

## **LEGACIES OF THE PAST: HISTORIC WOMEN OF ARIZONA**

**By: Jan Cleere**

Women of Native American, African American, Hispanic, and Anglo descent left deep roots across Arizona Territory. From artists and healers, teachers and entrepreneurs, women who plowed the land, and those who were instrumental in establishing laws for the new territory of Arizona, many of these women became known for their fortitude in the face of adversity, their confrontation of extraordinary and sometimes dangerous situations, their adventuresome spirit, and their dedication to improving the lives of others. Some of these women gained a degree of celebrity across the state, within their communities, and throughout their tribal regions. Others remained relatively unknown. It is only appropriate during Arizona's Centennial year that we celebrate the remarkable women who shaped Arizona history. These are just a few of the women who had an impact on Arizona's past.

By the mid-1800s, more than 250,000 people had crossed the continental United States heading west.<sup>1</sup> Women often came with husbands, fathers and brothers, and a few crossed the country of their own volition. Most began their westward journeys in towns along the Missouri River, "jumping off places," where they loaded wagons with supplies before heading across the Great Plains of Middle America.

Domestic chores occupied much of a woman's day on the trail, although women also drove wagons and livestock. They collected "buffalo chips" and weeds to fuel fires for meals often cooked over a handful of hot rocks. They watched over children and learned to keep an eye out for rattlesnakes, coyotes, buffalo, and bear. If they were lucky enough to find water, they washed the family laundry along the banks of

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<sup>1</sup>The material for this paper is taken from the book, *Levi's & Lace: Arizona Women Who Made History*, by Jan Cleere (Rio Nuevo Publishers, ISBN 9781933855530). The notes below indicate the sources used for the research for this book. Lillian Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982): 10.

sometimes-fetid streams. They tended the sick and injured, and buried the dead. And they gave birth under some of the most difficult circumstances.

Arriving at their destinations, women set up housekeeping under equally harsh conditions. Neighbors might be miles away and their men gone from home for weeks or months, leaving the women alone to tend the livestock and gather food for their families.

As pioneers moved onto unsettled lands, it brought devastation to Indigenous tribes who watched Anglo interlopers trample the unspoiled landscape with thousands of head of livestock, making little effort to understand native customs and beliefs. Disaster was imminent as profiled through the life of the Chinenne Apache warrior Lozen.

Born sometime between the mid 1830s and mid 1840s, Lozen grew up in what is now southwestern New Mexico in an area known as Warm Springs, or Ojo Caliente.<sup>2</sup>

Even as a child Lozen's athletic abilities outshone those of her peers. She could outride, outshoot, out rope, and outrun even the most agile boys. By the time she was in her twenties, she was an expert at stealing horses.<sup>3</sup>

She also acquired an adept knowledge of herbs and plants, and was often called on to minister to the injured and sick.<sup>4</sup>

The ability to heal, along with an uncanny knowledge to detect enemies from great distances, were powers supposedly given to Lozen by Ussen, the Apache Creator of Life. With outstretched arms, palms up, she would turn to follow the sun. When she felt a tingling in her hands, and her palms darkened, she knew from which direction the enemy would come.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kimberly Moore Buchanan, *Apache Women Warriors* (El Paso: University of Texas, 1986): 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> H. Henrietta Stockel, *Chiricahua Apache Women and Children: Safekeepers of the Heritage* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2000): 70.

<sup>5</sup> Eve Ball, *In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970): 11.

Because of her skills and mystical talents, she sat beside her brother, Chief Victorio, at council meetings, and participated in warrior ceremonies. Few Apache women reached the status Lozen experienced.<sup>6</sup>

By the early 1860s, hostilities between incoming Europeans and the Apaches went beyond any chance of a peaceful settlement. Chief Victorio had signed several peace treaties with the United States, but the military had not honored any of them.<sup>7</sup>

In retaliation for the stealing of their land, Chief Victorio and Lozen, along with Nana, a respected Apache warrior, ransacked encroaching settlements. But by 1870, the military had forced the Chihenne from their land, moving them from one reservation to another. By 1876, they were herded onto the San Carlos Indian Reservation, a desolate, unhealthy expanse known as “Hell’s Forty Acres.”<sup>8</sup>

Bristling under the strict reservation rules imposed on them, three hundred Chihenne, led by Chief Victorio, escaped from San Carlos in 1877, returning to their homeland in Warm Springs.<sup>9</sup>

An Apache named James Kaywaykla provides one of the only firsthand accounts of Lozen known to exist. He was just a young boy when he saw her as she was riding into a swollen river while guiding the Chinenne as they fled from San Carlos.

There was a commotion and the long line parted to let a rider through. I saw a magnificent woman on a beautiful black horse—Lozen, sister of Victorio. Lozen, the woman warrior! High above her head she held her rifle. There was a glitter as her right foot lifted and struck the shoulder of her horse. He reared, then plunged into the torrent. She turned his head upstream, and he began swimming.<sup>10</sup>

The women and children faithfully followed Lozen into the raging waters.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>7</sup> “Apache Wars and Treaties,” [www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm](http://www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm) (accessed October 27, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Phyllis de la Garza, *The Apache Kid* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1995): 1.

<sup>9</sup> Sherry Robinson, *Apache Voices: their Stories of Survival as Told to Eve Ball* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000): 7

<sup>10</sup> Ball, *In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache*, 9.

Two years later the Chinenne were once again ousted from Warm Springs, this time sent to New Mexico's Mescalero Reservation. Rumors circulated that Victorio was targeted for arrest. His band, including Lozen, fled into the desert.

Soldiers had orders to shoot on sight any Apache—man, woman, or child—that was not on a reservation. Military battles took a devastating toll.

During one skirmish, with ammunition running low, Lozen agreed to make the long trip back to the Mescalero Reservation and return with more ammunition as well as additional warriors. She always felt it her duty to protect the women and children of the tribe, so she agreed to take with her a young pregnant woman who wanted to return to the reservation.<sup>11</sup>

Shortly after the two women set out, Lozen hid the pregnant woman in a wash and stood guard as soldiers passed by and the woman silently gave birth.<sup>12</sup>

As soon as mother and child could travel, the trio headed out. They were always short of food and water. As they approached the Rio Grande, Lozen watched as a herd of cattle entered the riverbed. Using only a knife, she killed one of the cows, a feat even a strong man would hesitate to undertake.<sup>13</sup>

But water was a more monumental problem as they had no container to store a sufficient supply.

They also traveled without horses until Lozen spotted a troop of Mexican soldiers across the Rio Grande. After dark, she hid mother and baby and swam across the river, stealthily creeping into the soldiers' campsite. With a leather rope she had fashioned from the dead cow's hide, she slipped a lasso around the neck of one of the horses, leaped on, and fled just as the soldiers spotted her.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 117.

Days passed with little water. Lozen killed a calf and used its stomach for a makeshift canteen, but it held only a small supply. When they came upon a lone soldier, Lozen quickly divested him of his rifle, his ammunition, a blanket, and his life. But most treasured was his canteen.<sup>15</sup>

Finally arriving at the Mescalero Reservation, Lozen learned that on October 14, 1880, Victorio and seventy-eight of his followers had been killed in Mexico at the battle of Tres Castillos. Sixty-eight were taken prisoner, with only seventeen escaping, including the elderly Nana.<sup>16</sup>

Lozen joined eighty-year-old Nana and the few remaining Apaches to revenge Victorio's death. More than a thousand soldiers and civilians pursued this handful of renegades. The Apaches rode into Mexico and joined forces with the Chiricahua Apache warrior Geronimo, who had also escaped from the San Carlos Reservation. The combined forces ravaged the countryside. "We were reckless of our lives," Geronimo later said, "because we felt every man's hand was against us."<sup>17</sup>

Within Geronimo's camp Lozen met a young Chiricahua woman named Dahteste. Since Dahteste spoke English, Geronimo used the two women to take messages back and forth to military personnel as he bartered for the surrender of his people.<sup>18</sup>

In September 1886, with over 5,000 military troops hunting him down, Geronimo surrendered. Lozen and Dahteste were with him, along with just a handful of men, women, and children.<sup>19</sup>

Boarding a train in Holbrook, Arizona, the Apaches were taken to an encampment in Fort Marion, Florida. After a year in Florida, they were relocated to Mt. Vernon Barracks north of Mobile, Alabama. Not

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>16</sup> Robinson, *Apache Voices: their Stories of Survival as Told to Eve Ball*, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Wynne Brown, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Arizona Women* (Guilford, Connecticut: Two Dot, an imprint of the Globe Pequot Press, 2003): 9

<sup>18</sup> Robinson, *Apache Voices: their Stories of Survival as Told to Eve Ball*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> "Apache Wars and Treaties," [www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm](http://www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm) (accessed October 27, 2011).

used to the humid, swampy southern land, many died from a variety of illnesses including diphtheria and tuberculosis.<sup>20</sup>

Lozen lasted less than three years. On June 17, 1889, she died from tuberculosis and was buried in an unmarked grave.<sup>21</sup>

Dahteste survived bouts of tuberculosis and pneumonia while imprisoned in Alabama. She was eventually sent to the military prison at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where she lived for the next nineteen years before being allowed to return to the Mescalero Apache Reservation.<sup>22</sup>

Geronimo died at Fort Sill in 1909.<sup>23</sup>

In 1913 the surviving Apaches were set free and allowed to return to their homeland.

The threat of Indian uprisings may have caused some travelers to pause in their quest to head west but those who took the vows of chastity and charity were sorely needed in the rough, tough towns along the western frontier. The women who came to start schools, hospitals, and missions knew the dangers they faced, but they put their faith in the hands of God and traversed the desert under sometimes extremely dangerous conditions.

For more than one hundred years, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have tended to the educational, medical, and spiritual needs of the citizens of Arizona, particularly in Tucson. Their appearance in the territory was nothing short of miraculous as they marched into the Old Pueblo on the warm spring evening of May 26, 1870.<sup>24</sup>

As the first seven sisters of St. Joseph left the motherhouse in St. Louis, Missouri, to make the arduous journey to Arizona Territory, they had no idea what lay before them. Arriving safely in San Diego,

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<sup>20</sup> Brown, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Arizona Women*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Buchanan, *Apache Women Warriors*, 32.

<sup>22</sup> Julia White, "Woman Spirit," [www.meyna.com/apache.html](http://www.meyna.com/apache.html) (accessed October 27, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> "Apache Wars and Treaties," [www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm](http://www.greatdreams.com/apache/Apache-treaty-Victorio-1877.htm) (accessed October 27, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Sister Monica Corrigan, *The Trek of the Seven Sisters* (Tucson: s.n., 1947). pages unnumbered.

they started the trek across the desert to Tucson. Sister Monica Corrigan chronicled their passage, describing dangers both two- and four-footed, tipsy rafts, and threats of Indian attacks. She wrote of the blistering heat and freezing nights, of pulling cactus thorns out of her boots at the end of each day, and of passing the unmarked graves of those who had not made it across the desolate terrain.

On one particular day as the sisters were resting before continuing their journey, a passing rancher invited them to dinner. Sister Monica wrote of the evening in her journal, mentioning there were several neighboring ranchmen around the table, but no women. After dinner, she said, the ranchers became very sociable, and as the sisters headed for the barn to sleep for the evening, the ranchers followed them.

Before long marriage proposals began flying through the air like a wild dust storm. As the sisters declined the offers, the ranchers became more insistent. Sister Monica noted that the men claimed the sisters “would do better by accepting the offers than by going to Tucson, for we would all be massacred by the Indians. The simplicity and earnestness with which they spoke put indignation out of the question,” she said, “as it was evident they meant no insult, but our good. For that afternoon, we had amusement enough.”<sup>25</sup>

After crossing the Colorado River into Arizona Territory, a feat that almost sent them to the bottom of the murky waters, they walked most of the final two-hundred-mile trek, their heavy black habits taking on a ghostly earthen hue as they swept the desert floor. At each break in their travels, they painfully removed thorny cactus needles embedded deep in their feet.<sup>26</sup>

Two days out from Tucson, soldiers joined the party as an escort into town. More soldiers arrived the following day as the sisters headed through a narrow corridor at Picacho Peak, a place known for Indian attacks. And although they encountered no Indians on this day, the event was meticulously recorded by Sister Monica.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

“‘The Indians! The Indians!’ was echoed from every mouth,” she wrote. “Whips and spurs were given to the horses—we went like lightning—the men yelling like so many fiends, in order to frighten the savages. The novelty of the scene kept us from being afraid.”<sup>27</sup> Sister Monica seemed to enjoy the wild ride.

As the nuns entered Tucson, hundreds rejoiced at their safe arrival. “The city was illuminated, fireworks in full play,” according to Sister Monica. “All the bells in the city were pealing forth their merriest strains.”<sup>28</sup> The first seven Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet had arrived, weary and footsore, but ready to go to work.

Just days after arriving in Tucson, the sisters opened St. Joseph’s Convent and Academy for Females, and within three years, they were operating a school at the San Xavier Mission for Tohono O’odham students (then known as Papagos).<sup>29</sup> In 1874 they went back to the muddy Colorado River and started Sacred Heart School in Yuma. They established St. Theresa’s School in Florence in 1877, St. Joseph’s Hospital in Prescott in 1878 (later converted into a school), and St. John’s vocational school at Komatke on the Pima reservation in 1901.<sup>30, 31</sup>

The sisters ventured into mining camps, begging for donations to keep the institution afloat. On one of these occasions, a miner handed one of the sisters a large sum of money representing several months’ wages. It seemed the miner had appeared at the academy door on Christmas Day, more drunk than a Saturday night cowboy. One of the sisters fed him a hearty meal accompanied by a stern sermon on the evils of liquor.<sup>32</sup> Apparently he appreciated both the food and the lecture.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Madeline Ferrin Paré, with the collaboration of Bert M. Fireman, *Arizona Pageant: A Short History of the 48<sup>th</sup> State* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1975): 242.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Arizona Women*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> “Nuns Arrived in Far West 75 Years Ago After Tedious Trip,” May 20, 1945 newspaper article, undated, accessed at Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

<sup>32</sup> Sister Thomas Marie McMahon, C.S.J., B.A., “The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet: Arizona’s Pioneer Religious Congregation, 1870-1890.” Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of St. Louis University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, 1952. 65.



Of all the schools and missions the Sisters of St. Joseph founded and managed, their most significant contribution was the establishment of Tucson's St. Mary's Hospital, today a modern health center providing care, compassion, and comfort to thousands of patients.

From out of the desert, seven courageous women, and those who followed, brought education, health care, and solace to the citizens of Arizona. The schools, missions, and hospitals they established are a legacy and testimony to their devotion and tenacity.

With the aid and support of the Sisters of St. Joseph, many Native children developed and prospered in the growing, changing west. But some of Arizona's small rural schools had to deal with the exclusion of Indian, as well as Mexican children from the classroom after laws started appearing on legislative books segregating them from Anglo students. When African Americans began migrating west after the Civil War, laws banishing them from the schoolroom also materialized. By 1921 Arizona was one of the strictest western states banning blacks from white classrooms.<sup>33</sup> This was the atmosphere that African American Rebecca Huey Dallis encountered when she came to teach in Arizona in 1929.

Born in 1896 Rebecca graduated from Swift Memorial College in Rogersville, Tennessee, in 1924. Reverend William Henderson Franklin, the son of slave parents, had established Swift College in 1883, helping to open the world of education to southern African American students.<sup>34</sup>

Rebecca married William Curtis Dallis in 1923, and received her teaching certificate the following year. The couple moved to Phoenix in 1929.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Mary Melcher, "This is Not Right: Rural Arizona Women Challenge Segregation and Ethnic Division, 1925-1950," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* xx, no. 2 (1999): 1.

<sup>34</sup> Tom Phillips, "Casa Grande's Unsung Heroes." *Tri-Valley Dispatch*. October 28 and 29, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

William ran the Dallis Funeral Home in Phoenix while Rebecca reportedly taught school in Mobile, Arizona, a predominantly black community about thirty miles southwest of Phoenix. At the time, two railroad cars served as segregated schoolhouses in Mobile.<sup>36</sup>

She earned her master of arts in education from the University of Arizona in 1935.<sup>37</sup> Four years later she and William moved to Casa Grande.<sup>38</sup>

By 1933 the black population of Casa Grande had increased to the point that a separate “colored school” was required by the laws of the state.<sup>39</sup> In 1939 Rebecca replaced the retiring teacher at the one-room Southside Colored Grammar School, located in a far corner on the grounds of the white South School. The cramped building accommodated between fifty and seventy students and as one student remembered, entering the long narrow school building made her feel “like cattle going through a chute.”<sup>40</sup>

“You had to listen to all the noise from everybody,” recalled another student. “There were no divisions or separation in that building...but we did the best we could because that’s all we had.”<sup>41</sup>

Earning about one third less than her white counterparts, Rebecca was allotted tattered textbooks with missing pages and worn-down chalk from the nearby white school. Her students were not allowed to ride school buses with white children and were banned from the playground when white children were at recess.<sup>42</sup>

She had older children tutor youngsters outside under a tree to reduce the noise in the cramped classroom. Working without benefit of a library or science equipment, and with no school facilities for classes such as home economics, she taught students how to cook in her own kitchen.<sup>43</sup> When she discovered

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<sup>36</sup> Cindy Tracy, “Meeting Mrs. Dallis,” *Pinal Ways*, Summer 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Rebecca H. Dallis, “A Critical Survey of Extra-Curricular Activities in Negro Secondary Schools.” Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Graduate College of the University of Arizona, Department of Education, 1935.

<sup>38</sup> Phillips, “Casa Grande’s Unsung Heroes.”

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Melcher, “This is Not Right,” .7

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

some of the children needed an understanding of Spanish to enroll in college, she ordered a correspondence course and learned the language right along with them.<sup>44</sup>

In 1952 Rebecca left the narrow classroom of Southside for Casa Grande's new East School, acquiring the title of head teacher. However, not until 1960 did the school board feel comfortable naming her principal, the job she had performed for the previous eight years.<sup>45</sup>

Along with her principal duties, she also worked with developmentally challenged children at East School, utilizing methods she had learned while taking post-graduate classes at Arizona State University and the University of Southern California.<sup>46</sup>

Rebecca retired from East School in 1962 and died in 1971. Among her possessions was a scrapbook of newspaper articles detailing the momentous 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court abolishing segregation.<sup>47</sup>

In 1992 the old Southside Colored Grammar School was relocated onto the grounds of the Casa Grande Valley Historical Society and Museum, and renamed the Rebecca Dallis Schoolhouse in honor of the woman who influenced the education of so many African American students.<sup>48</sup>

Not only did Arizona women make their mark in religion and education, they also were instrumental in establishing laws and legislative practices. One of these early women was Annie Dodge Wauneka who was born on the Navajo Reservation in 1910. Her mother Kee'hanabah was a wife of Henry Chee Dodge, one of the wealthiest and most respected Navajo ranchers and leaders.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Tracy, "Meeting Mrs. Dallis."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Phillips, "Casa Grande's Unsung Heroes."

<sup>48</sup> Tracy, "Meeting Mrs. Dallis."

<sup>49</sup> Carolyn Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More: Annie Dodge Wauneka, Navajo Leader and Activist* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001): 3.

In 1918 Annie's father sent the eight-year-old to a government boarding school at Fort Defiance. She completed fifth grade there and went on to Albuquerque Indian School. "When I went to elementary school on the reservation," Annie said, "the speaking of Navajo was forbidden. And when I went to high school at the Albuquerque Indian School, the speaking of Navajo was still prohibited. So I and many of my Pueblo friends decided that we were going to speak the very best English that we could. It was very unfortunate that I had to forsake my Navajo friends and not enjoy the privilege of speaking my native language."<sup>50</sup>

In 1929 Annie married George Wauneka, a young man she had met at school, and the couple had ten children.<sup>51</sup>

But Annie spent very little time at home.

In 1923 Henry Chee Dodge had become the first chairman of the newly organized Navajo Tribal Council.<sup>52</sup> Chee Dodge played an integral role in resolving disputes between the Navajos and government agents, and believed education was the key to bringing his people into the Twentieth Century. He relied on Annie to attend meetings with him and assist with interpreting. Before long Annie became a dominant figure at tribal meetings, working with her father to improve living conditions on the reservation.

Chee Dodge wanted more boarding schools and advocated the teaching of English to Navajo children. He fought to stop the sale of liquor to Indians, knowing its effect on his people. Ninety-year-old Henry Chee Dodge died in 1947, leaving Annie to continue in his stead.<sup>53</sup>

In 1951 she was elected to the Tribal Council, only the second woman to hold a seat on the council.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>52</sup> Virginia Hoffman and Broderick H. Johnson, *Navajo Biographies* (Rough Rock (Chinle), Arizona: Dine, Inc. and the Board of Education, Rough Rock Demonstration School, The Navajo Curriculum Center, 1970): 296.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>54</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 76.

In 1953 she was appointed chair of the Health and Welfare Division of the Community Services Committee that dealt with the issue of tuberculosis on the reservation.<sup>55</sup> The U.S. Surgeon General appointed her to the Advisory Committee on Indian Health in 1956.<sup>56</sup>

Annie was keenly aware of the ravages tuberculosis. In order to fight the disease, she sought out experts to understand the sickness, and she took classes at the University of Arizona, receiving a degree in public health.<sup>57</sup>

She visited hogans and witnessed firsthand the toll contagious diseases took on families. She discovered many had received treatment, but upon returning home, they fell into old patterns of poor nutrition and unsanitary living conditions.<sup>58</sup> She encouraged medicine men and doctors to work together to provide understanding of medical issues.<sup>59</sup>

Annie tore across the reservation in her beat-up old station wagon, and later an equally disheveled pickup truck, delivering fruits and vegetables, only to have the produce sit unprotected on dirt floors. So she went to the council seeking money to build wooden floors in the hogans.<sup>60</sup>

She insisted that toilet facilities be built farther from houses and argued for funds to improve water quality.<sup>61</sup> She taught women the benefits of canned meats and powdered milk, while advocating for better health care for pregnant women and infants.<sup>62, 63</sup> She went to the departments of education in Arizona and New Mexico requesting that students be taught personal hygiene and disease prevention.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hoffman, *Navajo Biographies*, 298.

<sup>56</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 121.

<sup>57</sup> Rosita Klee, "Leadership Profile: Annie Wauneka," [www.corporatelibraries.pbworks.com/f/LeadershipAnnie+Wauneka.doc](http://www.corporatelibraries.pbworks.com/f/LeadershipAnnie+Wauneka.doc) (accessed January 29, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 109.

<sup>59</sup> Marion E. Gridley, *American Indian Women* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1974): 128.

<sup>60</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 111.

<sup>61</sup> Donald C. Virgil, "Dramatic Conversations: An Episode in Changing Medical Values Among the Navajo in the Twentieth Century." Arizona History Convention paper (1995): 6.

<sup>62</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 110.

<sup>63</sup> Klee, "Leadership Profile: Annie Wauneka."

<sup>64</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 109.

Annie instituted a dictionary of English/Navajo medical terms to provide a better understanding of doctor's instructions. She chaired the Alcoholism Committee and continued the efforts of her father to ban the sale of liquor on the reservation.<sup>65</sup> And she took to the airwaves with a radio program focusing on health issues.<sup>66</sup>

During the 1960s the death rate among Navajo infants declined by twenty-five percent and the ravages of tuberculosis were reduced by thirty-five percent.<sup>67</sup>

Recognized as the leader in improving the well-being of the Navajo, Annie became the first Native American to receive the highest honor given to a civilian. In 1963 President Lyndon B. Johnson awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her crusade in the "betterment of the health of her people."<sup>68</sup>

Annie also became the voice of the Navajo in Washington, D.C., speaking before Congress on numerous occasions. She always dressed in typical Navajo clothing—long tiered skirt topped by a plush velvet blouse, with a beautifully decorated large squash blossom necklace. When a congressman once told her to "quit playing Indian," Annie calmly replied, "Congressman, I didn't come here to talk about your clothes, so you ignore mine and let's talk legislation."<sup>69</sup>

Annie was inducted into both the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame and the National Women's Hall of Fame. The Navajo Council declared her the Legendary Mother of the Navajo People.<sup>70</sup>

At age eighty-three Annie developed Alzheimer's disease.<sup>71</sup> She died in 1997.

Then Navajo president Albert Hale called her "one of the great Navajo leaders."<sup>72</sup>

The year before her death, the University of Arizona awarded her an honorary doctor of law degree. Since she was unable to attend, her grandson Milton Bluehouse Jr. accepted the award for her. "I didn't

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>66</sup> Hoffman, *Navajo Biographies*, 302.

<sup>67</sup> "Annie Dodge Wauneka," [www.lapahie.com/Annie\\_Dodge\\_Wauneka.cfm](http://www.lapahie.com/Annie_Dodge_Wauneka.cfm) (accessed January 29, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> "'Legendary Mother' Still Helping Navajos," *Arizona Republic*, June 19, 1988.

<sup>69</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 199.

<sup>70</sup> "Annie D. Wauneka, 87, Dies; Navajo Medical Crusader," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1997.

<sup>71</sup> Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 241.

<sup>72</sup> "Annie Dodge Wauneka," [www.lapahie.com/Annie\\_Dodge\\_Wauneka.cfm](http://www.lapahie.com/Annie_Dodge_Wauneka.cfm), (accessed January 29, 2008).

know she was famous until about my senior year in high school,” Milton said. “Before that, I figured that she was just my grandmother. I thought, grandmothers do these things. They jump in their trucks and go everywhere.”<sup>73</sup>

The arts were also well represented among the early women of Arizona. The photographs and paintings of Kate Thomson Cory illustrate true treasures of Arizona’s past.

Born into a wealthy Illinois family in 1861, Kate was one of six children, although only she and a brother survived infancy. Both Abraham Lincoln, before he became president, and Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant occasionally dined at the family home.<sup>74</sup>

When her father became a stockbroker in New York City, nineteen-year-old Kate entered art school and graduated from New York’s Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1887. She established herself as a commercial artist in the New York art community.<sup>75</sup>

In 1905 when artist Louis Akin invited her to join an art colony he said he was starting on the Hopi reservation in Northern Arizona, Kate gladly accepted the invitation. But when she got off the train in Canyon Diablo, about halfway between Flagstaff and Winslow, and made her way by buckboard to the Hopi village of Oraibi, she found the art colony had never materialized and she was the only artist in residence. Nevertheless she decided she would stay for a few weeks to sketch and develop new ideas. Kate Cory remained with the Hopi for seven years.<sup>76</sup>

Of course the Hopi people were quite curious about this small, pale woman who had moved into their community and often, Kate would return to her apartment to find an entire family rifling through her papers

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<sup>73</sup> Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 235.

<sup>74</sup> Tricia Loscher, “Kate Thomson Cory: Artist in Hopiland,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 43, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

and belongings while their dinner simmered over her fireplace.<sup>77</sup> Yet they developed a deep fondness for the woman they called “Paina Wurti” (Painter Woman), allowing her to view ritualistic ceremonies and inviting her into sacred kivas never before visited by outsiders.<sup>78</sup>

During the seven years Kate spent with the Hopis, first at Oraibi on Third Mesa and later at Walpai on First Mesa, she took more than six hundred photographs, considered one of the largest pictorials of the Hopi people as well as one of the most accurate depictions of their culture.<sup>79</sup>

She used very unstable nitro-cellulose film for her photographs, filtering rainwater to develop her pictures after extracting drowned bugs and rodents from the murky liquid. Photographers today are amazed at Kate’s accomplishments under these almost primitive conditions.<sup>80</sup>

She documented the daily lives of the Hopi and witnessed life-changing moments such as the ouster of the Hopi faction known as the “Hostiles” by the “Friendlies” in 1906, recording the dissidence with her camera. When she lost these negatives, she picked up her paintbrushes and reproduced the event in a large mural entitled “Migration,” depicting Hostile men, women, and children fleeing their Oraibi homes.<sup>81</sup>

Her paintings clearly show her admiration and respect for the Hopi people, as she painstakingly recorded meticulous details of ceremonies and costumes.

In her rich multicolored portrait entitled “Hopi Butterfly Dancer,” she painted a young girl standing in her bare feet. Her whorl hairstyle of large rolled circles over each ear, depicting squash blossoms or butterfly wings, indicates this young woman is of marriageable age. Her headpiece, made from cottonwood surrounded by feathers, can weigh as much as ten pounds, and is held in place with a braid of hair pulled

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<sup>77</sup> Dana Brisendine Sharp, ed., “This Was the Way.” Original Journal notes kept by Miss Kate T. Cory from July 1909 through July of 1910, edited, researched and written by Dana Brisendine Sharp and finally finished in August of 1976.

<sup>78</sup> Loscher, “Kate Thomson Cory: Artist in Hopiland,” 10.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 5.

<sup>80</sup> Barton Wright, Marnie Gaede and Marc Gaede, *The Hopi Photographs: Kate Cory: 1905-1912* (La Canada, California: Chaco Press, 1986), 12.

<sup>81</sup> Loscher, “Kate Thomson Cory: Artist in Hopiland,” 8.



through a cornhusk ring, then tied under her chin. Her black sack dress trimmed in blue is called a manta, and she holds white feathers that represent rain clouds.<sup>82</sup>

Kate also maintained a journal of her time with the Hopi, and learned to communicate with her neighbors by translating more than nine hundred Hopi words and phrases.<sup>83</sup>

Although she was isolated on the Hopi mesas, Kate maintained her connections with the art world by spending time in Hollywood as a consultant on Western films and showing her paintings in Los Angeles and New York.<sup>84</sup>

After seven years Kate began to feel the strain of climbing the steep hills and hundreds of steps to the Hopi mesas. She moved to Prescott in 1912 and designed a home that resembled a typical Hopi house.<sup>85</sup>

In 1915 *Sunset* magazine named Kate Cory one of Arizona's most interesting Westerners.<sup>86</sup>

At the age of ninety-five she moved into the Arizona Pioneers Home in Prescott. She died there on June 12, 1958.

Kate Cory's abundant portfolio of paintings and photographs illustrates an intense cultural sensitivity to Hopi rituals and ceremonies. Because the Hopi have not allowed photographs to be taken of some of their ceremonies since 1917, Kate's collection is a valuable record of the Hopi people that can never be replicated.

This handful of women, and many more like them, represent the foundation of our heritage and culture. Only through their valor and determination did the West develop and prosper. So here's to the ladies—may they forever be the caretakers of our past and our future.

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<sup>82</sup> Description of "Hopi Butterfly Dancer" obtained from display of painting at the Smoki Museum, Prescott, Arizona.

<sup>83</sup> Loscher, "Kate Thomson Cory: Artist in Hopiland," 11.

<sup>84</sup> "Kate Cory-Creating a Visual Chronicle of the Hopi People," Waukegan Historical Society, [www.waukeganhistorical.org/collection-cory.html](http://www.waukeganhistorical.org/collection-cory.html) (accessed September 13, 2008).

<sup>85</sup> Loscher, "Kate Thomson Cory: Artist in Hopiland," 22.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.