

We Walk in Beauty



NATIVE AMERICAN

Photographs & Words

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photographed and compiled by
GARY AUERBACH

Acknowledgements

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(in order of appearance)
Ruth Benally
Elvira Horseherder
Angela Cody
Autasha Cody
Harrison Begay
Rex Redhouse
Eddie Draper
Larry Tso
Larry Mitchell
John Thompson
Tamara Lake
Greg Red Elk
Bob Red Elk
Irene Bedard

Al Okemah
Tiffany Prater
Thomas Tiger
Joe Jojola
Calvin Standing Bear
Ofelia Zepeda
Rebekah Miles
Elizabeth “Gracie” Miles
Sirianna Shaw
Mya Kitcheyan
Cecelia Miles
Denise Anderson
Carrie Reede
Martha Miles
Douglas Miles
Craig Goseyum
Srila Goseyum
Paul Ortega

Teresino Jiron
Crucita Romero
Jerry Giron
Reycita Jiron

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Forward

Images of Their Own

In the Smithsonian Institution’s letter of appreciation found at the close of this book, the photographer Gary Auerbach is rightly praised for his artistry and mastery of his craft. Stunning and lush, rich in texture and vibrancy, and deftly composed, the alluring photographs presented here and in the limited edition of photogravures, reveal a compelling talent. But to me, the ultimate beauty of these images lies with Auerbach’s subjects as well as his own gifted vision. The indigenous voice—an essential element notably absent in most images of Native Americans—is celebrated in this path-breaking, harmonic union of images and words.

As a librarian specializing in photographs of Native life and people, I have viewed thousands of images over the past twelve years. While studying the face of a handsome and beguiling Lakota Wild West show performer pictured in an early 20th-century studio portrait or while getting lost in the sparkling eyes of a Northern Cheyenne child as she plays with her toy tipi in a faded image taken in Montana, I’ve often wondered: What are you up to? What are you thinking? Has your family seen this delightful picture? What sort of life do you have? What are your thoughts of yesterday, today, tomorrow?

Sadly, in the history of the photography of Native people, the Indian voice has been most striking for its silence. Indigenous people generally have been excluded except as subjects.

Created primarily for commercial markets and anthropological studies, their portraits often revealed more about the photographer’s attitudes than they did about Native life and culture. Offensive, degrading, or simply inaccurate captions contributed further to the objectification of indigenous people and kept their real identities a mystery.

In her book about photography and the American West, Martha Sandweiss suggests that 19th-century photographs of Native Americans were “used to endorse a political agenda that involved a systematic attack on native cultures.” [1] Susan Sontag, the late critic of contemporary society, is even more scathing in her assessment, claiming that the photography of Native Americans represented the “most brutal” and “predatory side” of photography. [2] And, describing the far-reaching impact of these attitudes, Rick Hill, a Tuscarora photographer and scholar who has written extensively about stereotyping in historic images, states it simply: “The camera photographed Indians but the viewer saw losers.” [3]

Breaking with the past, Auerbach is one of the first photographers to invite his subjects to participate as full partners in the collaborative process of making a photograph. This innovative book is the poignant and successful result of that collaboration.

Working with Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O’Odham), a distinguished professor of linguistics and recipient of the MacArthur

Foundation award (the “genius grant”), Auerbach crafted a series of interview questions for the photographic participants. I think you will agree with me that their responses, which are completely unedited, speak as loudly as the photographs.

Not surprisingly, many of their comments reflect cultural tradition, emphasizing the importance of family and how values are passed down from one generation to the next. For example, Ruth Benally’s conception of her Dine way of life (“We Walk in Beauty”) reiterates that given to the Navajo by their Holy People when they emerged into this world. She says, “I was born with it.”

These individuals are also “proud to represent” their Native Nations, excited about having their portraits exhibited, and eager to contribute their diverse indigenous perspectives. They obviously enjoyed the experience. Why else would they offer such candid and personal glimpses into their lives?

The rich words and images published here are documents of family history, valuable to Native Nations and non-Indian audiences alike. They evoke treasured memories, elicit personal and cultural stories, and stimulate ideas. I applaud this heartfelt effort by both the photographer and the contributor-sitters—who were graciously, and finally, given the opportunity to represent themselves.

Jennifer Brathovde
(Sisseton-Wahpeton, Spirit Lake Sioux Nation)
Prints & Photographs Division
Library of Congress

[1] Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 215.

[2] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977), p. 64.

[3] Rick Hill, “In Our Own Image: Stereotyped Images of Indians Lead to New Native Art Form,” in *Exposure* (Volume 29:I, Fall 1993), p. 7.

NAVAJO



Ruth Benally

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I was born with it. My late mother and father taught me everything that is traditional.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“Culture tells me about everything, the wind, the rain, the sun, the morning dew, the evening down.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Tradition tells me I live with everything around me. My home, my livestock, my land and the water.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I am inspired to have my photo taken because the weaver has a lot of traditional Dine. Weavers today care for our grandkids and tells them all about our traditional ways.”

What do you see for the future?

“I always pray for my self, my children, and my grandkids. We walk in beauty!”

Given name: Ruth Benally

Date of birth: August 26, 1923

Place of birth: in Hogan on Big Mountain

Tribe: Dine

Maternal clan: Mexican Clan, Red Tall House Clan

Paternal clan: Red Tall House

Years photographs were taken: 1993, 2002, 2003





Elvira Horseherder

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I was seven years old when my late grandmother asked me to help her with her sheep. She told me the importance of learning to weave as a Navajo woman. The tools that you have to use, the gift you use. I believe that weaving was a gift and the sheep are very important, not only for weaving, but for survival in life. I was taught this as a child.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“In our culture, we are taught the same as our generation, from mother to mother. Our tradition is mainly about teaching your children the same skills you were taught. In a way, I’m not different from my parents or grandparents. The only difference is now we live in a more modern age. We are taught to never forget where you came from, and who you were chosen to be as a human.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“We still practice ceremonies, herding sheep, weaving Navajo rugs, teaching our children what is important. Stories are told, about life, plants, the sky, the sun, all human kind and a consideration for others. There are all different types of ceremonies, some for illness, the Earth, the Sky, the Snow, the Summer, and the Plants. There are also reasons for weaving, reasons for happiness, for healing and for all the features of the environment.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I was inspired to have my photo taken because I’m a weaver, a mother, a grandmother and a traditional Navajo woman. I hope this photo will teach more people about the gifts they are given. The skills and tools they use to accomplish their destination in life.”

What do you see for the future?

“I’m concerned that all human kind does not consume the future. There are not people thankful for the land anymore. But I pray for the land, earth, and the ground we walk on. We need to pray for water and snow. There will be happiness as long as we pray and the future will bring happiness and hope.”

Given name: Elvira Horseherder

Date of birth: November 11, 1949

Place of birth: Big Mountain in Hogan

Tribe: Dine

Maternal clan: Mexican Clan

Paternal clan: Edge of Water Clan

Years photographs were taken: 2002, 2003





Harrison Begay

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“When I was four years old, my first trip in a wagon “buggy” to a trading post with my parents. I was with my older brother (6 years) and my little sister (2 years). It was spring time. My family had sheep and goats at home. My main happiness and joy was being around the little ranch with little lambs and little baby billy goats. Mostly, I liked a little brown puppy, a boy pup. He grew up and was a good sheepherder. A good strong dog and good defender of the sheep in keeping the coyote away. Then I learned to ride horses, and I found one that I liked, and he liked me also. I rode him for herding sheep, and fed him lots of corn that my parents raised. At the age of seven years, I went to school at Fort Defiance, Arizona.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“After going to school, I did not have much time to be with my parents. My mother died before I went to school. I only went back home in the summer for a while. Then my father married again. I had tuberculosis. I spent about three years in the hospital. I

continued studying while in the hospital, but finally ran away back to my home. I helped my father and my stepmother for a couple years, then left and went back to the school. I was about 18 years old then. Finishing high school, I then went to college for one year. I married just before entering the army, and three years after getting married, my wife died.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Having seen some pueblo ceremonial paintings by Fred Kabotie (Hopi), for the first time at the Santa Fe Art Museum, I became interested in painting. In the year 1940, I began to study at the Santa Fe Indian Art School.0

The Santa Fe Indian Art School taught a lot of good Indian artists. Navajo, Apaches, Pueblos and other tribes learned Indian arts. Becoming well known are Allan Houser, Gerald Nailor, Ben Quintana, Joe Herrera, Quincy **Tohoma** and others. Art teacher, Dorothy Dunn (white woman) was a very good teacher and helped a great deal to promote Indian art, especially paintings.

Now there are many good Indian artists, painters, sculptors, silversmiths and others. With the encouragement and help from the Navajo Tribal government, many Navajo artists have established their own studios or shops.”



Native name: HASKAY YAHNE YAH

Given name: Harrison Begay

Date of birth: Not recorded. My parents did not have a calendar. They only know I was born in the fall of the year 1914. So my date of birth – I made it November 15, 1914.

Place of birth: Navajo County, White Cone, Arizona

Tribe: Navajo

Maternal clan: Zuni Clan, White Corn

Paternal clan: Walk Around Clan / Near Water Clan

Year photograph was taken: 2002

Rex Redhouse

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I distinctly remember my father’s advice in which he said, “When you meet a person, shake his/her hand firmly and then look him/her in the eye until he/she looks elsewhere.” Also, he said, “Through and by education, learn the skill and profession of the non-Indian and you will be as good as he is in whatever he does.” I kept this advice in mind in receiving my college degree and retiring from the federal service as an accounting supervisor.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“While I am still the same person, my style of life has radically changed. The struggle to exist for basic needs, such as, subsistence food, manual labor, lack of utilities in a one room Hogan, transportation by horse and wagon, no medical facilities being available, were difficult. After military service during World War II and receiving academic training in college and moving off the Navajo reservation, I obtained the means to integrate into the contemporary life style. However, the rich native cultural and spiritual visions have enriched my life.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

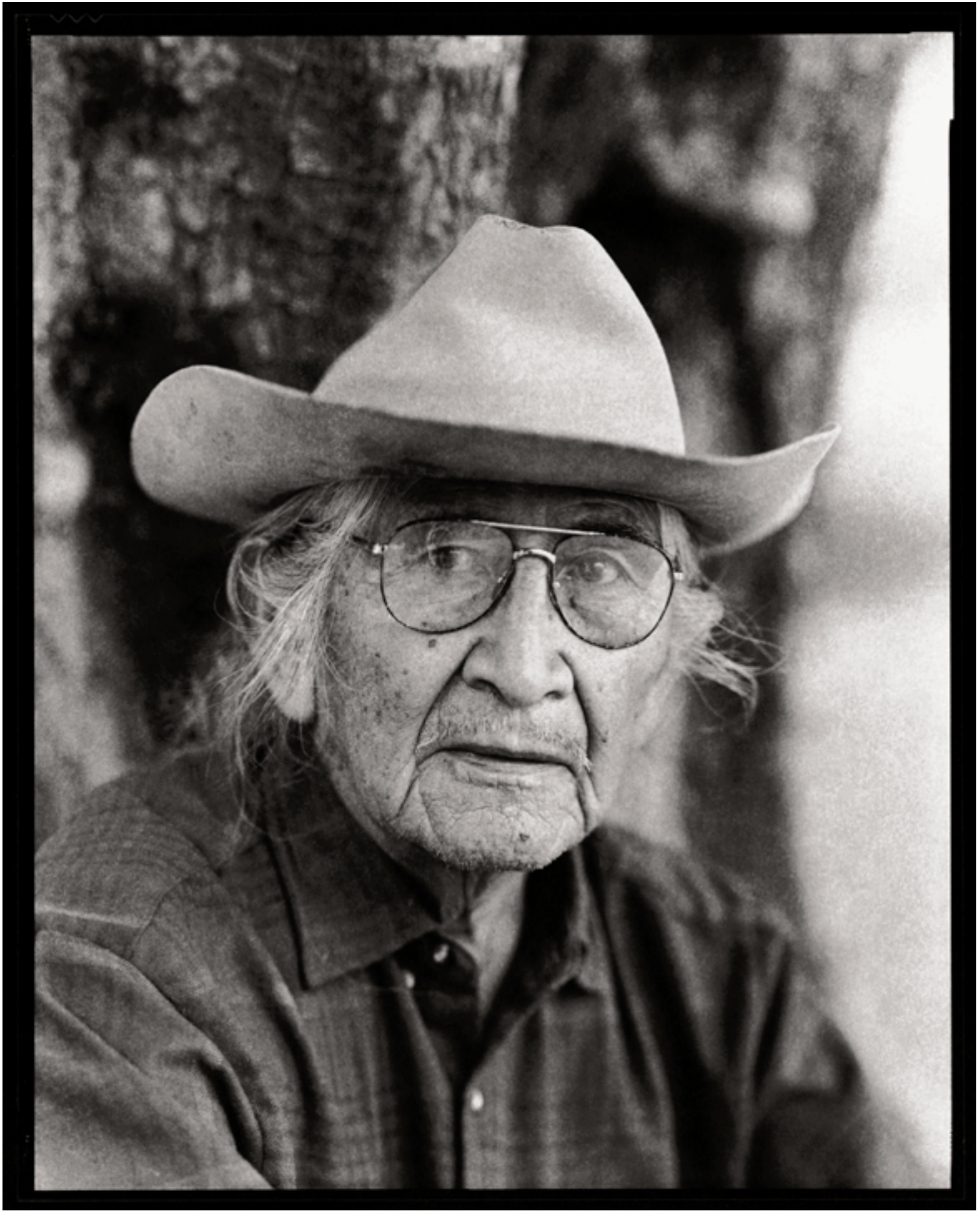
“My childhood experience and exposure to the tribal cultural customs and traditions were ingrained and became part of me. This has given me a deeper appreciation of my parental influence and tribal traditions and customs. The urge to share the cultural influence has resulted in my starting a family performing arts Native American dance group. The group performs a variety of dances and songs for the public to inform the attendees of the origins, significance and purposes of the dances.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I was somewhat cautious because my photograph might be used for commercial use and sold for monetary purpose which would not benefit me. Later, I was assured that this was not the purpose, which calmed my suspicion.”

What do you see for the future?

“By passing on my cultural background to my children and grandchildren, they will carry on the presentations of the dances to the public.”



Native name: RODNEY KINTAI CHIINII

Given name: Rex Peter Redhouse

Date of birth: November 20, 1919

Place of birth: Teec Nos Pos, Arizona (near four corners)

Tribe: Dine, Navajo

Maternal clan: Bit’aanii

Paternal clan: Kontachiinii (The Redhouse Clan)

Year photograph was taken: 1998

Eddie Draper

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Herding sheep, climbing rocks, and helping to work the cornfields and just being a kid.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“They never really speak English and lived off the land, hauling water, growing corn, beans and squash.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Traditional prayers and medicine men.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I liked that we had a good time looking for places to take pictures. Near the Anasazi ruins where the pueblos lived in the canyon caves.”

What do you see for the future?

“Working for National Geographic.”

Native name: RAN OR WALK AROUND ANGRY

Given name: Eddie Draper

Date of birth: April 22, 1966

Place of birth: Ganado, Arizona

Tribe: Dine, Navajo

Maternal clan: Red Bottom Clan

Paternal clan: Water Flowing Together Clan

Year photograph was taken: 2001





John Thompson

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Government Boarding School, where we weren’t allowed to speak Navajo. That experience stays with me always, some good, but mostly negative experiences.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“My parents still have no electricity or running water. I live in the city with all the amenities of modern life.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Mainly prayer, meditation and sweat lodge ceremonies.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“When Mr. Auerbach approached me for my picture to be taken, I just agreed. I didn’t fully understand his work.”

What do you see for the future?

“Many of the things I saw and experienced as a child will not be the same experience as our children have. I am afraid some of the old traditions will not be carried on.”

Given name: Jonathan (John) Thompson

Date of birth: February 5, 1962

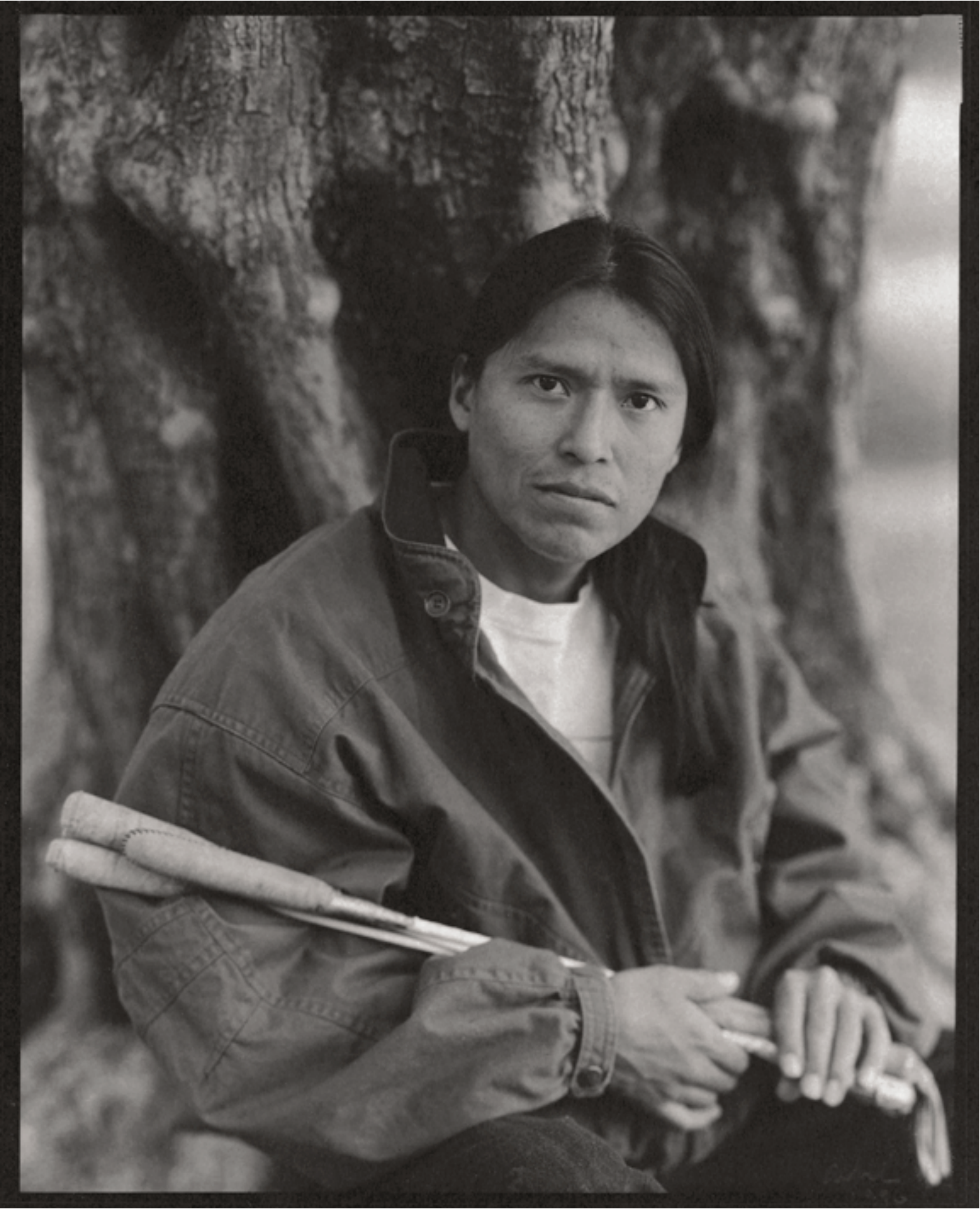
Place of birth: Flagstaff, Arizona

Tribe: Navajo

Maternal clan: Kinyaanni (Towering Horse)

Paternal clan: Many Goats

Year photograph was taken: 1996



Tamara Lake

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I remember going to the trading post in the summer with my grandmother to haul water and buy hay for the horses. It felt like a long trip then, but it was only about twenty miles. The roads were very bumpy and dusty, and the whole time I remember thinking about buying candy. My grandmother usually gave me a couple dollars and I could sure make it go far, or so it seems when you are young. When we got there, I would go into the trading post and look around and talk to other kids who were there doing the same thing as me, hauling water, buying hay and food. It seemed like we were there forever, filling the water barrels took a long time. When my grandmother was done, I would help her load everything into the bed of the truck and we would get back on the road to head home. I remember that I was only allowed one or two pieces of candy because I had to make the rest of the money last until the next time we came back.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“There are vast differences in how I live today than how my parents and grandparents have lived their lives. I had a very strict Christian upbringing while I lived with my mother’s family. We also had very little money on which to live.

Given name: Tamara Lake

Date of birth: November 30, 1977

Place of birth: Tuba City, Arizona

Tribe: Navajo

Maternal clan: Red House Clan

Paternal clan: Born for the Bitter Water Clan

Year photograph was taken: 2003

It was a very difficult life. I then lived with my father’s side of the family and learned about the traditional ways of the Navajo people. My father was better off than my mother’s family so some of the struggles I had experienced when I was very young were easier to deal with. When I went to high school in Flagstaff I learned about the non-native way of life and lived in the city for the first time. I have been living in Tucson for seven years and I have been exposed to many other cultures and people. I have become independent of my family, yet I still go home as often as possible. I find myself living with modern conveniences and the ability to explore more opportunities than what my parents and grandparents experienced.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“There are many traditions that I incorporate into my daily life. One is my native language, that I use as often as I can. My language is very important to me because at home at Black Mesa, many relatives do not speak English. I must use my language to stay in touch with my family and culture. Another tradition I apply everyday is the use of prayers. Every morning I go outside and face the east and pray to the creator for the great blessings onto the four directions. Then, I go running, a tradition representing strength. Another Navajo tradition I follow is striving for the beauty way of life. This means that I always look forward everyday without looking back. I look for the good in all things, people, and situations, and treat others with respect. All of these things are very important to me in a traditional sense.”



What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I was pleased with the overall experience of having my photograph taken. Gary made me feel very comfortable and I felt absolutely no pressure. I was at ease through the whole experience. I was very excited to see the finished results. When I saw the final platinum print it was quite amazing to see. I love the depth of the picture, the textures, and the realism. It reminds me of pictures of Native Americans from the past. Being photographed for such a project (Smithsonian) is very flattering. It made me feel very special and made me proud to be able to represent my people to potentially a vast number of other people from around the world. Also, having a photo that will last for such a long period of time makes me value it as something I can pass on to my family for generations to come.”

What do you see for the future?

“I am very optimistic for the future. I see Native people earning more and more respect for who they are and for their history. I see more and more modernization of the reservations in terms of utilities, education, and infrastructure. I see recovery and relief from the mining industry in Black Mesa where my father and grandmother struggled to live a traditional life against the pollution and contamination the mines have created on the land. I see many more Native people getting out into the world and contributing to society as a whole, not just to their own people. For myself, I see success in whatever path I am guided down.”



ARAPAHO

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ASSINIBOINE

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DELAWARE

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INUIT

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ISLETA

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KICKAPOO

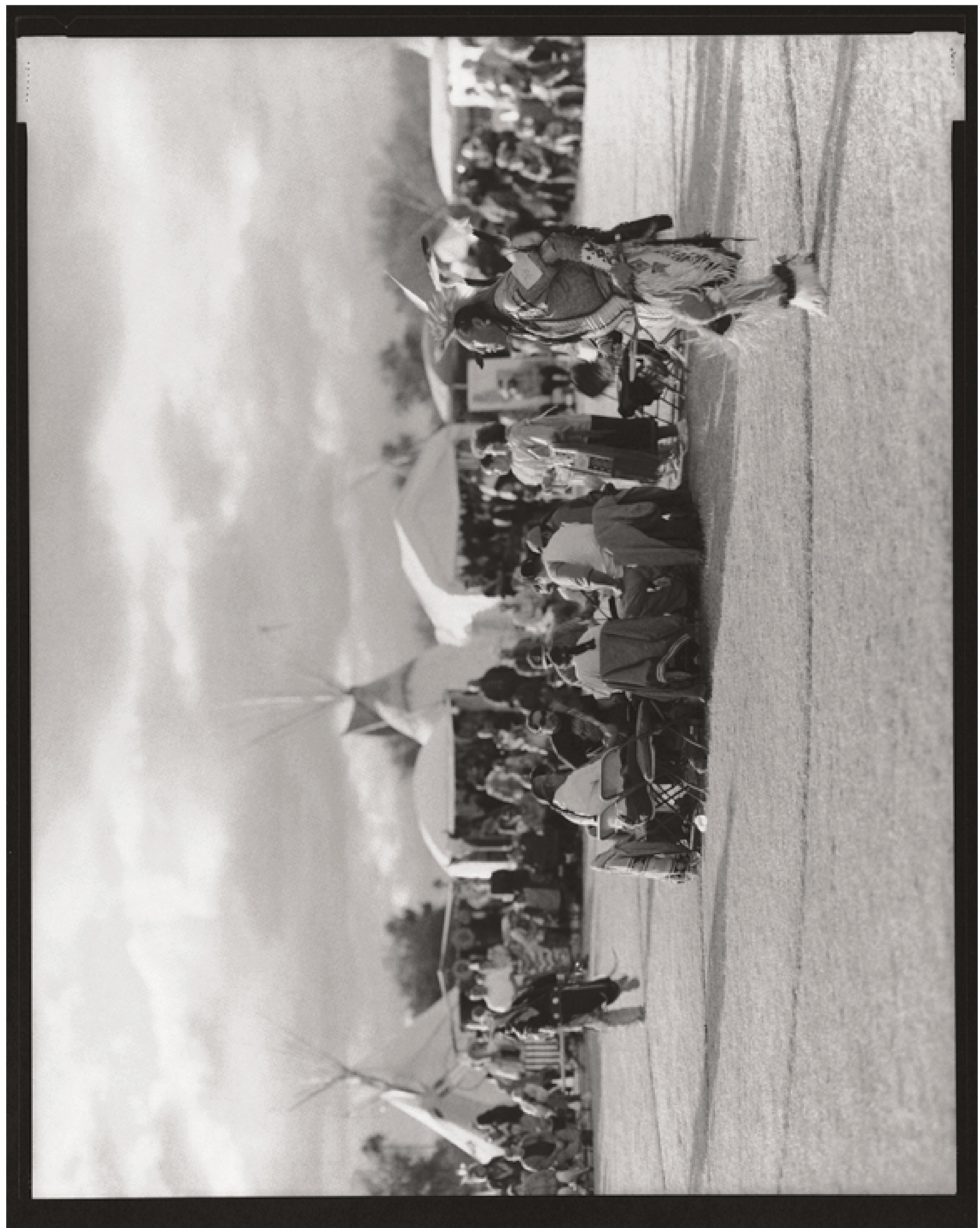
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SHOSHONE

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TOHONO O'ODHAM

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Greg Red Elk

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I remember being at Pow Wows and other spiritual gatherings and watching my father perform ceremonies that very few knew how to perform. I also remember the unity I felt, the safeness of hearing the drums and being near other tribes. I remember most the closeness of our families.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“Inipi – sweats, dancing ceremonies. Through my exposure to the outside world I have seen the effects of Western or so-called civilized culture upon Native Peoples, the positive and the negative. Having been raised in both worlds I now realize the importance of traditional values and how they can have a very positive effect upon the world. My parents and grandparents had tried so hard to instill in us the importance of those values today as they knew the effects the modern world would have upon us. That is something that I too will have to instill in my own children and grandchildren.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I must look ancient for being “50”. Ha Ha. I was honored to think that anyone would find how I looked as a way of thinking historical. I now know why as I looked upon the photos and remembered the photos that were taken of my ancestors in doing the traditional dances and ceremonies and how others were seeking an understanding of the world of Native Peoples. I now feel privileged to have had my photo taken....Thank you once again.”

What do you see for the future?

“Much change to and away from culture - a division of values. I see some of our People coming back to the old ways and others drifting away. Yet, I see many searching for their spirituality.”

Native name: HEHAKA – DUTA (Red Elk)

Given name: Gregory Kendall Red Elk

Date of birth: August 8, 1953

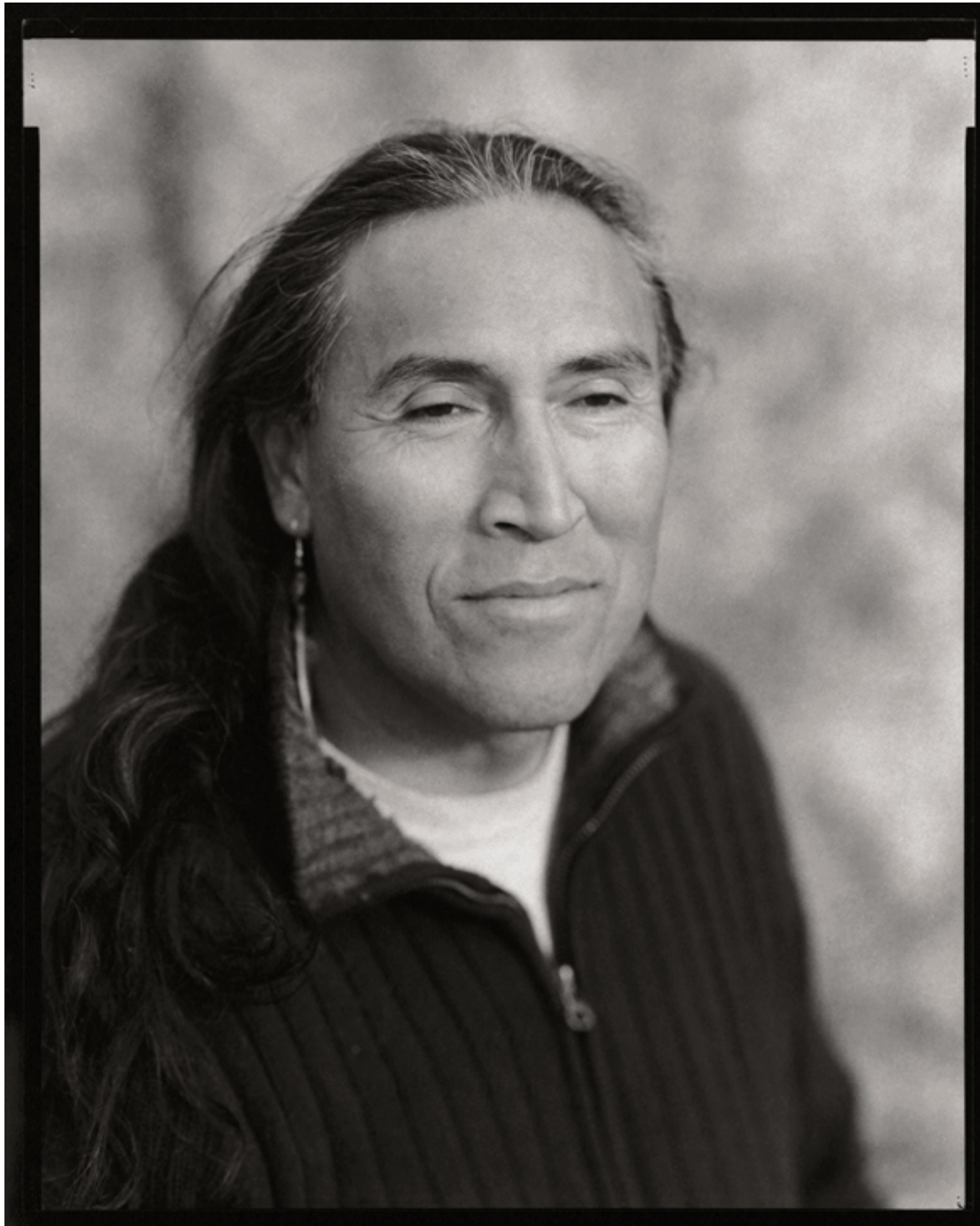
Place of birth: Poplar, Montana

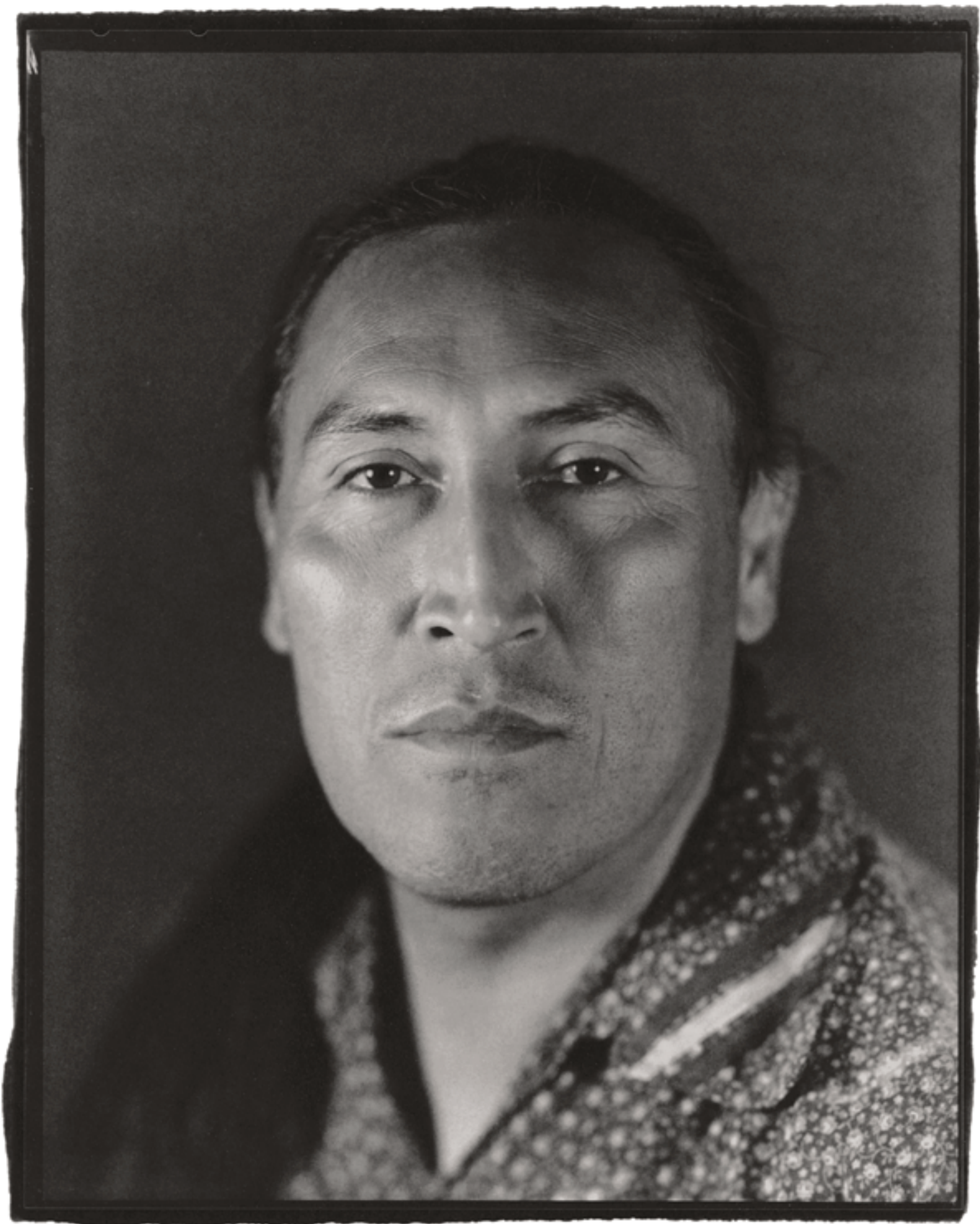
Tribe: Sioux/Assiniboine

Maternal clan: Canoe Paddlers

Paternal clan: Rides the White Horse

Years photographs were taken: 1999, 2004





Bob Red Elk

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I remember living out in the country in a frame house where in the winter we traveled by horse and sled to the round dance hall where we did our social drumming and dancing. During those early years as an innocent child, isolation from the dominant society allowed for deep introspection into who I was before I started going to structured schools.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“Like my parents and grandparents, I grew up adapting to rules of living from public school and Christian religion. During those early years I was distracted from practicing certain traditions and rituals but I was fortunate to have a father and mother who allowed me to return home at different times in my life to participate and learn ceremonial processes.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Early in my life I did not realize that I was being imprinted by the behavior and example of my grandfather who in his own quiet way

schooled me in what it means to be respectful. That is hard to retain when those around you are taught that competition and conquest are more important than the Christian golden rule. As a rule of thumb today, I strive to stay teachable amidst a world bent on self-reliance through corporate global expansion. The old ways teach us the benefit of cooperation and peaceful co-existence, but it is hard to practice them when you have to live in two worlds.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“Gary Auerbach and I met at a Pow Wow in 1999 on the San Carlos Indian Reservation where he asked me to pose for him with his Edward Curtis-style camera equipment. Even though the finished photographs speak for themselves, I have to commend the photographer for the sensitivity and devotion he has shown in seeing his subjects as real people. In our fast moving world, the traditions of Native Americans often go unnoticed and it is people like Gary Auerbach and others that take the time to show the rest of the world that American Indians continue to make a place for themselves in a changing world.”

What do you see for the future?

“Our forefathers still whisper to us through the spirits that when the “sacred hoop is mended” then and only then will man be able to overcome the prejudice that has been around for a long time. And again, I heard it once said that to ‘change the man is to change the world’ but it takes one, then two and then more to bring this to pass.”

Native name: LITTLE WARRIOR

Given name: Gerald Robert (Bob) Red Elk

Date of birth: December 3, 1946

Tribe: Dakota, Lakota, Nakoda (Assiniboine), Blackfeet

Maternal clan: Mother Earth

Paternal clan: Father Sky (Star People)

Year photographs were taken: 1999, 2004



Irene Bedard

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I grew up in Alaska. I remember big dramatic skies, mountains made from earthquakes and volcanoes that blow till the sky is dark. I remember fishing, berry picking, stories about the mountains which look large and majestic. The northern lights. I remember my father and mother sitting around the table, drinking coffee, discussing the work needed to be done in the Alaskan Native community. It was the time of the Alaska Land Claims Settlement Act and my father was a liaison between the State and the Native community.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“With the onset of satellites, space technology, modern medicine, it seems as though our lives today must be totally different from those who came before us. But we go home to the village in Alaska, and my relatives still subsist by hunting and continue to live many of the traditions the Inupiaq, Malemuit, and Yupik have lived since the beginning. I think even though I am an actor on film, a recent invention in the realm of time, I am still a storyteller. So, maybe my life is not so different.”

Native name: KAUTAUAK

(Someone Who Dropped Something)

Given name: Irene Marie Bedard

Date of birth: July, 22, 1967

Place of birth: Anchorage, Alaska

Tribe: Inupiaq, Malemuit, Yupik, Cree

Year photograph was taken: 2004

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I just recently came from Alaska where I spoke at the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference for the Elders and Youth Consortium. It was incredible to see the young people working together with the elders. To see the traditions passed on to another generation. To see the language live on. To see the stories told again. My uncle came from the village for the conference and brought seal skin boots called mukluks for my baby boy and dried salmon, seal oil and muktuk (whale blubber) for me. Food is one tradition I’ll always keep.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I thought of the nature of the photographs, the light, the beauty, the fact that they will last 500 years, the potential, and the camera which comes from a time long ago. And then when we were taking the photograph, it struck me that there is a comical quality to its accordion like structure and the man hiding under the cloth.”

What do you see for the future?

“I see the beauty of our ways. Our songs, our drums, our stories, our languages, our relationships to the earth, to our elders and our link to the coming generations is what keeps us breathing the life into our tribal ways. I think the future is nothing short of a breath of life!”



Al Okemah

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Being sent out at age five with a limited amount of jerky and water. First time a full day at age five. One day and one night at age six. Three days and two nights at age seven. Four days and three nights at age eight. Five days and four nights at age nine. At age ten, I went to accomplish my first edible “kill”. You had to find your own water source. My generation was the last to go through this ritual. The clan marked the cheeks of the child to prevent anyone in the tribe from helping the trainee during the ordeal.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I have been assimilated into the white man’s culture. It is difficult to follow the old Indian ways. Travel and transportation of any kind is no longer by horse and wagon. Barter was a way of life. We lived off the land. Courtships, marriage, childbirth were community efforts. Building homes, growing crops and rituals were events in the lives of my parents and grandparents.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I try to speak my language (Kickapoo) as much as I can. I was discouraged in trying to speak the language of my tribe when I was a youngster. I try to teach the new generation their tribal language. Keeping respect for the things in nature around me. Not to destroy animals for “sport”. Only to take what is necessary to survive.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I felt honored to be able to represent my tribe. At 82 years of age, I am one of the oldest members of my tribe.”

What do you see for the future?

“I am afraid man is polluting his own nest. There is no future unless he learns to respect the land, animals and his fellow men!”

Native name: KA-KEE-KE-TO-HA
Given name: Alexander Okemah
Date of birth: June 13, 1921
Place of birth: Harrah, Oklahoma
Tribe: Kickapoo
Maternal clan: Buffalo
Paternal clan: Bear
Year photograph was taken: 1993



Tiffany Prater

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I was raised to be a well bred lady with good morals and much respected values. I have danced ballet, tap, and jazz since I was three. I often took piano lessons and enjoyed Girl Scout camp. But, when I was in sixth grade, I looked in the mirror and the image of myself had faded. I did not see myself as a “white” girl, with beautiful features. I saw myself with dark skin, and dark brown hair and it left me confused. I wonder whether other people saw me as an “Indian” or a “white” girl. On the inside, I was white, but on the outside I was Indian.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I am adopted and was raised in a non-traditional atmosphere. As a young adult, a gentlemen friend by the name of Thomas introduced me to the Pow Wow world. Just barely eighteen I experienced the best summer of my life. In the fall of 1999, I was accepted to Haskell Indian Nations University and learned more about the Indian way of life than I can ever have imagined through any book.”

Given name: Tiffany Sue Prater

Date of birth: May 7, 1978

Place of birth: Okeene, Oklahoma

Tribe: Cheyenne, Arapaho

Maternal clan: Bison Clan

Years photographs were taken: 1996, 1997

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“While attending Haskell Indian Nations University, I began to learn how to dance, ‘Fancy Shawl’. It’s not a traditional dance. It is a contemporary move rather than for contest. The regalia worn by the dancer is represented by symbols of the dancer’s tribe. I have also had the pleasure in participating in a peyote meeting while living on campus. I did make my entrance into the arena at the Kiowa Pow Wow and also had a giveaway.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“When Gary took my picture I felt that he had captured me in a time of true love. I knew no boundaries of time because that is the way Thomas (my fiancé) made me feel. In one of my photographs, I am looking up at Thomas and I can’t see his face because the sun was so bright. But I know every little detail of his face and at that particular moment he was a gentleman and I was a lady.”

What do you see for the future?

“I am now engaged to a man from the Tohono O’odham tribe from Arizona. We have a beautiful daughter together and two sons that are wonderful. We plan to raise our children with all the knowledge of our people that will be passed on to their children. We value education and family and hope that one day our children will do the same.”



Thomas Tiger

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Trust no one!” I am learning to get past that one. No real parental memories.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I think I am a little smarter regarding technical items and live at a much faster pace. In some ways, my life is a little more dangerous.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Eating and giving thanks!”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“It was nice to have a picture that will outlast me or my family. Sad though, that there are not too many of us left.”

What do you see for the future?

“Tribal extinction. It is inevitable. Get all the pics now while you can, for we belong to a dying people.”

Given name: Thomas Lee Tiger

Date of birth: November 23, 1972

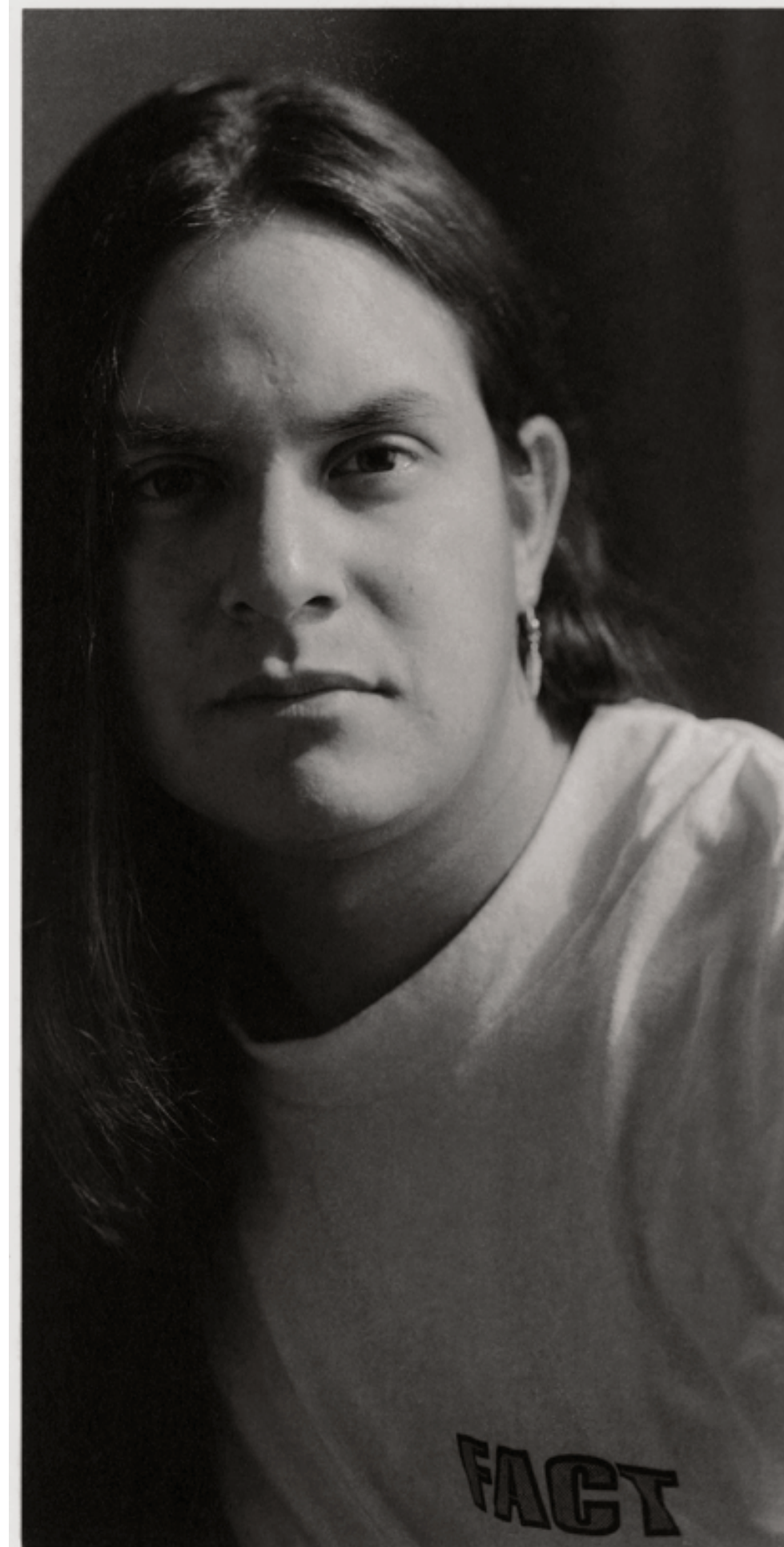
Place of birth: Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tribe: Euchee/Delaware

Maternal clan: Round Foot

Paternal clan: Eagle Clan

Year photograph was taken: 1996



Joe Jojola

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Family. There were eight boys and three girls in our family. We grew up as a “unit of oneness.” Where the hurt of one is the hurt of all and the honor of one is the honor of all. Our parents guided us with kindness and compassion and took care of our basic needs, but also stressed upon us the importance of caring for one another. Secondly, since we lacked modern conveniences, we were able to use our imagination and be creative in our thinking – from making toys with rocks, hunting, developing games to being artistic.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“Three basic differences. Media, Mobility and Employment. Media enables us to know what the rest of the world is doing, current events, communications. Mobility, no longer confined to the Pueblo, able to travel places we only dreamt about. Attend schools, universities, access to shopping centers, etc. Employment, educational employment is available on the reservations through economic development programs or nearby cities/towns. This enables the majority to sustain a good standard of living. Unfortunately, as an agricultural people, we no longer farm or grow crops as before.”

Native name: THURR-SHUN (Sun Rising)

Given name: Joe L. Jojola

Date of birth: November 2, 1945

Place of birth: Isleta Pueblo Indian Reservation, New Mexico

Tribe: Isleta Pueblo

Maternal clan: Eagle People

Paternal clan: Earth People

Year photograph was taken: 2004

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

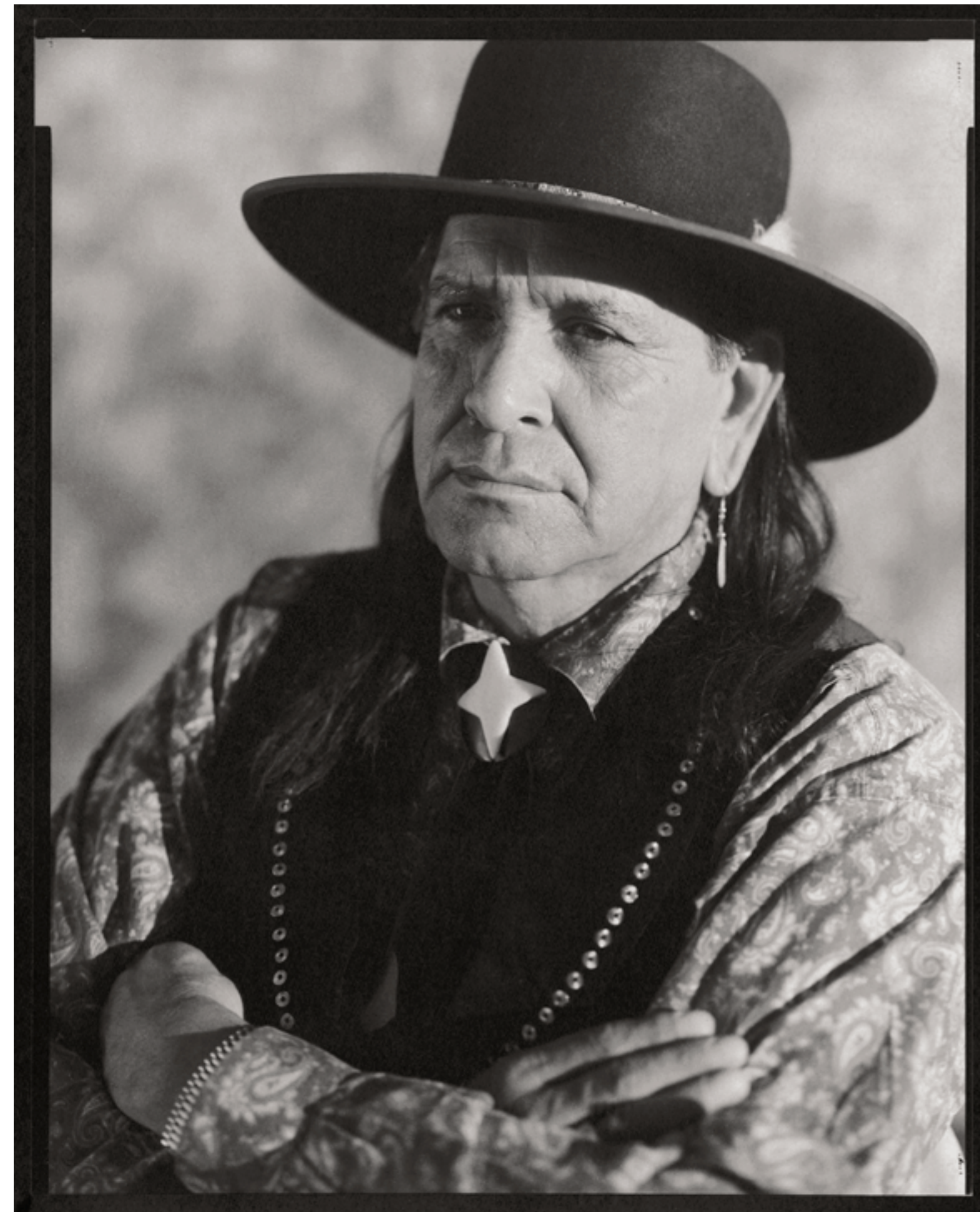
“All things that were here before the Europeans arrived – songs, dances, ceremonies, rituals. We “ALL” pueblos live in two worlds. Adapting to the ways of the dominant society yet still maintaining all tribal ceremonies.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“It is not only an honor for me, but for my family, my tribe, and native people. Mr. Auerbach is a person who I believe respects the way of life of our people. He made me feel important to represent our peoples; therefore, I didn’t hesitate to work with him and his lovely assistant, Tamara.”

What do you see for the future?

“Unfortunately, because of the inter-tribal and inter-racial marriages, the tribes are losing the native tongues and songs. This is simply because the first language learned is English. Secondly, the move of the US government to abrogate all treaties with Native Americans – we are in danger of losing our tribal rights and sovereignty.”



Calvin Standing Bear

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Growing up on the reservation was different than being raised in the city. One thing that stands out in my mind is going to Episcopal school and living in a dormitory with other Native children as we were expected to do in an effort to integrate us native into the white world.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“The most negative manifestation of white dominance has been the separation of Natives from their spirituality. Spirituality helps maintain balance and harmony with our known Universe.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Spirituality, (Lakota)”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I think it is a good thing to satisfy the desire some people have to see a full blood Native like myself. There are only 300 full bloods left. I am one of them.”

What do you see for the future?

“Doom!”

Native name: LIGHT IN THE LODGE

Given name: Calvin Standing Bear

Date of birth: November 20, 1949

Place of birth: Rosebud Reservation, Rosebud, South Dakota

Tribe: Oglala/Sicongu Lakota Sioux

Year photograph was taken: 2004



Ofelia Zepeda



Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Thinking about this photograph, I reflect on my memories of schooling here in Arizona. I attended a small rural public school in the town of Stanfield, Arizona. Stanfield was a cotton farming community made up primarily of Tohono O’odham, Mexicans, African-Americans and Anglo peoples. It was a diverse community and like many rural communities it had its own rules regarding segregation. This rural community, like so many others, was at times a difficult place to grow up in. It was a life of extreme poverty and hardship, but despite that, within our own individual communities there was strength and support. I like to think this support and strength helped a few of us to succeed in the outside world.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“My life now and my parents’ lives are nearly worlds apart. My grandparents’ lives might as well be in another universe. This is how far apart our lives are. My grandparents’ home was in a small village in Sonora, Mexico. The village like all other O’odham homelands was a desert place. In contrast, I live in mid-town Tucson and all that entails, but at the same time I like to think I have a tether that always connects me to the way they lived. I have memories,

ways of behaving, and ways of speaking that I get from their “worlds”. So in some ways we are close enough to have many things that continue to connect my life to theirs. This is a good thing.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“There are various traditions I continue to practice. Some are of a personal nature, which I will not say anything about. I can say though, that many of the traditions are highly influenced by the Catholic Church. I still observe events and practices around religious holidays and so forth.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“This photograph was taken to commemorate my being awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation award in the summer of 1999. The photograph was taken to accompany an article about my award and the work leading up to it. This photograph was one of several that were taken as a result of this award.

What do you see for the future?

“Native Americans have always had struggles. The future I think will continue to offer struggles, struggles from without the tribal communities and from within. I think we acknowledge this as being a part of our existence here and so will continue to work at educating ourselves on the best ways to deal with these struggles.”

Given name: Ofelia Zepeda
Date of birth: March 24, 1954
Place of birth: Stanfield, Arizona
Tribe: Tohono O’odham
Year photograph was taken: 1999



APACHE



Rebekah Miles

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Yes, I do have a specific memory. I remember when I went to my grandma’s house in Navajo Land. Over there she didn’t have a rest room in her house. There was an outhouse outside. Outside the house there was a handle bar tied to a rope that was tied to a tree. I swung on it. That day she killed a sheep and we ate it; it was good. There was no electricity either. I was about eight years old.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“My life is different from my grandparents. They didn’t have electricity at their house. They didn’t have running water. They had to walk almost everywhere they went. Today, I have electricity, running water and a car, so I don’t have to walk everywhere. I’m glad I live the way I live today.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I don’t really actually practice traditions, but I do attend a Sunrise dance once in a while. I like Sunrise dances.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I wasn’t into it in the beginning, but it got fun. We got to go to little streams, and other cool spots to take photographs. Now I enjoy when you take photographs of my family and I like the way all the photographs with the backgrounds are traditional like. They look awesome dude.”

What do you see for the future?

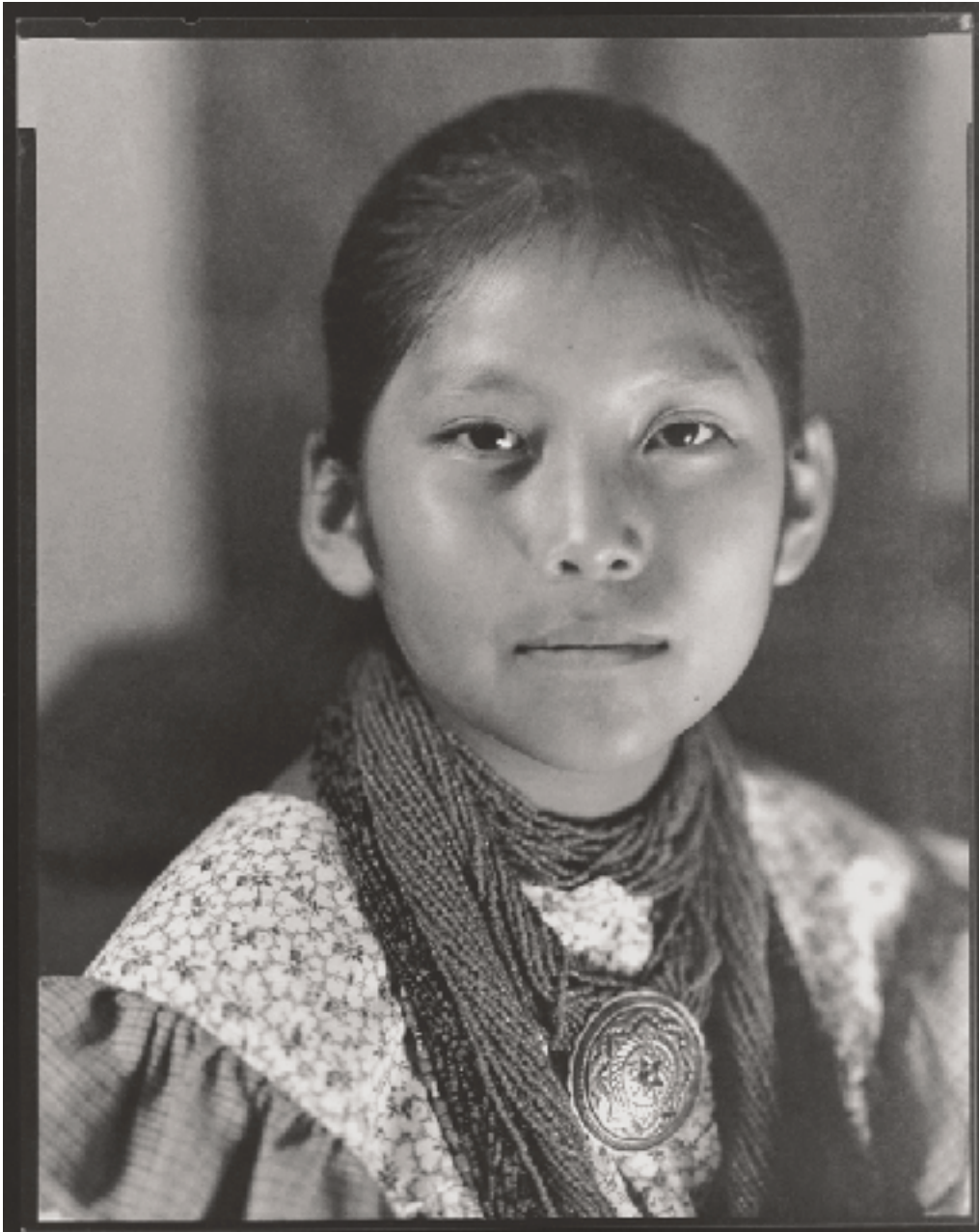
“I see for my future that I will be a doctor or an artist like my dad. I will have a normal sized house and maybe one or two children. That is what I see for my future.”

Given name: Rebekah Miles
Date of birth: August 9, 1992
Place of birth: Globe, Arizona
Tribe: San Carlos Apache / Navajo
Years photographs were taken: 1999, 2001





Elizabeth Miles



Given name: Elizabeth “Gracie” Miles
Date of birth: February 13, 1991
Place of birth: Globe, Arizona
Tribe: San Carlos Apache
Year photographs were taken: 1999, 2001

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Not necessarily, yet I do not remember a lot from when I was younger.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“Back then they were born in a time that didn’t have the technology and all the opportunities that I have today.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I don’t really do any of that spiritual ceremony stuff but it is a very common thing for young women to have Sunrise dances and sometimes our family has participated.”

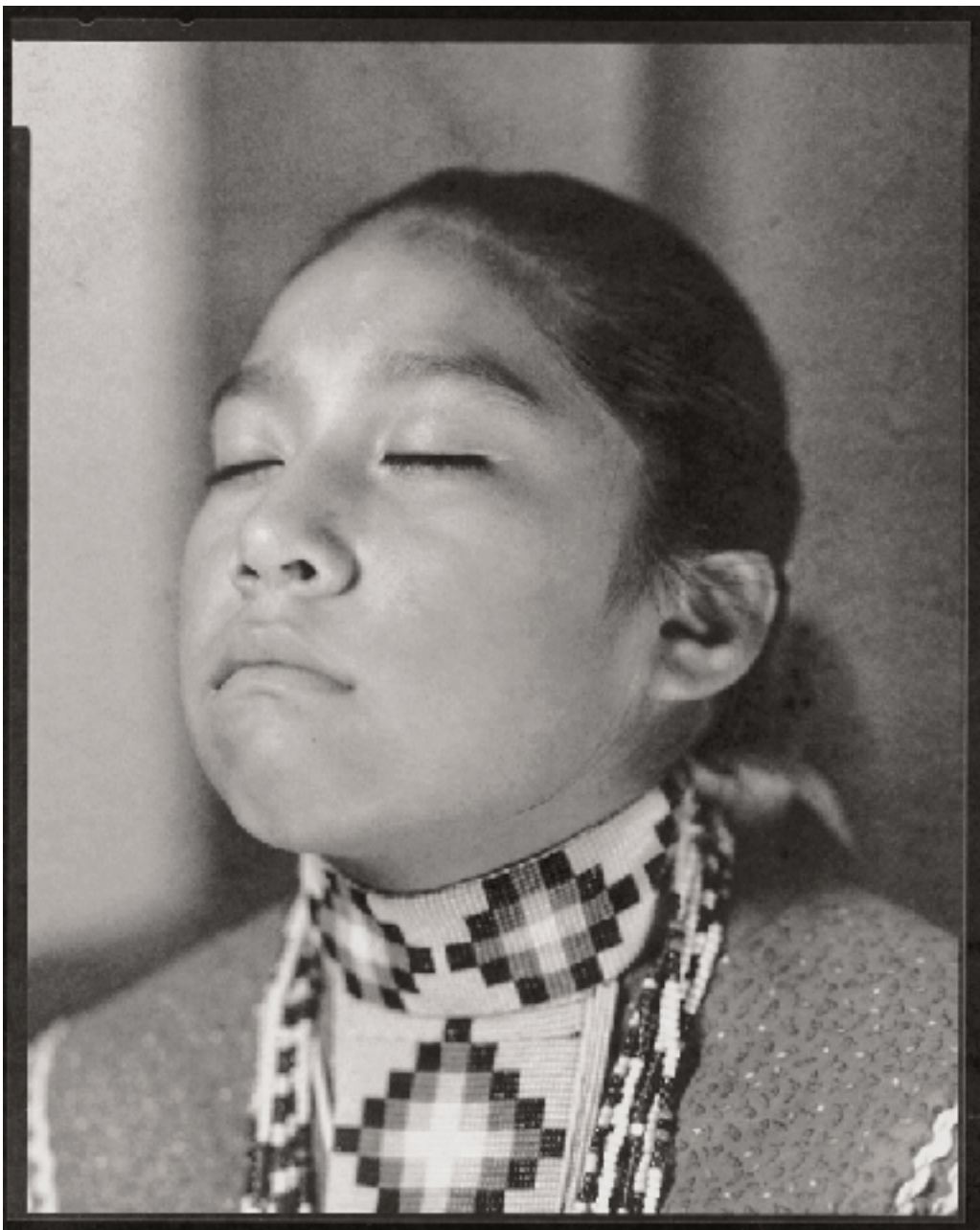
What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I thought it was a very great opportunity and it was a great experience.”

What do you see for the future?

“I just see a lot of opportunity in the future and I hope I will be able to do a lot of different things.”

Carrie Reede



Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Eating marshmallows. My mom use to buy me a big box of marshmallows.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I don’t have to herd sheep like my grandma. We have running water. And I’m different from my mom because I don’t have to cook and I don’t sew.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I still can wear an Apache camp dress!

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I felt it was cool! It was neat because we got to do different pictures and take photos with my cousins.”

What do you see for the future?

“Navy, Army and Marines. I seriously want to be a Marine. Or maybe art school.”

Given name: Carrie Reede
Date of birth: June 30, 1988
Place of birth: Phoenix, Arizona
Tribe: San Carlos Apache
Year photographs were taken: 1999, 2001



Martha Miles

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“My first day of school. My father walked me to school, held my hand. The school was right behind my house. I felt safe and proud of him.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“My life seems easier due to the fact that my parents raised 14 children. I know raising children is a serious, important job and the one thing my parents taught us is to be there for each other. Financially, emotionally, spiritually, giving your time and setting aside your wants in order to be there for your children is what my parents did, now that I look back, I am thankful and appreciative for their hard work.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Attending church with my family is a tradition I want my children to never walk away from.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I thought when we were going to have photos taken they would be pictures of my daughters. I was there to support them and to make sure they were comfortable with it. When Gary asked me to work, I had to let my girls know that it was ok to experience other things than

they were expecting. I only became comfortable with myself being photographed knowing my children were learning and watching. Meeting Gary was a blessing.”

What do you see for the future?
“Seeing my children be happy and successful in whatever they want to become.”

Given name: Martha Miles
Date of birth: October 2, 1963
Place of birth: San Carlos, Arizona
Tribe: San Carlos Apache (mother) / Navajo (father)
Years photographs were taken: 1999, 2001

Douglas Miles Sr.

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“I remember my dad and being at home in South Phoenix. There are very few things I remember about my dad except that he once brought us home some small toy soldiers with parachutes. He stood me on the car and let me throw it. He was in WWII. He was a paratrooper and was gravely wounded but made it back home. He knew Ira Hayes (helped raise flag on Iwo Jima) and could play guitar even though some fingers were missing due to his war wounds. That is what I remember earliest.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“My life is much easier. My parents both worked hard. My dad picked cotton, drove a truck and served in WWII. My mom cleaned houses and ironed clothes for others to feed the family. When she was young she stayed in the mountains with her dad as he helped build dams in and around San Carlos. Today I work at home and am a full-time artist. I went to school and studied art. My mom told me to go to college right after I got married. So I did. I’ve had many jobs but often felt I never had to work as hard as my parents did. I feel that my life is a result of the dreams, hopes and silent prayers my mom and dad had for us and themselves. They always had books around and loved to read and listen to music. Our lives

Given name: Douglas Miles Sr.
Place of birth: Phoenix, Arizona
Tribe: San Carlos Apache
Year photograph was taken: 2001

were filled with a respect for art. As we fulfill our own dreams and creative destiny I feel that my dad is sitting somewhere in heaven nodding his head smiling and saying ‘well done’.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Our family was raised in the city so we created some new traditions: family gatherings at the holidays, church on Sunday, and visiting relatives on the “rez” as often as possible. Usually in the summer we visited my mom and dad’s family in White River and San Carlos. There have also been Apache Sunrise ceremonies recently where our family was involved. This is a centuries old tradition that still occurs today.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I usually don’t care for my pictures. This picture was different. I like to look at it. My wife seems to just glow. Maybe she can see my love for her reflected in my eyes.”

What do you see for the future?

“My family and my children are featured in these photos. I only see success in life for them. The photos capture their determination and pride. They understand that the impossible is possible with hard work and effort. My wife and I have endeavored to let them know their full potential is yet to come. As an artist, I plan to keep painting and being creative. Nothing can stop me because it is my calling and what God intended for me to do.”

Craig Goseyun

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Between the years 1972-74, before my grandfather died in 74’, he brought me and my cousins, all boys, in his yellow ’57 Chevy pick-up into the mountains. Us boys had sling shots and small bows and arrows. My grandpa would use a long pole to disturb the pack rats from their prickly pear cactus homes. We would tie strips of yucca lance shaped leaves together around our wrist with the rats hanging from their rear legs with their tendons keeping them in place. For dinner, my grandpa boiled, and fried them. They were white, sweet, and tender, a delicious delicacy. The rats were clean “being in the mountains” and their food being the sweet prickly pear cactus.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“One thing is obvious, that teenagers are disrespectful towards the elders and the land and wildlife. The wildlife is less abundant on the reservation. My grandparents were wealthy from the cattle industry between the 30’s and the 70’s of last century. My parents were strict disciplinarians and my dad gave us a good work ethic, encouraging us to higher education.

Native name: NDED GUHYANEH

Given name: Craig Goseyun

Date of birth: March 31, 1960

Place of birth: Honolulu, Hawaii

Tribe: San Carlos Apache

Maternal clan: Black Water Clan

Paternal clan: Natural Erosion on the Side of a Hill

Year photograph was taken: 1997

I see many of the younger generation just give up and are couch potatoes.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

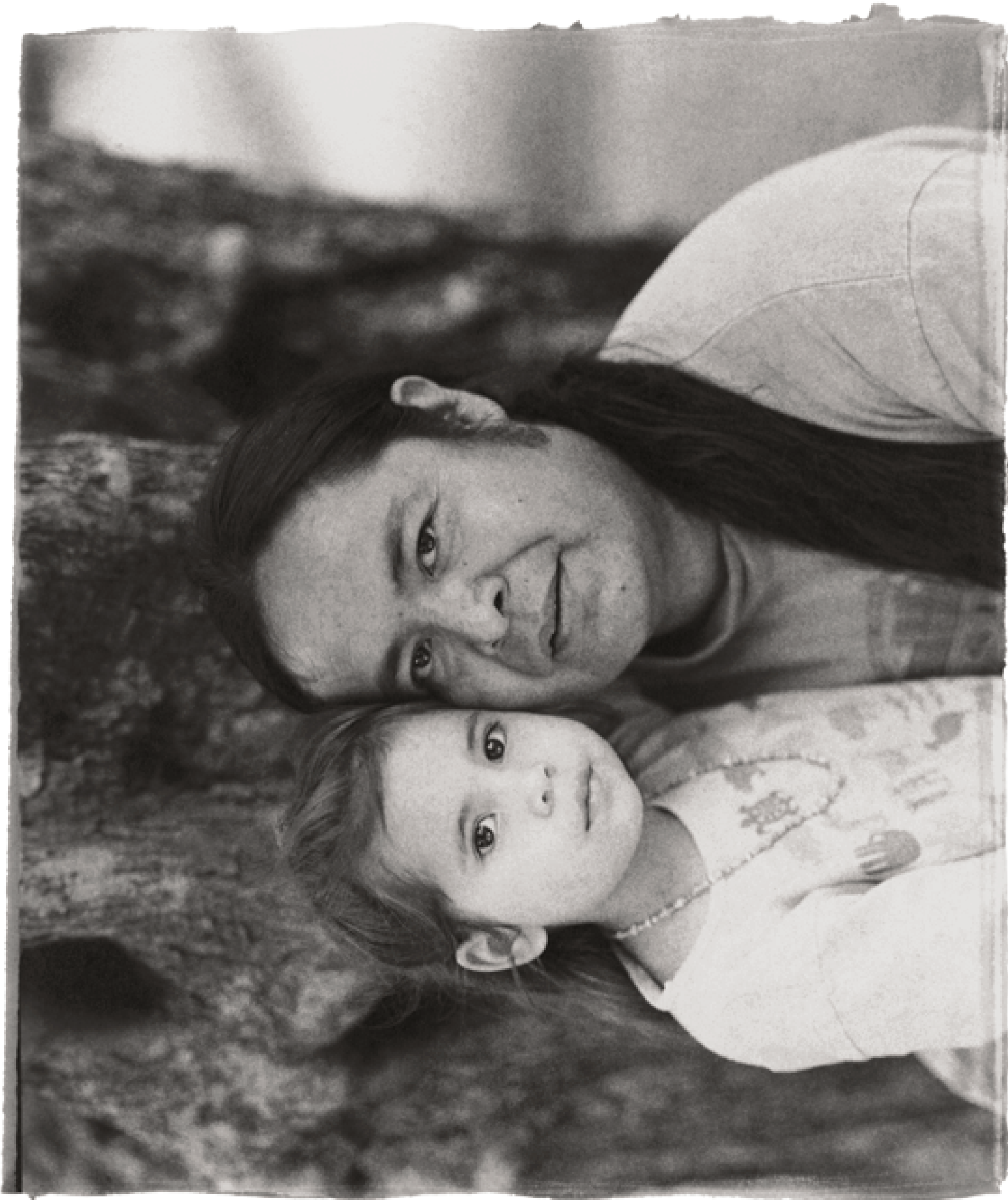
“I have participated in the healing ceremonies of the Apache Holy Grounds and hoping to learn the sacred 32 song. I help my friends, family, and relatives during the Sunrise ceremony or the Rites of Passage ceremony of a girl going to womanhood. My mother, aunts, grandmother, great aunts and sisters have gone through this ceremony. I have been a cowboy like my grandfathers, my father, and uncles. I respect my hunting traditions.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I must be a very handsome guy. Just kidding! It could be a recording for the photographer, maybe for the Arizona State Museum, or a museum art event. It may be possible to get a copy for myself, especially being with my daughter Srila. Me, and my little girl were pleased with the shot.”

What do you see for the future?

“I’ve attended my tribal counsel meetings. I have seen struggles and difficulties presented, but the counsel members are doing a professional job of dealing with the constant obstacles. I’m in favor of our progress as a nation in these rapid-paced times.”



About the sculpture in the photograph:

“Blue River Woman”. What came to mind was that there is a flat plain near where I lived, nothing but cactus, rocks and desert. I was on horseback, and a box canyon came before me... about 200 feet deep and 600 feet across. Inside the canyon there was a stream of water the color of turquoise, with birds flying all over, trees, many petroglyphs....LIFE. The area was called Blue River. The water, and all the important sources of nature, inspired me to make “Blue River Woman.”



Paul Ortega

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Grandpa and grandma.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“They did not need money like now.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

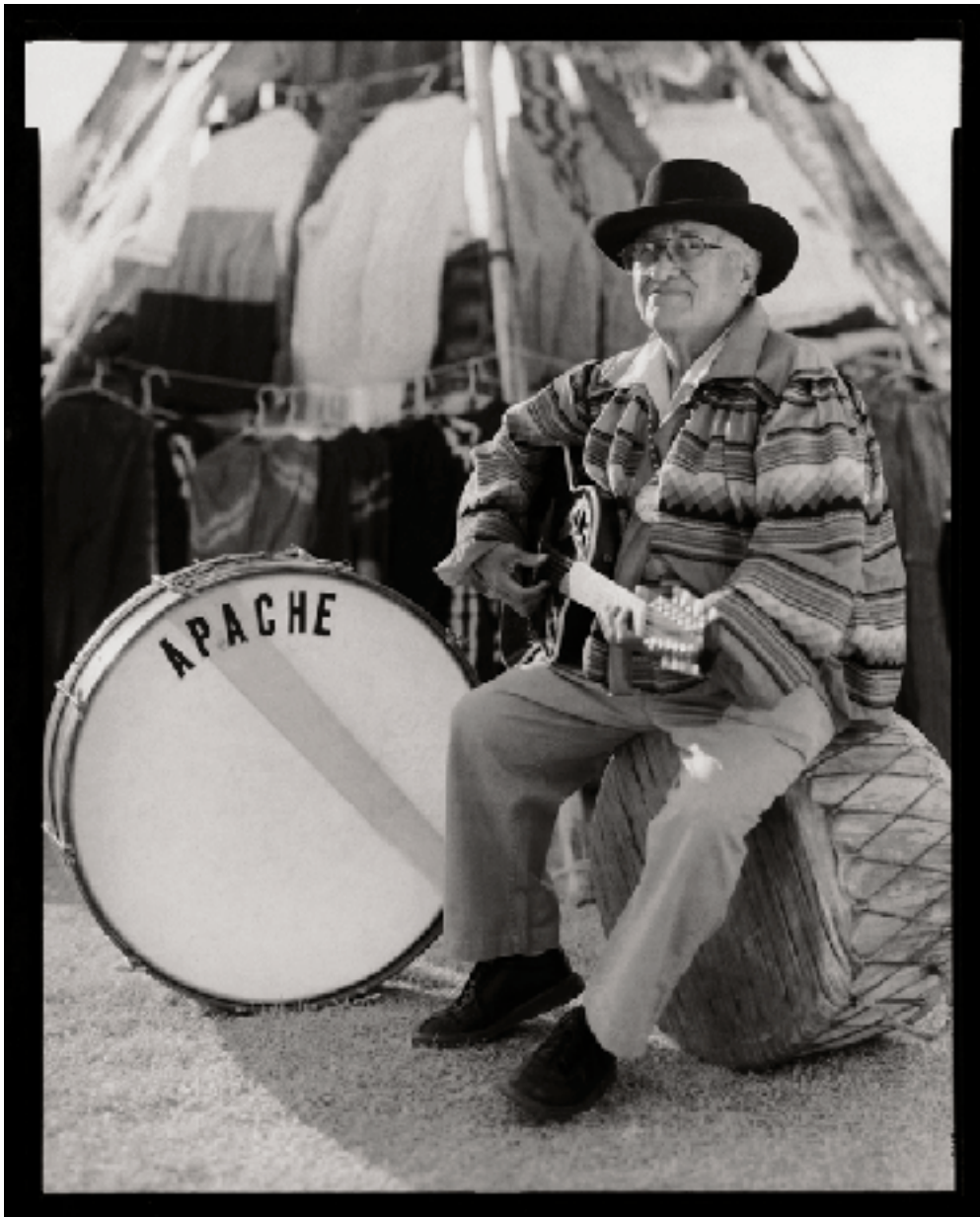
“The Apache ways.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“Awesome.”

What do you see for the future?

“Self destruction of the world!”



Native name: DEERFOOT

Given name: Paul Ortega

Date of birth: August 26, 1937

Place of birth: Mescalero Apache Reservation

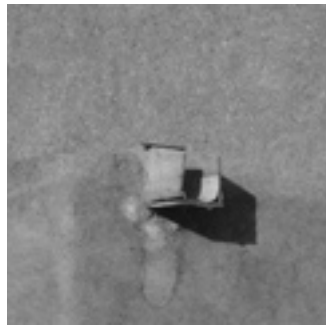
Tribe: Mescalero Apache

Maternal clan: Sun

Paternal clan: Sun

Year photograph was taken: 2004

TAOS



Crucita Romero



Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“When I was young, I watched my uncle oil paint on the riverside. The tourists used to buy his 5x8 paintings for a very small fee. I also helped my uncle in his shop (where I am now); he was the very first individual to have a shop at the Pueblo. I gained a lot of experience in working with people and meeting people from all over the world. Even now more.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I got to see the better things in life. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to express myself through the many talents that were taught to me. The bread baking, various cookies, pies of different ingredients, the bead work in jewelry and dress. The pottery making and design and most of all the ability to better educate my mind in order to associate with people. This came at an early age of 14 when I started helping my uncle, Albert Lujan, at his studio. I have been in this business ever since.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I still participate in all our cultural activities within the community.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I’m used to people and tourists asking to take my picture; although they pay me a small fee. Sometimes I wonder if they sell or make money from my photos.”

What do you see for the future?

“I hope that my family keeps up the traditions in this manner as a way of making extra money and also to teach their children the ways of our heritage.”

Native name: OUTSTANDING DANCER
WITH A FLOWER

Given name: Crucita L. Romero

Date of birth: April 21, 1920

Place of birth: Taos Pueblo

Tribe: Taos Pueblo

Maternal clan: Lujan Family

Paternal clan: Conchs Family

Year photograph was taken: 1996

Jerry Giron

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“All my growing up years, spending time with my dad, Teresino Jiron, and being the oldest, I had to help my dad do a lot of plowing, planting and, of course, harvest time came around, and it was a lot of work doing things like shucking corn, either cooking the corn, drying the corn, or eating it.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“There are lot of problems and everything is expensive. In my parents or grandparents days or era, they didn’t have what we have today like TV, radio, and a lot of different foods. Everything — everything is different today than then.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“Everything that was taught to me by my dad and my mom. Our tradition is still carried on.”

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“I am astonished.”

What do you see for the future?

“Everything will go fast, including the food that we eat.”

Given name: Geronimo “Jerry” Giron

Place of birth: Taos Pueblo

Date of birth: October 1, 1926

Tribe: Tiwa-Taos Pueblo

Maternal clan: Water Clan

Paternal clan: Big Earring Clan

Year photograph was taken: 1992

Reycita Jiron

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

A picture taken when I was very young, with just a bunch of old cloths and a cloth shawl with no shoes or pants. Very long ago. No pants or shorts were worn during my days. Long dresses made out of flour sacks or burlap were worn. Just a manta was worn sometimes.

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

Very much. Today is a modern day with all the extra conveniences that the old people never had. Then, there was no electricity, running water, television, microwaves or even a gas stove. It was only at the fireplace that there was a means of cooking.

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

Our traditional ways are still carried out the way they used to be. Our men or the males still carry out their traditional ways, in the kiva or at home. The traditional food is still prepared the same way it was then. Also, they still use pottery to cook with on the fireplaces.

What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

It was a good idea. We, Teresino and myself, always liked to have our photos taken. Especially Teresino he seemed to have people like him in their photos and magazines. We both really enjoyed having people around us.

What do you see for the future?

Hoping that our “traditional” way of life is still being carried out. I like the older ways of preparing the food as well as the dances. Also, here is hoping our children’s children will carry out the same traditional way of life as the way we lived them.

Given name: Reycita B. Jiron
Date of birth: December 28, 1908
Place of birth: Taos Pueblo
Tribe: Tiwa - Taos Pueblo
Maternal clan: Water People
Paternal clan: Big Earring Clan
Year photograph was taken: 1992



Teresino Jiron

Do you have a specific memory that stands out in your mind when you were young?

“Having a grand time. All I did was plant corn, squash, beans, wheat, pumpkin and alfalfa. Getting wood with a wagon and a team of horses.”

How is your life different from your parents or grandparents?

“I think my life was almost the same as my parents and grandparents. They were very poor and I was too growing up. The grandparents were more strict and more old fashioned. No English was spoken. I ate on the floor like they did.”

What traditions from the past do you still continue to practice?

“I still practice my traditional beliefs. I am the most spiritual and am a special believer in my traditions. I always carried out my beliefs and ways of life. When my children were growing up, I made sure we all ate on the floor. No paper plates, we ate with our pottery dishes.”

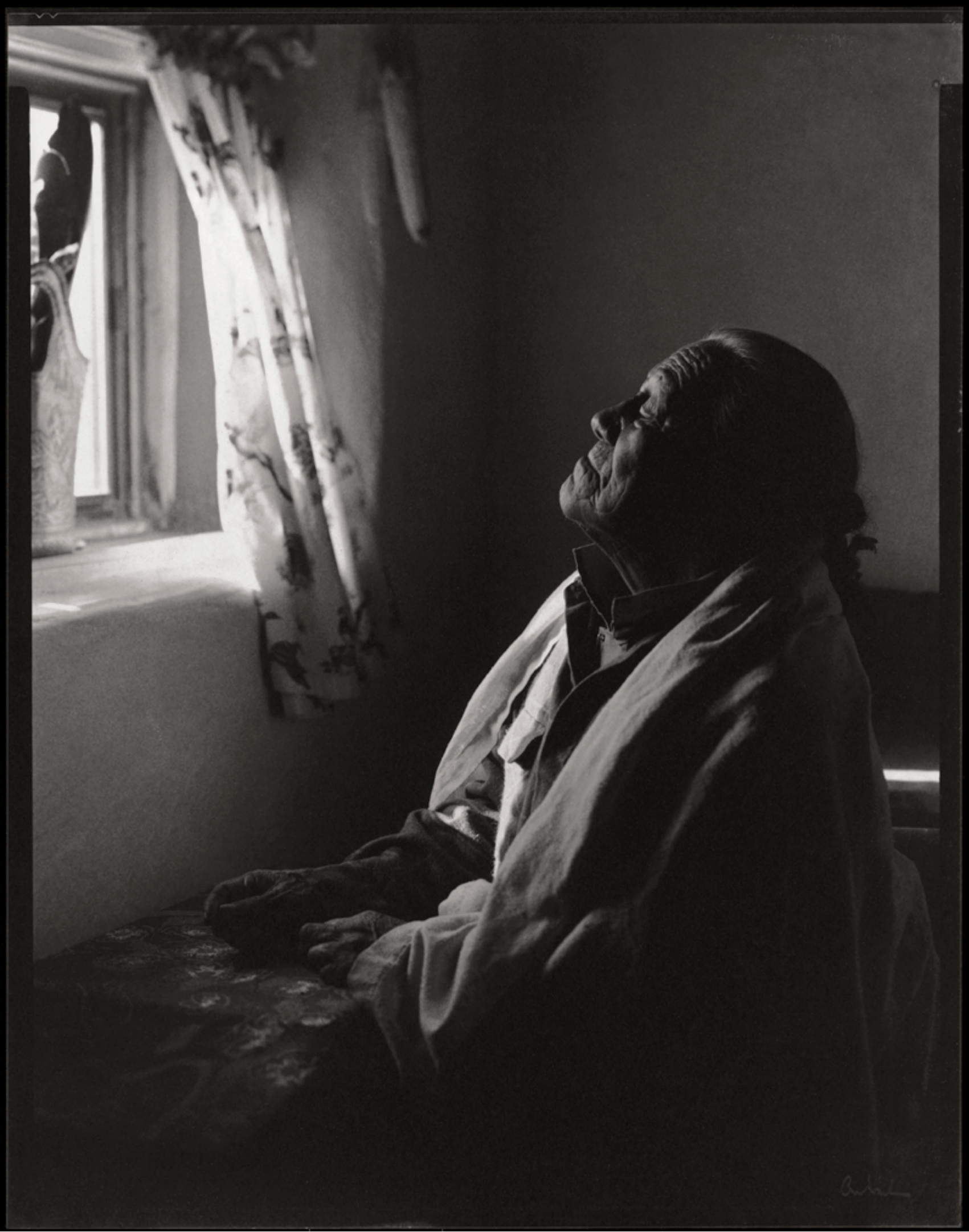
What was your impression on having your photograph taken?

“Enjoyable! I have always liked to have my picture taken at any time or at any place. I enjoyed posing.”

What do you see for the future?

“Nothing but trouble. They will be using airplanes for all the fighting. Our children are using drugs and alcohol and getting in trouble.”

Given name: Teresino Jiron
Date of birth: December 8, 1900
Place of birth: Taos Pueblo
Tribe: Tiwa - Taos Pueblo
Paternal clan: Big Earring Clan
Year photograph was taken: 1992





Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

April 5, 2004

Mr. Gary Auerbach
2730 N. Pantano Road
Tucson, Arizona 85715

Dear Gary,

It was a pleasure finally getting to meet you last week. And it was an even greater pleasure seeing your wonderful photography and hearing you talk about your work in general and about the specific photographs you gifted to the National Anthropological Archives.

I hardly need to say that the 44 platinum prints you gifted to the NAA are magnificent additions to our collections. I say this for reasons beyond the obvious artistry and mastery of craft they embody. In my view, it is significant that your work reflects lines of continuity both in style and in subject matter with a number of the 19th century photographers whose images are preserved in the NAA. As I mentioned when you were here, I have in mind some of the classic photographers of the West including Gardner, Reed and Curtis. And it was for this reason that I immediately imagined an exhibit of your work with similar subjects photographed by some of these recognized masters. I have no doubt that, in years to come, the work of Gary Auerbach will provide historians of photography with a distinctive 21st century benchmark of the style they pioneered.

I also want to say that, for me, each of your photographs reveals something of the encounter between subject and artist. It is obvious that you've taken time with those that you have photographed and that you have, in varying degrees, gained their trust. This is clear from the photographs themselves but became even more apparent during our conversation. In this regard, I encourage your book project as a way to open up the space behind your photographs and let your audiences know something more of these encounters and, in some cases, ongoing relationships with subjects. Your photographic intentions as well as those of your subjects are all part of this space. The words that accompany your individual prints are a most welcome beginning in this regard. For my part, I promise to be in touch with my contact at the Smithsonian Press about your work.

I close with heartfelt thanks for the wonderful works you have left in our care.

Sincerely,

John P. Homiak, Ph.D.
Director, Anthropology Collections & Archives Program
Smithsonian Museum Support Center
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Suitland, MD 20746
301-238-6655