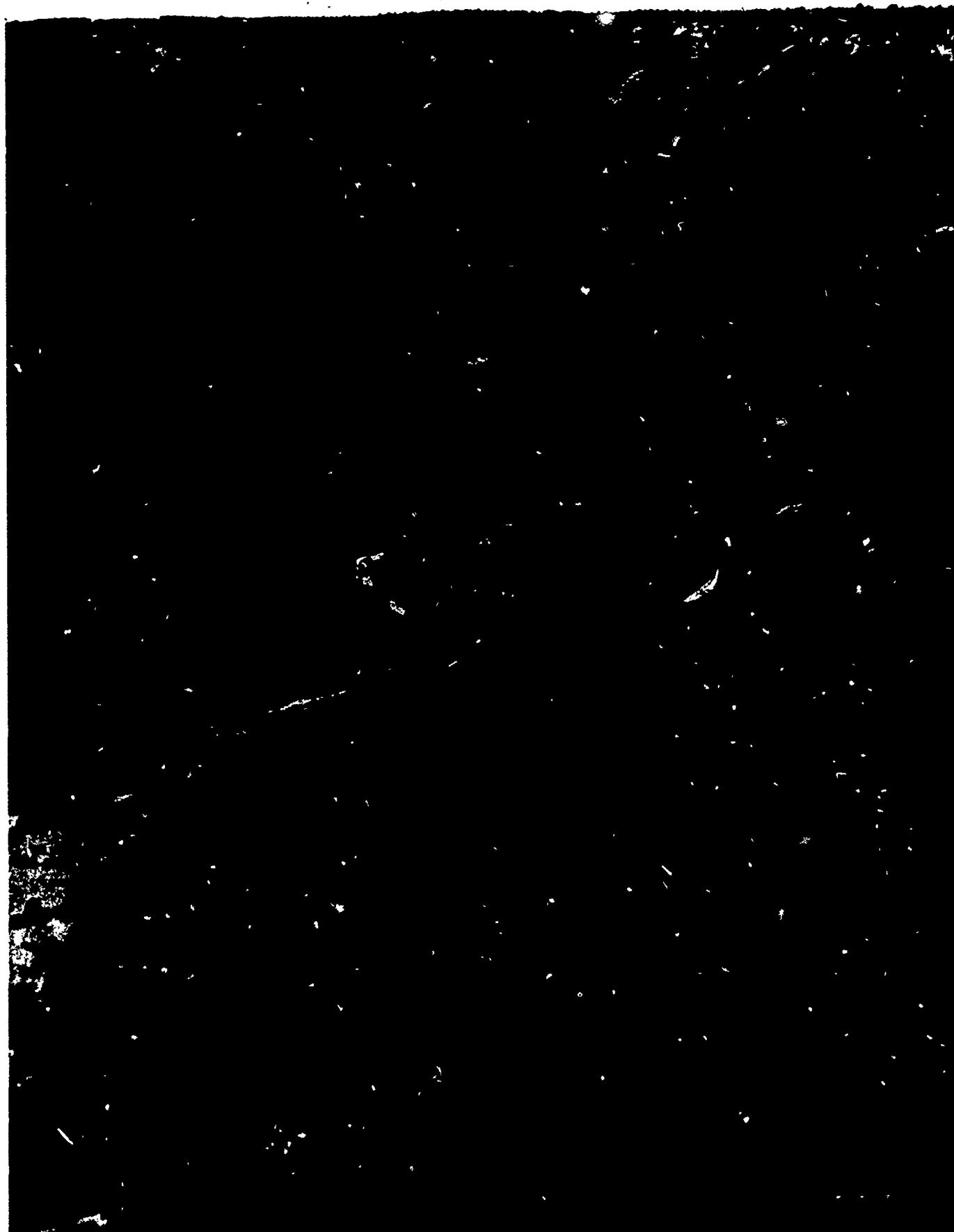
Agaatá ("Much Wool"), near Monument Valley, was named for the piles of wool which accumulated when the site was used for tanning hides.



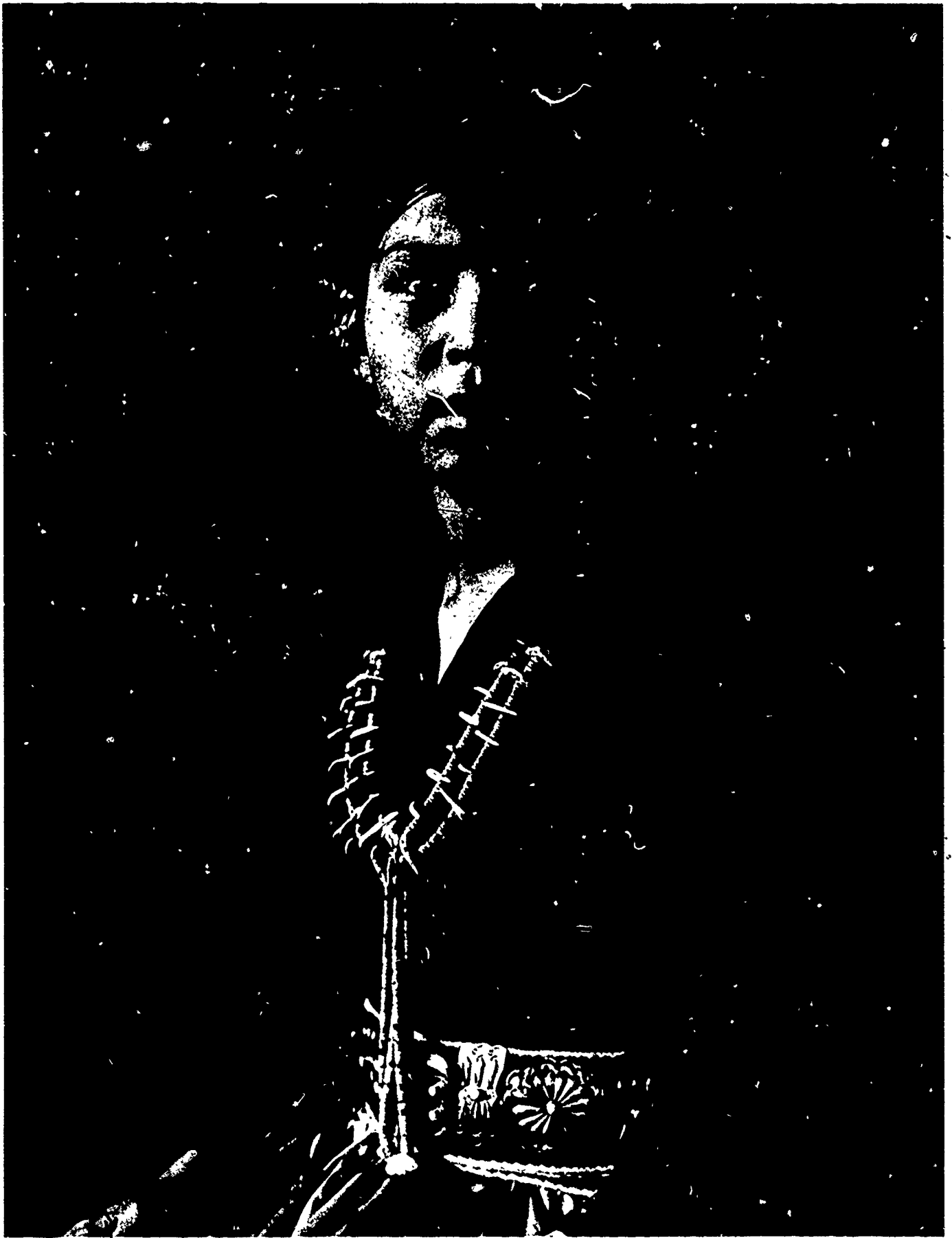
View of Canyon de Chelly from Spider Rock, looking west.



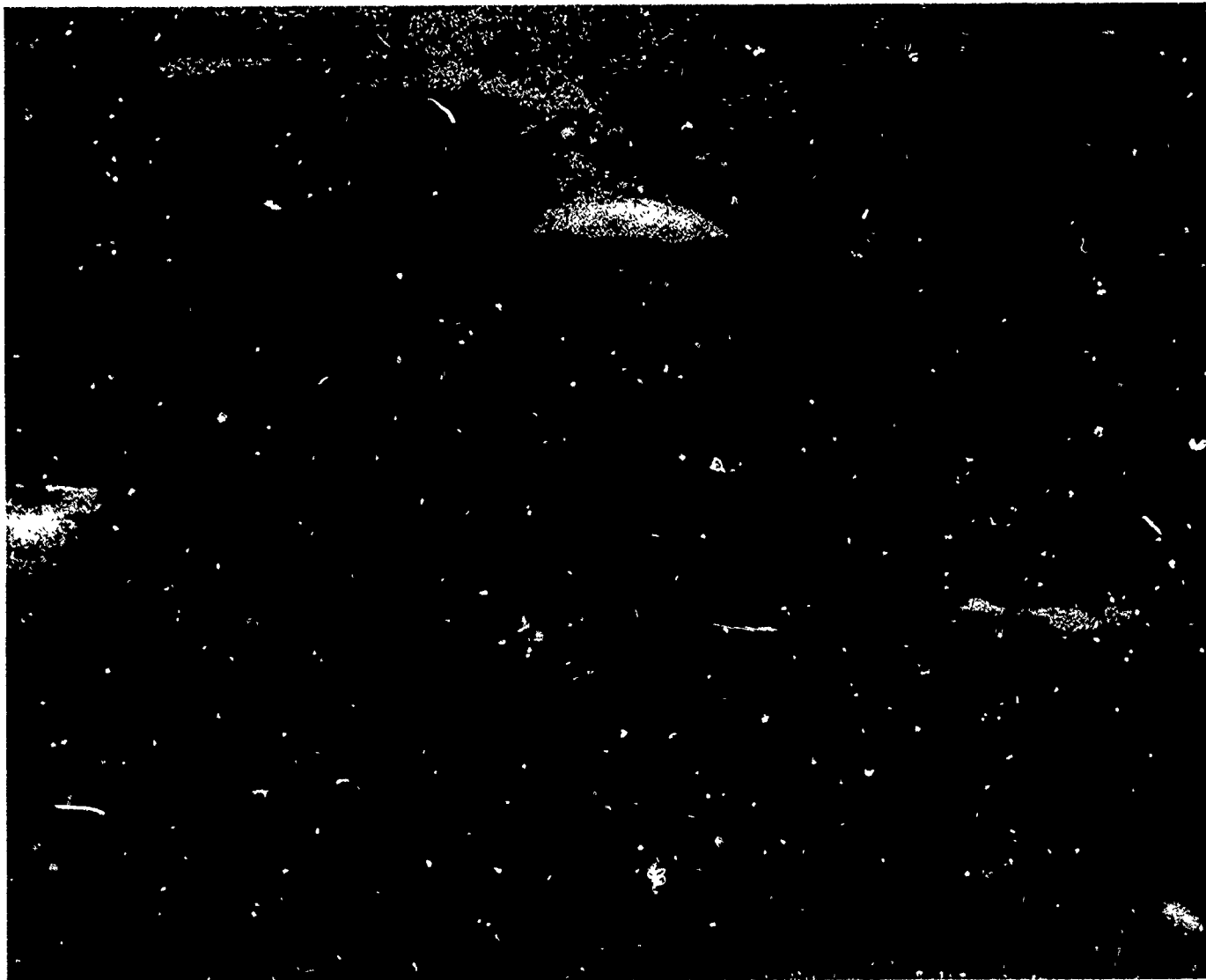
Looking west toward Black Mesa from White House Ruins Overlook, at dusk.



Wash winds through the canyon; viewed from Junction Overlook.



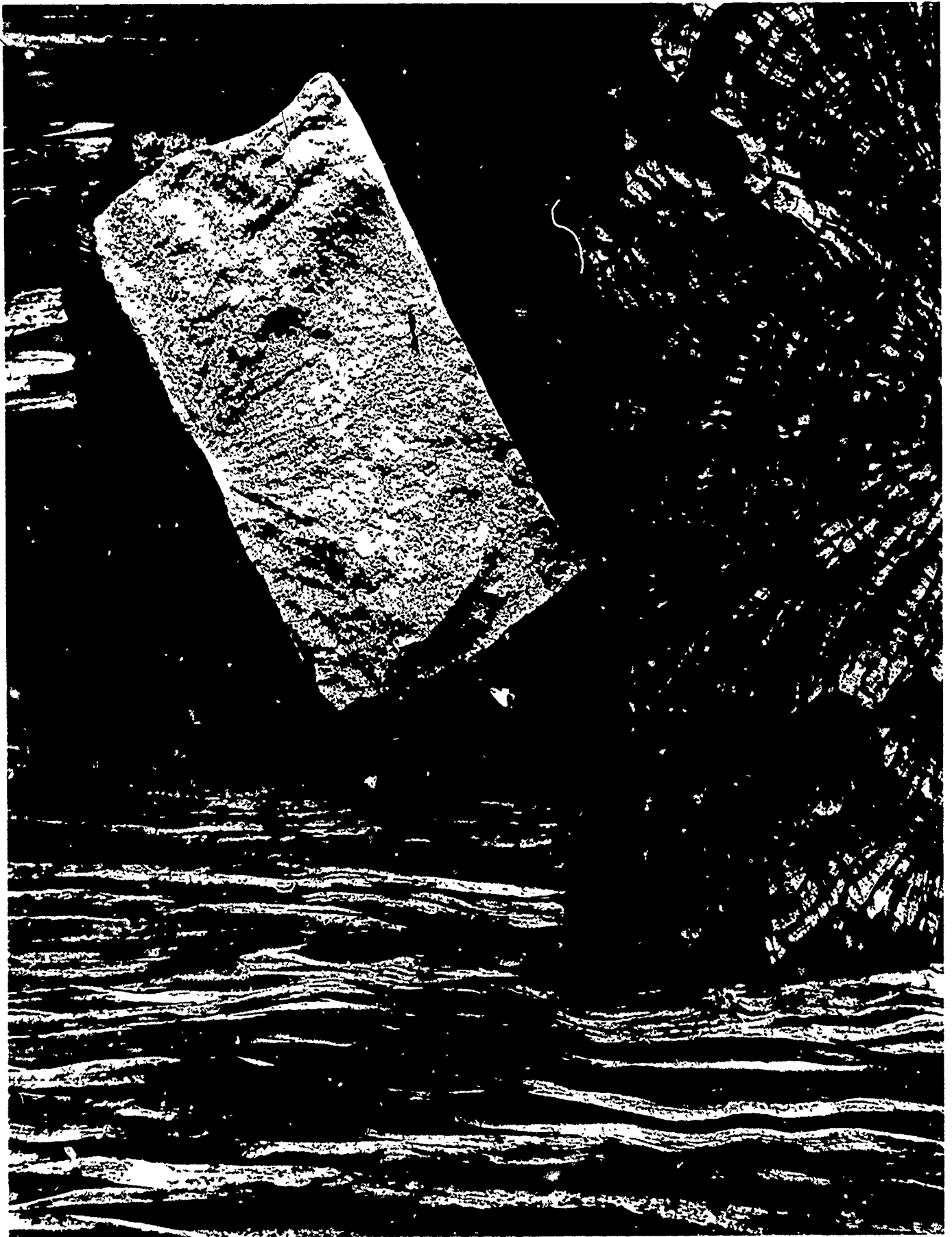
Lynnette Yazzie, daughter of Kée Charlie and Betty Lou Yazzie, attends the fourth grade at Rough Rock.



Round Rock during an autumn storm.



Five-year old Michelle Woody, daughter of Michael and Alta Woody, is learning to speak and write Navajo and English at Rough Rock School.



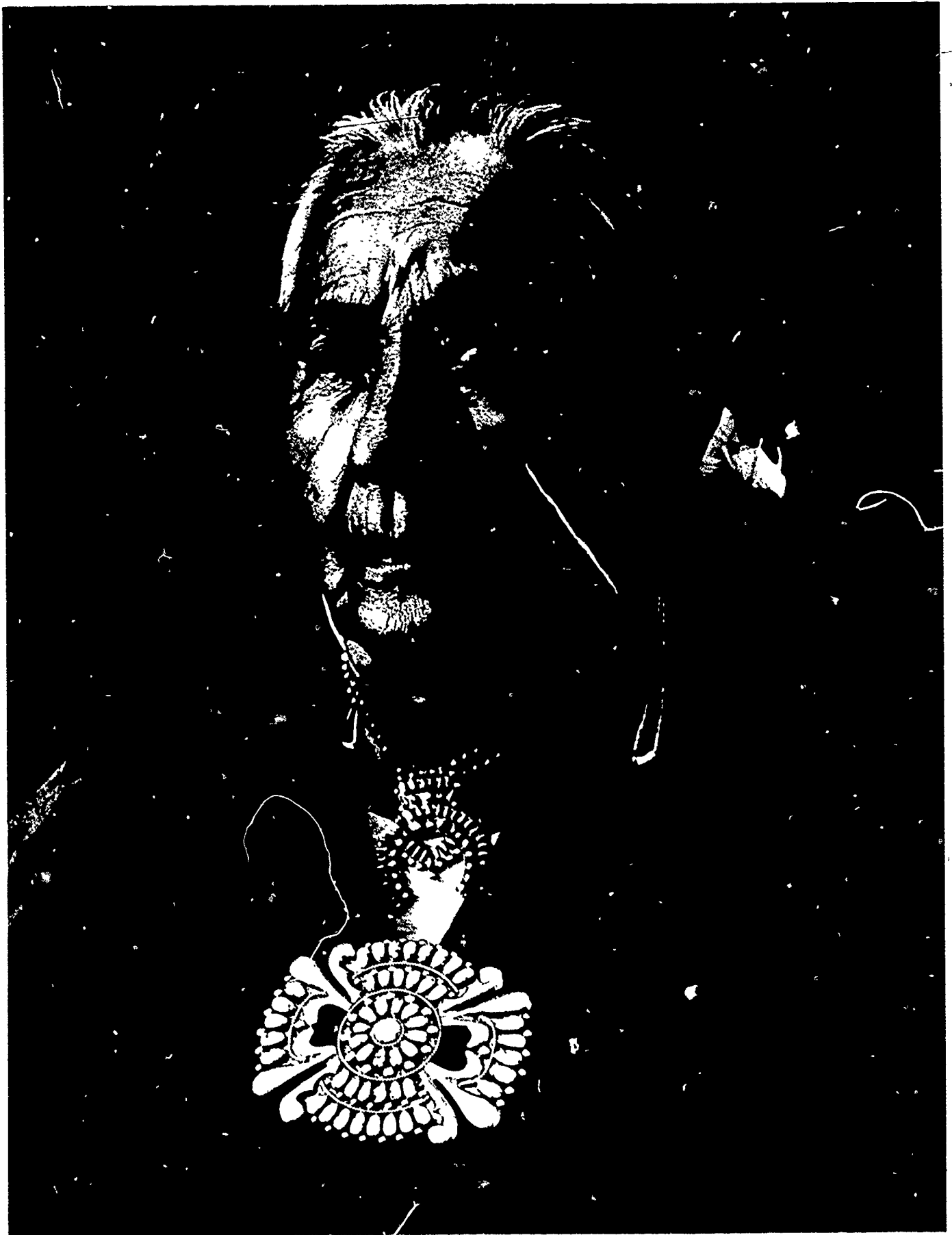
Components of a log cabin.



Weathered plank, part of a hay shed.



Twin limbs of a lightning-burnt tree stretch skyward.



Hasbah Charley is a grandmother and serves in many leadership roles in the Rough Rock community.

PART III. *Additional Information*

About the Photographer

Fred Bia is a Navajo artist who, prior to receiving training in photography, worked as a freelance artist in oils, pastels and watercolors. He was raised in the Rough Rock area, and most of his paintings and photographs depict the striking landforms, people and lifestyles of that region. He attended school at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, then enrolled in the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, graduating in 1970. He returned that year to Rough Rock to teach art at the recently established Rough Rock Demonstration School. In 1972, at the age of 23, he was elected to the school board, of which he eventually became president. He resigned several years later to pursue his artwork but in November, 1980, returned to the school as an illustrator for a bilingual-bicultural curriculum development project. While working on textbook illustrations, Mr. Bia became increasingly interested in photography, a field in which he had some experience since photographs often provided a source for his realistic landscapes. In 1982 he attended workshops given by Ansel Adams and Cole Weston. Mr. Bia continues to work for the Rough Rock Demonstration School as an illustrator-photographer while maintaining a career in freelance photography and painting. He lives at Rough Rock with his wife, Julie, and daughters Andreana Leigh, 8, and Shannon Marie, 1.

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