

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

KLAGETOH (LEEGITO) CHAPTER HOUSE

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1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Klagetoh (Leegito) Chapter House

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

Street and Number (if applicable): US Highway 191, approximately milepost 397 (west side)

City/Town: Klagetoh

County: Apache

State: Navajo Nation (Arizona)

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior January 13, 2021

2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

NHL Criteria: 2

NHL Criteria Exceptions: 8

NHL Theme(s): IV. Shaping the Political Landscape

2. governmental institutions

4. political ideas, cultures, and theories

Period(s) of Significance: 1963-1979

Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2): Wauneka, Annie Dodge

Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6): N/A

Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder: Navajo Construction Services, designer

Historic Contexts: N/A

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement. We are collecting this information under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467) and 36 CFR part 65. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate properties nominated as National Historic Landmarks. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has approved this collection of information and assigned Control No. 1024-0276.

Estimated Burden Statement. Public reporting burden is 2 hours for an initial inquiry letter and 344 hours for NPS Form 10-934 (per response), including the time it takes to read, gather and maintain data, review instructions and complete the letter/form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate, or any aspects of this form, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop 242, Reston, VA 20192. Please do not send your form to this address.

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3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

___ Yes

X No

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Acreage of Property: 0.4

2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places):
Datum if other than WGS84:

Latitude:		Longitude:
1	35.499759	-109.530379
2	35.499521	-109.530169
3	35.499272	-109.530597
4	35.499512	-109.530808

OR

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
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3. Verbal Boundary Description:

As shown on the included Klagetoh Chapter House Sketch Map, the boundary of the nominated property begins at a point 17 feet north of the north corner of the landscaped area in front of the chapter house; thence southeasterly for approximately 106 feet; thence southwesterly for approximately 156 feet; thence northwesterly for approximately 107 feet; and thence northeasterly for approximately 156 feet to the point of beginning.

4. Boundary Justification:

The boundary encompasses the Klagetoh Chapter House, the landscaped area to the front (northeast) of the building and its stone wall, and 20 feet on each of the other sides of the building.

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5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1963 Klagetoh (Leegito) Chapter House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 2 for its association with one of the most celebrated and powerful Native Americans of the twentieth century, Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Annie Dodge Wauneka.¹ The second and longest-serving woman elected to the Navajo Tribal Council (1951-1979), Wauneka devoted her life to the betterment of her people. Respected around the world for her tireless work, eloquence, and forthright courage, Wauneka drove thousands of miles across the Navajo reservation to listen to the concerns of her constituents; educated and communicated with the Navajo people (Diné) in their homes and at public gatherings; traveled dozens of times to Washington, D.C., to confer with presidents, members of Congress, and heads of government agencies on issues impacting indigenous people; participated in the creation of the modern Navajo Nation through her efforts on a wide range of critical issues; inspired and empowered other women; and saved thousands of lives in her quest to better the health and well-being of Native Americans. For these reasons, Wauneka is recognized as nationally significant in the history of the United States.

Klagetoh (Leegito) Chapter House in Arizona on the lands of the Navajo Nation best represents Wauneka and her national significance under National Park Service Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape. Wauneka family members, including her daughter Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, believe the chapter house is the resource most closely associated with her life of service that is appropriate for designation, in conformance with the Diné preference of recognition for a community rather than an individual.² The building is strongly associated with Wauneka, who was a member and officer of the chapter and its representative on the Navajo Tribal Council from 1951-79. The chapter house served as a venue for constituency service activities, community and political events, and a meeting place where Wauneka listened to the concerns of those she served and reported to constituents about Tribal Council matters, current issues affecting the Navajo, and results of her travels and meetings with government leaders. She played a dominant role in securing the necessary funding for the building's construction, determining its design and materials, and guiding its programs. The chapter house retains a high degree of integrity and conveys a Navajo architectural aesthetic through its stone masonry, hogan-inspired features, and interior simplicity, which resulted from Wauneka's influence. She personally led the chapter members in their rejection of a money-saving, streamlined modern building first proposed by the tribal government, demanding a chapter house whose appearance was informed by historic Navajo architecture.

The period of significance extends from 1963 (the completion of the chapter house) to 1979 (Wauneka's departure from public office), a time less than fifty years before the present. Criteria Exception 8 is met as Wauneka's extremely close association with the chapter house and her nationally significant public life extended to the end of her time in public office. She continued as a nationally prominent political figure, conferring with government leaders in Washington, advocating on issues important to her Navajo constituents and other Native Americans, and receiving national awards and recognition for her unstinting efforts to make a positive difference in the world throughout her tenure and beyond. Wauneka's activities during her final years on the Tribal Council remained extraordinarily significant to the Navajo Nation, thus satisfying the requirement of Criteria Exception 8.

¹ The authors wish to thank members of Annie Dodge Wauneka's family and past and present members of the Klagetoh Chapter, Navajo Tribal Government, and Indian Health Service for sharing their recollections, photographs, documents, advice, and assistance in support of this project. They also thank the Wauneka family, Dr. Carolee Dodge Francis, and Dr. Mary Melcher for their helpful reviews of this nomination.

² Shirli Kasper, Historian, National Park Service, email to Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, 29 June 2016, referencing attached trip report to the Navajo Nation and discussions with Wauneka's family.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Klagetoh (Leegito) Chapter House is nationally significant under Criterion 2 as the resource best representing the public life and nationally significant activities of Annie Dodge Wauneka, one of the most distinguished and influential twentieth-century Native American leaders, whose service on the Navajo Tribal Council extended from 1951 to 1979.³ Born in a traditional hogan in 1910, she herded sheep as a girl, attended government boarding schools, and experienced the traumas of the livestock reduction era on Navajo lands while a young ranch woman. As the daughter of head chief and the first Tribal Chairman, Henry Chee Dodge, she absorbed much about Navajo culture and public service, reporting, “From my childhood, I have been made aware of the problems of my tribe and I have wanted to help make our people aware of them.”⁴ Her political career began in the Klagetoh Chapter of the Navajo nation, one of the grassroots community decision-making units of Navajo government, situated in Apache County, Arizona. From there she became one of the few women to run for a seat on the Tribal Council during the early post-World War II period and the second to be elected. She proved to be a most diligent and effective member whose work extended wider than the boundaries of the two chapters she served to include the Navajo Nation and beyond. With her strong voice, vast influence, and tireless energy, she ensured her tribe preserved what Arizona State University Regents’ Professor of History (Emeritus) Peter Iverson describes as “a way of life, flexible and changing, which is identifiably Navajo.”⁵

While Wauneka’s exemplary effort resulted in a wide range of important accomplishments in fields such as education, agriculture, Indian rights, and empowerment of women, especially significant was her lifelong focus on health care, a remarkable effort which substantially improved the lives of Navajo and other Native American people, contributed to the character of American community medicine, and changed federal agency level healthcare. For this work she received national attention, high praise, and numerous achievement awards, notably including a 1963 Presidential Medal of Freedom. Iverson regards Wauneka as “a woman of truly legendary proportions.”⁶ Former Navajo President Peterson Zah judges her a person of overarching significance, stating: “To me, she’s almost like Gandhi. I think she did more for her people than any other Navajo, man or woman.”⁷ Former Navajo President Albert Hale estimates Wauneka to be “one of the great Navajo leaders,” who led the transition of the Navajo Nation from “farming and shepherding to the modern mixed economy of today.”⁸ The Navajo Nation bestowed one of its highest honors on her in April 1984, designating Wauneka “Our Legendary Mother of the Navajo Nation” for her humanitarian work for the welfare of her people, years of service on the Tribal Council, her position as “the most honored and decorated Indian woman in America,” and the “enlightenment and inspiration” she provided.⁹ No other Navajo woman has received the award.

When Wauneka entered the Navajo Tribal Council it faced enormous challenges, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, and disease, but also newfound opportunities for progress resulting from abundant natural resources, an understanding of the limits of federal programs, and a growing movement toward self-determination. She shaped the tribe’s response to critical issues and became an articulate and outspoken leader, whose opinions were respected and influential. Iverson believes Wauneka was “one of the most important

³ Klagetoh Chapter House indicates this spelling for its Navajo name; an alternative spelling is Leeyi’ tó. The name is translated as “water underneath” or underground water, referring to a particular underground spring of that name and also referencing the existence of other numerous shallow springs in the area.

⁴ Wauneka quoted in *New York Times*, November 16, 1997.

⁵ Peter Iverson, *The Navajo Nation* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), xxiv.

⁶ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), November 11, 1997, A1-A2.

⁷ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

⁸ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), November 11, 1997, A1-A2.

⁹ Navajo Nation, Proclamation, 1994, Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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voices for Navajo rights. . . . She played a central role in the campaign for improved health care, tirelessly toiling for this vital cause. But her interests were not limited to this one issue. The Tribal Council delegate from Klagetoh spoke out, again and again, about the need for Navajos to be vigilant in safeguarding and demanding their rights. On this subject there could be no compromise.”¹⁰

Wauneka displayed remarkable fluency in both English and Navajo that supported her abilities as an interpreter for both cultures and spokesperson for her own. Peterson Zah described the importance of her exceptional language skills in her accomplishments as a government leader: “You can speak the Navajo language at different levels. She represented that group that spoke at the very highest level. . . . She was probably one of the most powerful speakers using the Navajo language.”¹¹ Wauneka was comfortable and effective talking with the humblest people in their homes on the reservation, as well as the most formidable world leaders. Her contacts with important officials in state and national government agencies, Congress, and the White House were unparalleled, and she made numerous trips to Washington, D.C., to confer, bring attention to Native American issues, and testify before Congress. During those occasions she served as both an ambassador and a negotiator, using the opportunities to teach the outside world more about Navajo culture and to marshal support for Native American programs. Former Indian Health Service (IHS) physician Robert Bergman judged her “the smartest politician I’ve ever known” for her ability to negotiate and stay focused on achieving results for the Navajo people.¹² Grandson Milton Bluehouse, Jr., describes her as “a self-taught genius at government relations.”¹³

Healthcare Advocate

Annie Dodge Wauneka became the foremost healthcare advocate for Navajos in 1953, when the members of the Tribal Council drafted her to spearhead their fight against a devastating tuberculosis epidemic on the reservation. As the only woman on the council she was seen by her colleagues as more suited for undertaking the task. She identified the need for cross-cultural coordination of the care offered by medicine men, government physicians, and a volunteer group of Cornell Medical College doctors who offered their services and an effective new drug. She also developed a method of educating people who required treatment that respected their traditional beliefs and customs, clearly answered their questions, and alleviated their distrust of western medicine. Former Indian Health Service (IHS) physician Carl Hammerschlag recalled Wauneka as “a boundary person, a bridge person, one of those rare individuals who can stand between different cultures and help them bridge their differences.” He believed that “Annie wanted to wed the best of western medicine with the strength of traditional cosmology.”¹⁴ When Wauneka began her work the Navajo tribe included approximately sixty-nine thousand people, many scattered in isolated rural areas without utilities and accessed by unimproved dirt roads and others who were hospitalized off the reservation. She realized, “I had my work cut out.”¹⁵

After spending months studying the disease and its treatment, Wauneka drove by herself across the reservation from hogan to hogan, sleeping wherever she found herself at night and continuing with her work each day. She explained such concepts as germs, tuberculosis, x-rays, drugs, hospitals, and convalescence to Navajo people in

¹⁰ Peter Iverson, “For Our Navajo People”: *Diné Letters, Speeches and Petitions, 1900-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 121.

¹¹ Zah quoted in *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), January 1, 2000, 47.

¹² *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

¹³ Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Window Rock, Arizona, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons, Thomas H. Simmons, and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 12, 2016.

¹⁴ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

¹⁵ Wauneka quoted in Carolyn Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More: Annie Wauneka, Navajo Leader and Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 84-85. Niethammer notes that, once appointed, Wauneka also needed to convince her husband her new assignment would not result in the disease spreading to her own family.

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their homes, where she also observed their living conditions. This field research led her to develop other programs designed to improve her people's health in areas such as housing, sanitation, water quality, nutrition, pregnancy and infant care, ear and eye examinations, vaccinations, and alcoholism. She became an innovator of methods to instruct people about achieving better health, including presenting a weekly radio program on health topics, producing films narrated in Navajo to use as teaching tools, compiling a Navajo-English dictionary of medical terms, and organizing baby contests as an opportunity for medical screening. "She was the guardian of her people. To save them she had to convince them they needed modern medicine, a nearly impossible task in the mid-20th century," the *Arizona Republic* assessed.¹⁶ Former President Zah concludes that "she literally saved thousands of lives."¹⁷

As her efforts brought positive results, she gained national prominence, served in numerous advisory roles, received more than forty awards, secured increased funding for Indian health initiatives, and was recognized as a leading expert in the field of Native American healthcare. When she passed away in 1997, former IHS Director Emery Johnson reflected: "The death of Annie Wauneka marks the end of an era. I remember the remarkable Indian women . . . who were our major sources of support in the Indian communities in those early years. . . . Back then, these women were the key to achieving change in their communities."¹⁸ Former IHS Area Director John Hubbard, Jr., who worked with Wauneka, observes that she influenced "a lot of health issues, here and nationally: wellness, lifestyle, and family relationships. She emphasized taking care of the community. Hospitals, doctors, and nurses are fixing broken bones but don't really help the core of humanity."¹⁹ In a speech celebrating Women's History Month in 1993, Arizona Representative Karan English spoke in Congress of Wauneka's "significant contribution to the improvement of the health and welfare of the Navajo people," noting that "in some circles, she is known as the Mother Teresa of American Indians."²⁰

Groundbreaking Woman Leader

Annie Dodge Wauneka is nationally significant for her role as a groundbreaking tribal governmental leader at a time when even white American women rarely held national political office. Residents of the Navajo Nation continue to regard her as a role model and a courageous and caring politician, who encouraged, mentored, and inspired both men and women in seeking government office. Her service spanned the administrations of seven United States presidents by the time she left the Tribal Council in 1979. Within Navajo politics no other female office holder is comparable to Wauneka, who American Studies Professor Jennifer Nez Denetdale calls "the most prominent woman council delegate."²¹ Wauneka never ran for tribal chairman, and no Navajo woman has yet served in that capacity, although two ran unsuccessfully in the 1980s and 1990s. Her long tenure, tenacious championing of issues important to Native Americans, service on national advisory commissions, and numerous awards and recognitions guaranteed her prominence throughout the Navajo Nation, in Washington, D.C., and across the United States. President Gerald Ford selected her as one of thirty-five men and women in the country to serve on the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year in 1975, which formulated ways to encourage equality of women and men and promoted International Women's Year. Along with First Lady Betty Ford and eight other significant women, *Ladies Home Journal* honored Wauneka as a

¹⁶ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), January 1, 2000, 47.

¹⁷ Zah quoted in *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), January 1, 2000, 47.

¹⁸ Johnson quoted in Matt J. Dellapenna, Jr., "Pioneers in the Indian Health Service: Dr. Annie Wauneka," *The IHS Provider*, 35 (March 2010) 3: 58.

¹⁹ John Hubbard, Jr., Window Rock, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons, Thomas H. Simmons, and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 15, 2016.

²⁰ *Congressional Record Daily Edition*, 139 (March 16, 1993): H-1279.

²¹ Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Chairman, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition," *Wicazo Sa Review* 21 (Spring 2006): 15, 25.

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1976 Woman of the Year in a live ninety-minute television program broadcast from New York City. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2007.

Only a small number of women in American government achieved positions comparable to Wauneka in the mid-twentieth century. Within Navajo government the unicameral Tribal Council (now the Navajo Nation Council) was analogous to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Wauneka's active political life embraced a period in which few women served in the U.S. Congress. In 1951, that body included only one woman senator and ten representatives. During Wauneka's time in office (1951-79) the yearly total of women never exceeded three in the Senate and nineteen in the House. Few of these national women officeholders compiled a record of political longevity or achievement approaching that of Wauneka.²²

“A MIRROR WHICH REFLECTS LIFE AS IT IS”: THE LIFE OF ANNIE DODGE WAUNKA²³

Annie Dodge Wauneka once commented: “I like to think of my life as a mirror which reflects life as it is.”²⁴ During her long life, she witnessed and influenced a cavalcade of events extending from the early to the late twentieth century, met the humblest and the most powerful people in the United States, experienced times of tragedy and of celebration, dealt with the most profound issues affecting Native Americans, and received the highest honors of the Navajo Nation and the American government. Some of the most notable aspects of her character were an unceasing desire to understand how and why things happened, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with people in all walks of life, an optimistic outlook about the possibility of bringing about beneficial change while preserving traditional values, and a willingness to do the hard work necessary to achieve challenging goals. Although Wauneka spoke of her life plainly and without exaggeration or hyperbole, the events she experienced, the people she encountered, and her multitude of accomplishments make her life story an extraordinarily compelling one.

Early Childhood

Celebrated Navajo leader Annie Dodge Wauneka was born in the hogan of her mother, K'eehabah (Mary Begay Shirley, 1885-1972), on the Navajo Reservation near Sawmill, Arizona, on April 11, 1910.²⁵ A Navajo baby's kinship stems from her clan affiliation, which is an important identifier that confers status as a member of the

²² Of female U.S. senators, only Margaret Chase Smith (1897-1995; Republican-Maine) achieved a comparable record of service. Smith was the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress (House 1940-49 and Senate 1949-73). In 1950, she gained recognition as the first senator to denounce McCarthyism, and in 1964 she became the first woman whose name was placed in nomination at a major party convention. President George H. W. Bush awarded Smith the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1989. Only three women U.S. House members had lengthy tenures during the same period. Edith Nourse Rogers (1881-1960; Republican-Massachusetts, 1925-61) warned against the danger of Nazi Germany and voted against the Neutrality Act in 1937. Rogers advocated for military veterans during her time in Congress. Frances Payne Bolton (1885-1977; Republican-Ohio, 1939-69) supported the Lend-Lease Act and served on the Foreign Affairs Committee. During World War II, her Bolton Act created a U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, which required funding to be distributed without regard to race or ethnicity. She supported the civil rights movement and attacked the policy of apartheid in South Africa. Martha Wright Griffiths (1912-2003; Democrat-Michigan, 1955-74) championed women's rights in Congress, successfully adding sexual discrimination to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and sponsoring the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which she first introduced in 1955.

²³ This account of Annie Dodge Wauneka's life is informed principally by personal interviews conducted by the authors with Wauneka family members in 2016 and interviews Wauneka gave to Norma Rae Arrington in 1972, Abe Chanin and Mildred Chanin about 1977, and others, as well as Niethammer's biographical work, *I'll Go and Do More*, and contemporary newspaper articles.

²⁴ *Farmington* (New Mexico) *Daily Times*, November 1, 1978, 6A.

²⁵ Stephen C. Jett and Virginia E. Spencer, in their book, *Navajo Architecture: Forms, History, Distributions* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), define a hogan as a traditional Navajo dwelling, generally a one-story and one-room building, in varied forms and materials, which has an entrance oriented toward the east or northeast, no windows or small windows, and a central hearth with a smoke hole or vented cupola above. The buildings typically have a domed, pyramidal, or low sloping roof with overhanging eaves. Wauneka's birthdate is sometimes cited as April 10, 1910.

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tribe.²⁶ Annie's mother was a member of the Tsenijikini Clan (Honey-combed Rock or Cliff Dwelling People) and her father, Henry Chee Dodge, was of the Ma'iideeshgiizhinii Clan (Coyote Pass People).²⁷ Wauneka described her first months as "really traditional . . . pure dirt hogan life."²⁸ Members of her mother's family were shepherders, whose animals supported their self-sufficient lifestyle by providing food and material for clothing, rugs, and other items. Her father, a respected tribal chairman and successful rancher, lived in another location with a wife related to Annie's mother.²⁹ Wauneka recalled that K'eehabah later stated she and Dodge had an understanding: when the baby was weaned her father would take her to reside with him, his wife Nanabah, and his three older children. He kept his word, and when she reached about eight months in age his daughter moved into Dodge's Sonsela Buttes residence. Wauneka described it as embodying both Navajo and American architectural features: ". . . a stone house with wooden floor, nice stoves, and another big house with four bedrooms and kitchen. . . . And I guess I went into a real modern, nice home—that's to be compared to the rest of the Navajos."³⁰ She did not learn of her parents' arrangement and her biological mother's identity until Nanabah died in 1939.

A Prominent Father: Henry Chee Dodge

The last official "head chief" and the first tribal chairman of the Navajo people, Henry Dodge (Askii Lichii or Chee) was born at Old Fort Defiance about 1860.³¹ The Navajo Agency at Fort Defiance had opened in 1852 with jurisdiction over the Navajo people then living in parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. Wauneka indicated her paternal grandmother was part Jémez and part Navajo and her grandfather was a Mexican captured by the Navajo as a child.³² Chee Dodge's father, who worked with Indian Agent Henry L. Dodge as an interpreter, was killed in 1861 while attempting to recover stolen horses.³³ When the boy was about three years old, Colonel Christopher "Kit" Carson initiated a military campaign to force the Navajo people into submission by killing resisters and destroying their homes and food supplies until they surrendered.³⁴ Dodge's family avoided the troops for a time, but soon they were starving. In a desperate attempt to acquire food the boy's mother traveled into Hopi country. She was never seen again.

²⁶ Edward T. Begay, Fort Defiance, Arizona. Interview by R. Laurie Simmons, Thomas H. Simmons, and Marilyn A. Martorano. December 13, 2016.

²⁷ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 3.

²⁸ Abe Chanin and Mildred Chanin, *This Land, These Voices: A Different View of Arizona History in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Press, c. 1977), 23.

²⁹ Respected Navajo educator and author Ruth Roessel in *Women in Navajo Society* (Round Rock, Arizona: Navajo Resource Center, 1981) indicates, "Plural wives [in Navajo society] were accepted and often found."

³⁰ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 23. Although the Chanins transcribed Wauneka's speech in what they heard as dialect, her writings and transcripts by other interviewers do not convey these speech patterns, including Norma Rae Arrington's transcription of a personal interview and her thesis analyzing Wauneka's speaking skills. For clarity, the authors chose to avoid the dialect produced by the Chanins, such as the use of an apostrophe (an') instead of a full word (and). Biographer Niethammer refers to the location of Dodge's ranch as "Sonsola" Buttes.

³¹ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 7. Niethammer believes February 22, 1860 is Dodge's most likely date of birth; 1856 is another possibility cited by some historians. The United States established Fort Defiance in the center of Navajo country to protect settlers and maintain peace between the Navajos and other Native Americans.

³² It is likely Dodge's father had lived in one of the settlements of the Southwest that were part of Mexico during 1821-46. Both the settlers and Native American people captured children in raids.

³³ Norma Rae Arrington, "Dr. Annie Wauneka—Spokesman for the Navajo Tribal Council," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), 16-17. Arrington conducted an interview with Annie Wauneka at her home in Klagetoh in 1972. Wauneka's father's name honored Indian Agent Henry L. Dodge, who was considered enlightened in his treatment of the Navajo and presided over a rare period of peace at Fort Defiance before being killed by other Native Americans in 1856.

³⁴ Carson was under the command of Brig. Gen. James H. Carlton, who had inherited plans conceived by Gen. E. R. S. Canby for the removal of the Navajo to Bosque Redondo. Carlton believed the Navajo needed to be incarcerated, educated, converted, and taught farming to become peaceful. Annie Wauneka later concluded: "I don't think the Navajos ever realized there is this group of people that are coming about to create a government" (Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 18).

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Remaining family members surrendered at Fort Defiance.³⁵ Chee Dodge and more than 8,500 other Navajo people were forced to proceed on foot to Fort Sumner, an army outpost on the Pecos River in east-central New Mexico more than three hundred miles distant. The removal, which Navajos designated *Hwéeldi* or the Long Walk, began in the winter of 1864, with the travelers facing snow, freezing temperatures, and inadequate supplies of food, water, clothing, and footwear. Many who started the journey never reached the internment camp. Wauneka stated: “He used to tell me, Mr. Dodge, that the old ones, the weak ones, the sick ones that were trying to participate in the march, they was just destroyed, and sometimes just fell over and died.”³⁶

The surviving Navajo people were confined at Fort Sumner for four years. As Wauneka later related: “Of course, they had a terrible price to pay at Fort Sumner, too—no shelter, no food, no water, no sanitation . . . no nothing.”³⁷ Conditions at the internment site were disastrous, and the years there were dominated by illness, starvation, and mortality. A smaller group of Mescalero Apache people, the Navajos’ traditional enemies, were also confined at the site. After years of drought, crop failure, overcrowding, insufficient supplies, and epidemics, Navajo leaders signed a peace treaty with the United States in 1868 and returned to about 3.5 million acres of land set aside for them: a reservation approximately one-tenth the size of the ancestral homeland they previously inhabited.³⁸ Dodge told his daughter that upon returning “everybody was happy, no matter how hungry, how poor, whatever they was without, shoes, or whatever.”³⁹ Peter Iverson indicates that during the Long Walk era Navajo people began to see themselves as one unit politically and realized their endurance.⁴⁰ Dodge’s experiences and observations during those difficult years guided the remainder of his life.

Dodge was adopted by an aunt and her non-Indian husband, who lived in a stone house and saw that he received some schooling and gained greater fluency in English.⁴¹ His ability to speak Navajo, English, and some Spanish learned at Fort Sumner, led to jobs as a store clerk at Fort Defiance, a messenger boy, and a mule and freight handler for wagon trains from Santa Fe.⁴² He attended Albuquerque Indian School for a few months until being called back to serve as an interpreter for Navajo leaders. Because of Dodge’s expanding speaking skills in English, he became a trusted translator known as Ashkihih Diitsi or “Boy Interpreter” by 1870.⁴³

In 1881, the government selected Dodge to serve as an official interpreter for the Navajo tribe; he indicated only two other Navajos spoke English at that time.⁴⁴ As an interpreter he worked with Fort Wingate post surgeon Dr. Washington Matthews to prepare studies of Navajo life and customs. Matthews arranged for him to accompany three medicine men to Washington, D.C., where he met President Chester A. Arthur.⁴⁵ In April 1884 at the age of twenty-four, Dodge received official appointment as “head chief” of the Navajo people by Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) Agent Dennis Riordan. Dodge later credited the agent with giving him his “start” toward his future life and encouraging him to become a leader.⁴⁶ The previous “head chief,” Manuelito, a signer of the

³⁵ Dodge later told his daughter that medicine men and older leaders advised young men who wanted to fight back against the intruders not to do it, because the white men would take all the Navajo away.

³⁶ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 20.

³⁷ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 20.

³⁸ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 11.

³⁹ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 20.

⁴⁰ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 10.

⁴¹ Richard Van Valkenburgh, “Henry Chee Dodge: Chief of the Navajo Nation,” *Arizona Highways*, June 1943, 6.

⁴² Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 11-12; Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons, Thomas H. Simmons, and Marilyn A. Martorano, Window Rock, Arizona, December 12, 2016.

⁴³ Arrington, “Dr. Annie Wauneka,” 19; Van Valkenburgh, “Henry Chee Dodge,” 6.

⁴⁴ Van Valkenburgh, “Henry Chee Dodge,” 6.

⁴⁵ Van Valkenburgh, “Henry Chee Dodge,” 7.

⁴⁶ Van Valkenburgh, “Henry Chee Dodge,” 7; Virginia Hoffman and Broderick H. Johnson, *Navajo Biographies* (Rough Rock, Arizona: Diné, Inc., and the Board of Education of Rough Rock Demonstration School, 1970), 199; Niethammer, *I’ll Go and*

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1868 peace treaty, believed strongly that an American education was the ladder to success for Navajo children, a view he impressed on Dodge.⁴⁷

After the return from Bosque Redondo, the government had issued two sheep and one goat to each Navajo on the reservation; the animals constituted the beginning of future flocks. By the 1880s, Dodge's herd consumed more of his time and required a better range. In 1886, he acquired property with fine grasses and fields and established a home ranch at Sonsela Buttes, a remote area in northeastern Arizona north of Window Rock. There, he pursued more profitable ranching and other business ventures. Savings from his interpreting job enabled him to purchase a small herd of Mexican cattle. His cattle increased, and sale profits enabled him to buy more sheep. He improved his herds with higher quality animals, which made his livestock attractive to buyers.⁴⁸ Dodge encouraged other members of the tribe to follow his example and raise sheep, believing that it made economic sense. By 1900 the Navajo people owned a reported 125,000 sheep.⁴⁹

During the 1880s Dodge also recognized the growing economic importance of Navajos buying and selling goods and became a partner at a trading post at Round Rock, in northeast Arizona.⁵⁰ In 1891, severe weather resulted in the loss of hundreds of sheep at Sonsela Buttes, and he acquired a second ranch at Tanner Springs, an area of lower elevation and milder winters where an associate managed the operations.⁵¹ Dodge continued to serve as a respected leader and translator for the government and his people. In 1892, when OIA officials tried to force Navajo children to attend the Fort Defiance boarding school over their parents' objections, violence erupted and Dodge was called in to help arrange a truce.⁵² During the 1890s and early 1900s, Dodge continued raising cattle, sheep, and horses. He became the first Navajo Tribal Chairman in 1923.

“I’m a Pure Shepherder, Except for a Little Education”: Raising Sheep and Attending Boarding School

As a young girl, Annie Dodge grew up in a house that was different from those of most Navajo children of her era. Reflecting Chee Dodge's relative affluence, it included a modern kitchen and a shady porch, curtains at the windows, furniture, books, and photographs.⁵³ At the same time, she was raised in a way that honored Navajo traditions and respected the struggle of those less fortunate. At about age five, she began herding her parents' sheep, which was a typical chore for young Navajo girls and boys. At first she herded with a cousin, whom she could play with while watching the sheep.⁵⁴ In return for this work, she received a lamb each year to start her own flock.⁵⁵ As historian Marsha Weisiger explains in *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, “Family members each owned their stock individually and could do with their animals as they saw fit. This independence extended to children, too, even little girls.”⁵⁶ Henry Chee Dodge confirmed Nanabah's economic

Do More, 15. Established in 1824, the Office of Indian Affairs was responsible for federal government programs relating to most aspects American Indian life, both at the tribal and individual level, ranging from education and health to land ownership and employment. The office created agencies headed by agents responsible for particular tribes and sent officials to the reservations for special tasks. The OIA became the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1947.

⁴⁷ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 16.

⁴⁸ Chee Dodge, Statement, undated, Niethammer Manuscript Collection, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

⁴⁹ U.S. National Archives, “Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Navajo Agency,” Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793-1999, Record Group 75, n.d., Denver Federal Archives, Broomfield, Colorado.

⁵⁰ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 17. Niethammer states that Chee Dodge “appears to be the first Navajo to enter the trading business.”

⁵¹ Tanner Springs, located southwest of Wide Ruins in Apache County, was about fifty-eight miles southwest of Sonsela Buttes.

⁵² Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 17-19.

⁵³ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 21.

⁵⁴ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁵⁵ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 25.

⁵⁶ Marsha Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 19.

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autonomy, indicating, “My wife owns her own property, and I own mine.”⁵⁷ Far from being a quiet partner in family life, a Navajo woman was consulted about decisions and had financial control commensurate with her own wealth.⁵⁸ These influences of Wauneka’s early years would inform aspects of her adult life.

Chee Dodge placed a high priority on the importance of education for his children and those of all tribes. He enrolled his three older children in private boarding schools in other states, and when Annie was eight years old she left the ranch to attend the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) boarding school at Fort Defiance. The adjustment in moving from a ranch lifestyle that incorporated traditional Navajo culture to the highly regulated atmosphere of a large government boarding school brought many challenges for the young girl.

When it established reservations, the United States faced the question of how it would treat Native Americans, whose presence complicated the issue of western expansion. The 1868 peace treaty contained a promise that the United States government would provide local teachers and classrooms, if the Navajos sent their children to school. However, this did not happen. Instead, by the 1880s, assimilation emerged as the predominant government approach to this issue. Reformers, considered progressive for their time, were convinced that if the remaining indigenous people were to survive, they must give up their traditional, “uncivilized” ways of life and assimilate into the wider American society. Education became one of the main strategies for this assimilation. Federal officials encouraged and later compelled American Indians to send their children away from their homes and local communities to boarding schools; in 1884 the first boarding school opened at Fort Defiance.⁵⁹

Many Native Americans believed sending their children away to be taught another culture posed a major threat to their traditions, way of life, and even existence as a people. Historian of United States Indian education policy David W. Adams argues that “parents resented boarding schools, both reservation and off-reservation, because they severed the most fundamental of human ties: the parent-child bond.”⁶⁰ By 1902, the government operated 154 boarding schools, including twenty-five off-reservation schools, as well as more than 100 day schools.⁶¹ At the schools, all aspects of traditional culture and identity were discouraged or forbidden, as children were taught how to be “American.”⁶²

Wauneka experienced the challenge of adjusting to a new culture during her school years: “When I went to elementary school on the reservation, the speaking of Navajo in or at the school was forbidden.”⁶³ Upon entering boarding school, children were stripped of their traditional dress, forbidden to speak native languages and practice their religions, and sometimes given new “American” names. Like other boarding school children, Annie Dodge received a haircut and a uniform to wear when she arrived. The haircut was especially traumatic for many Native Americans because they considered long hair culturally and spiritually significant. Living in dormitories, the children were fed unfamiliar foods; learned to speak, read, and write English; received indoctrination in Christianity; and were instructed in performing domestic chores, manual labor, and western agricultural techniques. They also were taught to believe in western conceptions of time, the value of private

⁵⁷ Dodge quoted in Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, 96.

⁵⁸ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, 99. This “control of the family purse-strings” was observed by Gladys Reichard in the 1920s and 1930s.

⁵⁹ National Archives, “Preliminary Inventory.”

⁶⁰ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 215.

⁶¹ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 57-58.

⁶² Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 17.

⁶³ Wauneka quoted in Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 34.

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property and individualism, and accepted gender roles. Some schools also provided instruction in western sports, art, and music.⁶⁴

Individual experiences and school conditions varied widely. Some students came to value aspects of the institutions, the curriculum, and the friends they made. They saw formal western education as an important way for Native people to better their circumstances and fight for their rights. Many American Indian leaders were products of the boarding schools. Because children from a variety of different tribes often went to each school and became friends, the experience is sometimes judged as having helped foster the emergence of a pan-Indianism that led to the American Indian civil rights movement.⁶⁵

In contrast, many former students found their time at the boarding schools traumatic, and some died during epidemics. Contagious illnesses often spread through the boarding schools, and the Indian agency set up clinics and hospitals to care for students “that later became the core of the OIA hospital building program after 1915,” a history of the IHS reports.⁶⁶ Within a few months of Annie Dodge’s enrollment at Fort Defiance, for example, the Spanish Flu pandemic arrived. The virulent influenza infected 28 percent of all Americans, killing an estimated 675,000.⁶⁷ As an adult Wauneka remembered: “At first, one or two died; pretty soon they’re just dying like flies, and I wonder what the devil is going on. I got sick myself, but not too much.”⁶⁸

The school nurse needed assistance tending to the ill and asked the young girl to help her by cleaning the kerosene lanterns that lighted the infirmary. Witnessing the epidemic left a lasting impression on Wauneka: “They hemorrhaged, every one of them hemorrhaged, and they were sick about a day or two; they were gone the next day.”⁶⁹ She was a capable helper and her duties expanded to giving the patients food and water. When the number of dead increased, she saw them piled up on top of each other: “And corpses were sitting in the hall, I remember it very clearly. And there were horse-driven wagons, and they used to just pile them up like a bunch of wood and haul them away.”⁷⁰

Another epidemic struck the Fort Defiance Boarding School when Annie Dodge was in fourth grade. This time, the disease was trachoma, an ancient and extremely contagious infection often associated with poverty, poor hygiene, and overcrowding. Trachoma inflames and scars tissues surrounding the eye and if left untreated can lead to blindness. It spread in boarding schools through shared wash water and towels.⁷¹ To deal with the outbreak, the school transferred its healthy students to the care of St. Michael’s, a Franciscan boarding school founded in 1902, located about ten miles away. Iverson indicates St. Michael’s played an important part in the education of Navajo leaders.⁷² After about eighteen months, the trachoma epidemic at Fort Defiance ended and its students returned. At that time Annie’s older sister Mary decided she preferred to attend school on the reservation and joined the Fort Defiance student body.⁷³

⁶⁴ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 97.

⁶⁵ Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues*, 204.

⁶⁶ James P. Rife and Alan J. Dellapenna, Jr., *Caring and Curing: A History of the Indian Health Service* (Landover, Maryland: PHS Commissioner Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health, 2009), 4.

⁶⁷ “Influenza Pandemic of 1918,” <https://virus.stanford.edu>.

⁶⁸ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 23.

⁶⁹ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 23.

⁷⁰ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 24.

⁷¹ Rife and Dellapenna, Jr., *Caring and Curing*.

⁷² Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 12. Annie Dodge had studied Catholicism while at Fort Defiance and received additional religious training at the new school; in later life she followed both traditional Navajo spiritual beliefs and her Catholic faith, according to her grandson, Darwyn Lowery.

⁷³ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 30 and 32.

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In 1923, Chee Dodge enrolled his two daughters in the Albuquerque Indian School, a large government-operated boarding school, which specialized in vocational training for boys and girls, as well as offering music and sports. For the first time, Annie encountered students from several other tribes and found they could speak a common language: English.⁷⁴ She later recalled: “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.”⁷⁵

Annie Dodge remained at the Albuquerque school until 1928, when she was called back to the ranch to resume herding sheep full time. Even after entering boarding school, each spring she returned to Sonsela Buttes to assist her family with the important seasonal tasks associated with raising sheep before resuming her studies in the fall. She told her own children, “I was the best shepherd on the ranch.”⁷⁶ In later years she would hold her hand about three feet above the floor and recall that “they used to make you start running after sheep when you were this high.” She liked to joke: “I’m a pure shepherd, except for a little education.”⁷⁷

She believed it was her duty to acquiesce to the request to return. She was regarded as the “family shepherd” for her skill caring for the large flocks owned by her parents.⁷⁸ During this time at home she also received training in the tasks Navajo women performed to manage a large household, such as food preparation, butchering, sewing, weaving, and traditional medical treatments.⁷⁹

During the 1920s, Chee Dodge participated in the beginnings of organized Navajo government. Early in the decade oil discoveries on the reservation raised the issue of who would benefit from the leasing of those acreages. The Department of Interior, citing the Treaty of 1868, asserted the lands not deeded to individuals belonged to all of the Navajo people. Therefore, revenues from such lands also belonged to the people and decisions should be representative of their will. In January 1922, respected leaders Chee Dodge, Charley Mitchell, and Dugal Chee Bekiss were invited to serve as a “business council” in Fort Defiance, acting on behalf of the tribe in regard to leases of its resources.⁸⁰

The following year Indian Affairs Commissioner Charles H. Burke ushered in limited self-government by creating a Navajo Tribal Council, which included a chairman, vice chairman, and a delegate and alternate from each agency. On July 7, 1923, the council held its first meeting at Toadlena, New Mexico, and elected Henry Chee Dodge as their first chairman in recognition of his skills and experience; he would remain in office until 1928 and serve again in 1942-46.⁸¹ The council worked with Indian Affairs to provide direction on matters

⁷⁴ Hoffman and Johnson, *Navajo Biographies*, 295.

⁷⁵ Wauneka quoted in Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 34.

⁷⁶ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁷⁷ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1 and H2.

⁷⁸ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 24.

⁷⁹ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 39.

⁸⁰ Aubrey W. Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System in the Contemporary Navajo Political Structure,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1964), 76. In previous times, federal agents occasionally gathered a few headmen together for consultation. Ruth Underhill noted that under terms of the 1868 treaty, agreement of three-fourths of the people was required before the leasing of Navajo land. To meet this requirement, OIA officials called “a General Council” of people living near Shiprock. The group first refused and at a later meeting agreed to the lease. The General Council met only to discuss leases and represented only part of the reservation. Ruth Underhill, *Here Come the Navajo!* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Education, 1953), 43.

⁸¹ Navajo Nation, “Tribal Chairman and Vice President,” n.d. <http://www.navajoelections.navajo-nsn.gov/pdfs/past%20chairmans-presidents.pdf>.

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pertaining to the entire tribe, but began their work with no specifically defined authority.⁸² They approved a resolution granting the commissioner power to sign oil and gas leases on behalf of the tribe after being warned that only by cooperating with the government would their reservation boundaries be increased.⁸³ Iverson asserts the first council meeting marked the “end of Navajo isolation.”⁸⁴ Even when Dodge was not in office his people solicited his advice, and “during all these years his home at Sonsela Mountain was the site of many Navajo political discussions and debates,” according to a 1964 *Arizoniana* article.⁸⁵

Married Life on the Tanner Springs Ranch and Early Political Training

Annie Dodge met her future husband, George Wauneka, while a student at Albuquerque Indian School. She was a cheerleader and he played on the football team, recalls daughter Irma Wauneka Bluehouse.⁸⁶ Although Navajo parents customarily selected husbands for their daughters, Annie decided she would marry George and informed her parents, who did not object. In October 1929, a traditional Navajo marriage ceremony with many invited guests took place at the Tanner Springs Ranch. A photograph from the wedding shows the young couple dressed in customary Navajo clothing sitting on the ground with a small group of men. On the back of the photograph the bride later wrote: “My Navajo wedding. My father is in the background. We are eating wedding mush out of a Navajo basket. Medicine man is at far right Mr. Cut Hair.”⁸⁷

Navajo society is matrilineal, and after the wedding the couple lived and worked at her parents’ Sonsela Buttes ranch, where their efforts earned her father’s trust and respect. In time, Chee Dodge decided to have the couple take over management of the Tanner Springs ranch, which focused on raising large herds of cattle and sheep.⁸⁸ Despite the rugged lifestyle and residence in a log house without running water, electricity, or the types of amenities found at Sonsela Buttes, Annie Dodge Wauneka found the duties at Tanner Springs interesting and enjoyed dealing with the livestock.⁸⁹ Weisiger states that “not all labor was gendered” in a Navajo household and some work depended upon whoever was available to do it.⁹⁰ Alan Menapace, whose father purchased cattle at the ranch, recalled that George Wauneka “was the cowboy of the outfit. But Annie was the boss.”⁹¹

In April 1930, the U.S. Census recorded the Waunekas at Tanner Springs, with three herders also living on the property.⁹² The couple’s first daughter, Georgie Ann, was born in the same year, and eight other children followed.⁹³ Each child had a responsibility on the ranch. For example, Irma learned about ranching by helping her father outdoors with the animals and about cooking by assisting her mother inside the house.⁹⁴ A varying number of herders and their families camped around the ranch headquarters. At times, employees or the couple’s relatives helped care for the children and the livestock; when they were old enough some of the children attended boarding school.⁹⁵ Annie Wauneka planted crops such as corn, tomatoes, green and pinto

⁸² Mary Shepardson, “Development of Navajo Tribal Government,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 10: 11, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), 625.

⁸³ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 21.

⁸⁴ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 22.

⁸⁵ Stephen N. Patzman, “Henry Chee Dodge: A Modern Chief of the Navajos,” *Arizoniana* 5 (Spring 1964): 39. The journal was a publication of the Arizona Historical Society.

⁸⁶ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁸⁷ “My Navajo Wedding,” Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

⁸⁸ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 41. George and Annie also moved their own flocks to the ranch.

⁸⁹ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 42.

⁹⁰ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, 86.

⁹¹ Menapace quoted in Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 43.

⁹² US Census, Census of Population, Manuscript Returns, Admana, Apache County, Arizona, 1930.

⁹³ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 58. Six of the children lived to adulthood.

⁹⁴ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁹⁵ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016; Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 73.

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beans and raised fruit; she preserved the food in a dugout.⁹⁶ She always helped with lambing in the spring, and once departed in a rush for a meeting in Washington, D.C., without remembering to change her shoes until she smelled manure on the airplane.⁹⁷ Despite the demands of running the large ranch and the eventual absences from home necessitated by her work, Wauneka's family recalls that she remained a strong presence in their lives. Irma Wauneka Bluehouse states: "We never really knew what she was doing for her people until we were older, but she always found time to be at every Christmas, birthday, graduation, or any holiday," and that her mother "lived a hard life so she developed gumption used later."⁹⁸

George Wauneka is remembered by Klagetoh Chapter members as having a good sense of humor, working hard on his ranch, and exhibiting fondness for his wife.⁹⁹ In addition to his ranch duties, he did a lot of work building houses for the government. George Wauneka's self-sufficiency in dealing with the isolation of the ranch is illustrated by a story recalled by Irma Wauneka Bluehouse. During a big snow in the 1930s, he needed to check on the sheep at a remote location and made his own snowshoes to wear. He walked out many miles and found the shepherders had survived by gathering frozen animals to build a "sheep hogan." It took a month for him to get back home.¹⁰⁰ In 1978, the Waunekas celebrated their fiftieth anniversary with a special noon mass at St. Michael's Catholic Indian Mission. The mission's Reverend Gale compared the couple to a team of horses that "pulled together," and he challenged other married people to live up to their example. Bishop Jerome Hastrich, a longtime family friend, cited the struggles the couple faced during their lives and noted their position as role models in the community.¹⁰¹

Finding a Powerful Voice during Livestock Reduction and Learning Political Skills

In the 1920s, a movement to evaluate the administration of Native American programs resulted in the U.S. Department of the Interior ordering an inspection of Indian reservations, schools, and hospitals. The findings, detailed in the 1928 *Meriam Report*, documented poor conditions and inadequate funding. The election of President Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 brought the appointment of Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes and installation of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Collier wanted to end the government's longstanding policy of cultural assimilation and begin rehabilitating Indian economic life, which had suffered from what he saw as "a century of oppression and paternalism."¹⁰² During his tenure, Roosevelt signed the Indian Reorganization Act (also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act).¹⁰³ The 1934 legislation encouraged tribal governments to adopt constitutions and elect city council-style governments. Federal subsidies were promised to tribes who completed these steps. The new policy prohibited further allotment of Indian lands to individuals and favored "respect for the diversity of Indian cultures, preservation and extension of the Indian land base, the right to self-determination for the tribes to be expressed in Indian governments and Indian courts, and the right of consultation in the shaping of federal policy," explains Mary Shepardson.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁹⁷ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁹⁸ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse quoted in *Navajo Nation Fair Magazine*, 2008, Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona; Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

⁹⁹ Nancy Chee and Maggie Roanhorse, Klagetoh, Arizona, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 13, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

¹⁰¹ *Farmington* (New Mexico) *Daily Times*, 1 November 1978, 6A.

¹⁰² Collier quoted in David E. Wilkins, *The Navajo Political Experience*, Rev. ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 59.

¹⁰³ In 1934 agencies were consolidated into a central Navajo Service with headquarters at Window Rock, led by a general superintendent. The reservation was divided into districts administered by district supervisors.

¹⁰⁴ Shepardson, "Development of Navajo Tribal Government," 626.

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Some viewed the proposed system as “another means of imposing white institutions on the tribes,” assert Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lyttle. They found that under the proposed governmental system “familiar cultural groupings and methods of choosing leadership gave way to the more abstract principles of American democracy, which viewed people as interchangeable and communities as geographical marks on a map.”¹⁰⁵ Although drafts were written, the Navajo Tribal Council and the federal government did not reach agreement on an acceptable constitution.¹⁰⁶

As historian Masha Weisiger details, between 1868 and 1930 the Navajo population increased five-fold, from approximately 8,000 to 39,000 persons, and the number of livestock increased fifteen-fold.¹⁰⁷ As early as the 1890s, federal officials and Catholic missionaries had observed the condition of Navajo grazing lands and expressed concerns about livestock overcrowding.¹⁰⁸ In 1928, the Indian Service informed the Tribal Council that limitation of livestock would eventually be required. Federal experts in the 1930s believed drought conditions were exacerbating the effects of the crowded range, and asserted overgrazing by sheep and goats was creating an “environmental catastrophe,” states Weisiger.¹⁰⁹ Yet many Navajo people felt the problem was not an emergency and instead resulted from a natural cycle of drought, which would reverse itself in the course of time.¹¹⁰ Most people had small herds that their livelihoods depended on. As Lorraine Turner Ruffing’s analysis of the history of Navajo economic development indicates, although the United States had added some additional lands since 1868, the policy of fixing the reservation boundaries while encouraging the raising of livestock as a means of self-sufficiency for a growing number of people ensured “that it would only be a matter of time before the increasing population would overburden the fragile resources.”¹¹¹

Wauneka was twenty-three years old, a young mother, and a successful ranch manager when United States government authorities attempted to improve the quality of reservation grazing lands by reducing the number of Navajo livestock. Chee Dodge astutely judged the grazing dilemma stemmed from the government confining the Navajo to “a little corral,” where there was never enough land.¹¹² He told his daughter the government’s plans and their impact on the Navajo would be “a tremendous battle he had to go through,” comparing it to the Long Walk. He also believed the reduction would proceed whether people liked it or not and felt it was his duty to tell them what to expect.¹¹³ Wauneka found his prediction correct, later calling the livestock reduction program “the most disastrous and sensitive situation the Navajo leaders and people had to face since the Long Walk and confinement at Fort Sumner in New Mexico.”¹¹⁴

Commissioner Collier, convinced the overcrowding and overgrazing threatened the Navajo way of life, made solving the problem his first priority.¹¹⁵ The OIA ordered a program of livestock reduction to proceed, killing thousands of sheep, horses, cattle, and goats. Weisiger indicates more than half of the existing livestock, which

¹⁰⁵ Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lyttle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 15.

¹⁰⁶ In 1991 the Tribal Council adopted a constitution and created the offices of president and vice president. The Tribal Council later became the Navajo Nation Council.

¹⁰⁷ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*, 58.

¹⁰⁸ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, x. Weisiger notes part of the concern was that without vegetation soil would run into the Colorado River and pose a threat to the new Boulder Dam.

¹¹⁰ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, xvi.

¹¹¹ Lorraine Turner Ruffing, “Navajo Economic Development: A Dual Perspective,” in *American Indian Economic Development*, ed. Sam Stanley (Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 16.

¹¹² Dodge quoted in Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 111.

¹¹³ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 26.

¹¹⁴ Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 28.

¹¹⁵ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, 24.

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“were mainstays of the Navajo economy and cultural life,” were destroyed.¹¹⁶ Although the original plan called for sending culled animals to packing plants to be canned for government schools, the difficulty and expense of moving the stock led federal workers to shoot them in front of their owners before burning the carcasses or leaving them to rot.

In examining Navajo oral histories, Weisiger found the people affected viewed the operation as “unjust, unnecessary, and incomprehensible.”¹¹⁷ Ruffing describes the program’s impact on the Diné as a “severe economic shock—and a psychological shock as well, and an economic, political, and ecological failure. Not only did the Americans fail to recognize that sheep were integral to the Navajo way of life, by dramatically reducing their numbers they forced people on the reservation to abandon old ways and values; it meant a cultural transformation as well as an economic one.”¹¹⁸

During this difficult period, Chee Dodge encouraged his daughter to step forward when she disagreed with the opinions of government officials, instructing: “Don’t be afraid to get up to speak on behalf of the Navajo people when that white person is not saying the right thing.”¹¹⁹ Because women were extensively involved in the ownership and care of sheep, provided family food, and wove wool items prized as trade goods, they had significant economic independence. They, “like men, fought back against Collier’s conservation program and helped shape the memories of the era,” concludes Weisiger.¹²⁰ Wauneka recalled following her father’s advice when the stock reduction agent arrived at Klagetoh:

There was a poor old Navajo woman . . . had a horse, a palomino horse, a real nice one with a colt. And this poor old lady for whatever reason she was left out in getting a grazing permit. You see, a lot of them didn’t get their grazing permit. And here she brings this horse to the district supervisor, and there I stood by the fence. She did everything she can to keep that one horse. She said, “Could I keep that one horse? It’s all I have. I drag in wood with that horse. I go to the store with that horse.”

She did, she exhausted every effort, but what does the supervisor do? “You got no business keeping that horse, old lady.” He throws it into the pen for sale.

That’s when I got so mad. I used to be a good roper, so I went to the corral and roped that palomino and I got it out of the corral. And . . . I give it back to the lady. And I say, “you take it home.”¹²¹

Chee Dodge visited his Tanner Springs Ranch regularly to review its operations after his daughter’s marriage. As Wauneka explained, he also used those occasions to attend meetings of the Klagetoh Chapter:

¹¹⁶ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, x.

¹¹⁷ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, xvii. Howard Gorman of Ganado (quoted in Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, 17) described the horror he witnessed at the Hubbell Trading Post near his home: “It was a terrible sight where the slaughtering took place. . . . Near what is now the Trading Post was a ditch where sheep intestines were dumped, and these were scattered all over. The women folks were crying, mourning over such a tragic scene.”

¹¹⁸ Ruffing, “Navajo Economic Development,” 17.

¹¹⁹ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 26.

¹²⁰ Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep*, xvi and 80.

¹²¹ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 27. Many years later when Wauneka recounted the story, which included a verbal battle with the federal worker as well as a struggle for the horse’s rope, she reported that the old woman eventually lived to be 110 years old.

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He'd come to us and say, "I want you to go to the meeting with me," meaning George and myself. There was a huge meeting at Klagetoh. They had no chapter house, nothing; it was under a big tree. He would be talking to these people just what the problems are and he was a beautiful speaker. Navajos understood him; they respected him.¹²²

She reported the people treated Dodge as "probably the leading Navajo celebrity of his day," and she observed his use of humor and skill at opening meetings.¹²³ When she asked her father why he attended so many meetings around the reservation, he responded that the Navajos needed attention, care, and education, and advised her to visit them in their hogans and learn more about their poverty and other problems.¹²⁴ Dodge also invited people to meetings at the ranch, where Annie would prepare coffee and listen as her father "talked about what's going to happen to the Navajos and what the government is going to offer."¹²⁵

After the loss of his wife in 1939, Dodge continued his public service and became the director of the Navajo Police Force. In 1942, he was reelected as chairman of the Tribal Council at a time when its power grew and, as Iverson found, people viewed the council as "a way of maintaining a separate, integral Navajo way of life."¹²⁶ Reduced funding for the government's reservation healthcare programs during and after World War II concerned Dodge and other leaders, who discussed their displeasure in the council meetings. They traveled to Washington, D.C., to express their disappointment and encourage larger appropriations at hearings of the House Committee on Indian Affairs.¹²⁷ Navajo healthcare historian Wade Davies views these and other efforts as "helping the Navajo tribal government establish itself as a force in Navajo health care."¹²⁸ In 1945, Henry Chee Dodge accepted the Indian Council Fire's prestigious Indian Achievement Medal in a speech concluding: "The greatest of all Indian needs is education."¹²⁹

In 1946, Dodge received the majority of votes cast for the position of council vice chairman. Before his new term of office began, he developed pneumonia and believed his days were numbered. He encouraged his four children to continue his leadership, explaining: "A rope or string that has been pulled real straight and up and high is the way this actual nation is. Don't let this rope drop to the ground. And somebody sees it dropping to the ground, somebody pick it up and stretch it again."¹³⁰ Henry Chee Dodge died on January 7, 1947. The Navajo Tribal Council postponed its winter meeting and did not fill the vice chairman position for a month to demonstrate respect for their deceased leader.¹³¹

World War II marked the beginning of a new era as many Navajo people left for military service and wartime jobs off the reservation and thereby experienced new cultures and opportunities. Others who hoped to enlist were refused due to health problems or limited fluency in English. When the men and women who served abroad or on the home front returned after the war, many were unable to find employment and faced the future with despair, dependent on government assistance. A blizzard during the winter of 1947-48 found a large

¹²² Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 25.

¹²³ Wauneka quoted in Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 44.

¹²⁴ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 25.

¹²⁵ Wauneka quoted in Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 44.

¹²⁶ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 30.

¹²⁷ Wade Davies, *Healing Ways: Navajo Health Care in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 62. Wauneka's half-brother, Tom Dodge, who also served on the council and became chairman (1932-36), introduced a petition protesting the fact that sick Navajos were being turned away from government hospitals due to lack of funding.

¹²⁸ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 65.

¹²⁹ Hoffman and Johnson, *Navajo Biographies*, 212.

¹³⁰ Chanin and Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, 27; Arrington, "Annie Wauneka," 28.

¹³¹ *Arizona Daily Sun* (Flagstaff), January 8, 1947, 1.

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number of people on the reservation starving and living in conditions of hardship, which attracted national attention and outrage around the country.

“I Just Told the People That I’d Do My Best”: Wauneka’s Life in Public Service

Annie Dodge Wauneka responded to her father’s request to continue his legacy of serving the Diné. It was not a traditional role for a Navajo woman to be elected as a chapter officer or official in tribal government. However, women had always occupied a central position in Diné society. This position is evidenced in their emergence story; in the tribe’s early history; and in traditional life through women’s family and social relationships, livestock ownership and access to grazing land, and contributions to family sustenance and income. As Ruth Roessel asserted, “While no Navajo women’s mark[s] appeared on the Treaty of 1868 it is true that the thoughts and feelings of women were evident and reflected in that treaty.”¹³² In 1938, the Navajo Tribal Council voted unanimously without discussion to affirm women’s right to vote. In 1981, Roessel found women playing a significant and influential role in decision-making in the postwar era and observed that “. . . Mrs. Annie Wauneka stands toward the top of any such list [of active leaders] for her long service to her people—first, in the area of health, and later, in almost every activity affecting the Navajo nation.”¹³³

As the daughter of Henry Chee Dodge, Wauneka noted that she possessed a natural political advantage stemming from his high regard among her people.¹³⁴ She and her husband had often accompanied Dodge to meetings of the chapter at Klagnetoh.¹³⁵ As her father’s health deteriorated during his final years in office, she frequently traveled to meetings with him and served as a translator if a government official was present.¹³⁶ “He was very strict with her, insisting that she help her people by thinking harder about the exact meanings of words and expressions so that she could give true meanings to non-Navajos and to Navajos,” report Virginia Hoffman and Broderick H. Johnson in *Navajo Biographies*.¹³⁷ She knew his long years of experience brought deep understanding of the two languages that aided the tribe in solving problems: “Well, my father, Chee Dodge, he was a very effective man and I used to listen to him talk, and he would say the right words and he would be sure of them.”¹³⁸ After Tribal Council meetings the two reviewed the issues raised together.¹³⁹

In 1942, Wauneka’s first official public service came with election by the Klagnetoh Chapter to its important Grazing Committee.¹⁴⁰ Next she was elected chapter secretary. When anthropologist Aubrey Williams completed a study of the chapter house system in 1964, he observed groups of distinguished men who usually sat at the front of meetings and were the main participants in discussions. These groups generally included past and present chapter officers, members of the Grazing Committee, council delegates, and “respected older men of the area.” Other members listened to the men and were influenced by their actions.¹⁴¹ That Wauneka joined this prestigious and influential group while still a young woman was a pioneering step. Her work in chapter

¹³² Roessel, *Women in Navajo Society*, 132.

¹³³ Roessel, *Women in Navajo Society*, 133.

¹³⁴ *Milwaukee Journal*, 15 December 1963, 6.

¹³⁵ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*.

¹³⁶ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 62; Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 28.

¹³⁷ Hoffman and Johnson, *Navajo Biographies*, 297.

¹³⁸ Hoffman and Johnson, *Navajo Biographies*, 297; Wauneka quoted in Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 62.

¹³⁹ Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 29.

¹⁴⁰ Arizona Women’s Hall of Fame, “Annie Wauneka (1910-1997),” <https://www.azwhf.org/introductions/inducted-women/annie-dodge-wauneka>; Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 97, 100, 103. The District Grazing Committee and its smaller units were designed to assist in ending the overgrazing perceived by the United States government during the stock reduction era. Williams indicates the high point of resistance to the program came in 1943 when sheep and goats, which many families depended on, were forcibly reduced. The grazing committees also dealt with such issues as livestock dipping, diseases, counts, and branding and were considered an important assignment.

¹⁴¹ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 158-159.

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positions increased the potential for other women in the Navajo Nation to assume an official role in local government. A 2016 study of local governance by the Diné Policy Institute found most of the administrative employees of chapter houses were women and they also represented 24 percent of chapter house officials.¹⁴²

After two days of balloting in March 1951, Annie Dodge Wauneka became the second woman to secure a seat on the Tribal Council in its history. Another outspoken woman, Lily J. Neil of Huerfano, New Mexico, had served on the council during the previous four years and was reelected in 1951 before resigning due to injuries resulting from an automobile accident. A new era was beginning: two other women, Mrs. Leonora Collins of Mariana Lake and Mary Sandoval of Torreon, New Mexico, ran unsuccessfully for council in the same year as Wauneka.¹⁴³ For the first time, voting was conducted with paper ballots that displayed a photograph of each candidate. Seventy-six percent of eligible Navajo voters participated in the election.¹⁴⁴ Of her first campaign Wauneka stated, “I was running against a good old medicine man, who said that a woman belongs at home. You can’t really argue with a medicine man, so I just told people that I’d do my best and that a woman could do just as good as a man.”¹⁴⁵

The newly elected council members were inaugurated for their four-year term on March 20, 1951. “It is a truism that there is no other legislative body like the Navajo Council,” observed Aubrey Williams.¹⁴⁶ Each member represented a different geographic area of the reservation.¹⁴⁷ The assembly consisted of 74 members from 102 chapters. It contained people with very diverse economic and educational backgrounds and types of experience. However, Wauneka was the only woman to take the oath of office. Newspapers across the country described the ceremonies associated with the inauguration, which included dignitaries of the Navajo nation, New Mexico Governor Edwin Mechem, the Navajo Tribal Band, and a phalanx of photographers.¹⁴⁸ The celebrated photographer Laura Gilpin captured the historic moment with her picture of Wauneka sitting among a sea of men in the Council Chamber.¹⁴⁹

When Wauneka entered the council, it was led by a chairman and vice chairman who determined the agendas of meetings and presented policies to the members for their consideration and votes. The legislative process included placing a topic on the council agenda, holding a thorough discussion, securing approval by majority vote, and preparing a resolution. Administrative departments of the executive branch were active in planning and initiating projects for the nation, often without input from the chapters. Standing committees, composed of council members, investigated special issues and offered recommendations. The council regularly convened four times a year and held special sessions if needed. An Advisory Committee of nine members assumed the Tribal Council’s powers when it was not in session. Lorraine Turner Ruffing, a former employee of the Navajo Nation, observed that the council members had no offices or staff and often spent much time dealing with local chapter issues rather than the study of broader tribal concerns.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Andrew Curley, Michael Parrish, and Majerle Lister, *Local Governance and Reform: Considering 20 Years of the Local Governance Act* (Tsalie, Arizona: Diné Policy Institute, September 2016).

¹⁴³ *Albuquerque Journal*, March 4, 1951, 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Great Falls Tribune* (Montana), March 9, 1951, 16.

¹⁴⁵ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

¹⁴⁶ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House,” 87.

¹⁴⁷ During Wauneka’s time there were seventy-four council delegate districts, with clusters of council districts nested within land management districts established by the Bureau of Land Management. Wauneka represented the council district encompassing the Klagetoh and Wide Ruins chapters in Land Management District 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Gallup Independent*, March 21, 1951, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Laura Gilpin, *The Enduring Navajo* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 164.

¹⁵⁰ Ruffing, “Navajo Economic Development,” 49.

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Wauneka represented the Klagetoh and Wide Ruins chapters on the council, a position she retained for twenty-eight years.¹⁵¹ Those holding office during this time faced the task of creating better conditions for people living on the reservation and, in so doing, establishing the modern foundations of the Navajo Nation. At the time Wauneka took office, she and fellow Tribal Council members confronted a challenging economic and demographic situation on the reservation, which resulted from the crippling economic effects of stock reduction, bureaucratic mismanagement, and reduced federal funding—factors that made diversification of the economy crucial. While they had experienced improved earnings during World War II's economic expansion, sociologist Denis F. Johnston found “the end of the war soon brought about a severe economic recession on the reservation, when the wartime markets and employment opportunities were drastically reduced.”¹⁵²

Census data for 1950 tallied 54,997 Navajos living on the reservation, 7,170 in adjacent areas, and about 7,000 elsewhere in the United States.¹⁵³ The median annual family income of Navajos in 1949 was \$526 or only 30 percent of the national figure for all rural farm families. Only 35 percent of Navajos six years old and older were fluent in English, while just 33 percent could read the language. In 1950, only 50 percent of Navajos fourteen years and older were in the labor force. In 1953-54, only 7.9 percent of Navajo seventeen-year-olds were high school graduates, compared to 60 percent in the country as a whole. Between 1950 and 1960, the labor force participation rate for the tribe declined and the unemployment rate rose sharply.¹⁵⁴

Annie Dodge Wauneka played an influential role in her nation's development, which brought the Navajo tribe greater control over its own undertakings, a brighter economic outlook, and an expanded and more mature government.¹⁵⁵ On April 19, 1950, the U.S. Congress had passed the Navajo-Hopi Long-Range Rehabilitation Act, the first program to promote the tribe's economic development and encourage a self-sufficient sustainable economy while raising the standard of living on the reservation. The Act created a ten-year program providing more than \$88 million in new funding for projects to rehabilitate tribal life in areas such as school construction, expansion of hospitals and health facilities, infrastructure work, conservation and range management, stimulation of industry and business, resource identification, and housing.¹⁵⁶ This coincided with a time of rising tribal revenues from natural resources development, including oil, gas, coal, and uranium.¹⁵⁷ Rich discoveries of these resources on Navajo lands and new federal support spurred expansion of the tribe's programs and responsibilities, reorganization of government and revitalization of the chapter system, and funding for projects but also created other complex issues, such as ensuring adequate tribal compensation, controlling pollution and damage, and protecting significant cultural resources.¹⁵⁸

Peter Iverson describes Sam Ahkeah, who led the council when Wauneka entered office, as “the first modern Navajo chairman.”¹⁵⁹ Ahkeah's life experience was similar to the councilwoman's in many ways, including herding sheep as a child, attending boarding school, and becoming a rancher who experienced stock reduction. He saw oil money as a way to help the nation move forward and accomplish desired development. Having contracted tuberculosis as a student, he had a personal interest in improving Navajo health. A major focus of his

¹⁵¹ Navajo Nation, Elections Division, Klagetoh Chapter, Fort Defiance Agency, District #17, List of Council Delegates and Officers, 1955-2016, January 30, 2017.

¹⁵² Denis F. Johnston, *An Analysis of Sources of Information on the Population of the Navaho*, Bulletin 197 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1966), 41.

¹⁵³ Johnston, *An Analysis of Sources of Information on the Population of the Navaho*, 115.

¹⁵⁴ Johnston, *An Analysis of Sources of Information on the Population of the Navaho*, 43-45, 50, and 53.

¹⁵⁵ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 82.

¹⁵⁶ Robert W. Young, *The Navajo Yearbook of Planning in Action* (Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Agency, 1955), iii-v.

¹⁵⁷ Ruffing, “Navajo Economic Development,” 18-19.

¹⁵⁸ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 51.

¹⁵⁹ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 51.

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concern was the education of young people who would provide the expertise essential for the nation's future. As he stated: "We don't want them to get an education and take jobs off the reservation. We need them here!"¹⁶⁰

People who knew or met Annie Dodge Wauneka during her time on the council described her as taller than the average woman and use such terms as regal, powerful, dignified, confident, strong, and motherly to describe her presence. Irma Wauneka Bluehouse observes that her mother could be stern at times, but was always very human—not reserved: "She was a great story teller—she would tell everyone what she had seen on her travels. She was really humorous and used humor as mediation to help bring people together."¹⁶¹ Grandson Milton Bluehouse notes she "never got angry or irate," but let an issue "sit for a while—take a moment before dealing with it." He continues, "She was very busy, politically oriented on all levels," yet could be "empathetic, loving." He found her "always focused on the future and the passing of time, the seasons. She always asked her grandchildren, 'When you grow up what will you do?'" He recalls her as "very matter of fact; very strong."¹⁶²

Wauneka's commitment to service was bolstered both by her strong physical and mental capabilities and the level of support (unusual for the time) provided by her husband and family in Tanner Springs, who managed the ranch and handled many of the routine tasks when she was away. She usually drove about 150 miles roundtrip daily from her home to Window Rock when the council was in session.¹⁶³ Long hours spent in travel provided her with time to consider issues facing the council and think about the speeches she would give.¹⁶⁴ She also established her long habit of extensive personal involvement with her constituents: communicating with them in their homes, at chapter meetings, and on special occasions such as building dedications and celebrations. Irma Wauneka Bluehouse sometimes accompanied the councilwoman to meetings and remembers her mother always liked to arrive early and drive around the community to see how people lived. Then she would begin a speech with an observation about what she had seen.¹⁶⁵ At the same time, Wauneka also continued to work at the ranch, completing chores ranging from caring for animals to cooking holiday meals.

Despite the lifestyle demanded by her isolated livestock ranch, people remember Wauneka as consistently well dressed in the traditional Navajo women's style, including a blouse, long skirt, silver and turquoise jewelry, and with her hair tied with a strand of wool in a traditional bun. She wore sturdy shoes appropriate for visiting hogans, speaking in the chapter houses or Tribal Council chamber, or traveling to Washington, D.C. During her many trips to the nation's capital she always appeared in traditional Navajo clothing, which attracted much attention and provided an opportunity to convey information about her people. When one government official referred to her distinctive dress and instructed her to "stop playing Indian," she responded with her customary dignity: "Congressman, I even sleep in these. I didn't come here to talk about your clothes, so you ignore mine and let's talk legislation."¹⁶⁶

In 1972, Maurice McCabe, who served as treasurer and executive secretary of the Navajo government, recorded his impressions of Wauneka's noted speaking skills during her years on the council:

¹⁶⁰ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 52.

¹⁶¹ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

¹⁶² Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Interview, December 12, 2016.

¹⁶³ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 82. The road system was substantially unimproved at that time. Darwyn Lowery states that his grandmother "never rode slow."

¹⁶⁴ Arrington, "Annie Wauneka," 62. Wauneka reported she once was concentrating so hard on a presentation for the council that she realized she had gone far beyond her destination.

¹⁶⁵ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

¹⁶⁶ Wauneka quoted in Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 199.

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Mrs. Wauneka's voice is strong and loud, basically, but, respecting the subject to which she is addressing herself, her voice can be gentle, can be kind . . . she is very motherly. She always knows her subject very well, and she does speak with a motherly tone in her voice, always with good volume, and always attracting the attention of her audience. . . .

There is a bit of humor in her presentation when she wants to criticize—when she wants to talk down some proposition that might be before the council. In this respect she has a loud laugh, and heaven help you if she wishes to criticize you and use humor in her criticism of you.¹⁶⁷

As a member of the Navajo Tribal Council, Advisory Committee, and various standing committees over the course of almost thirty years, there were few areas of Navajo life that Wauneka did not study and influence.¹⁶⁸ Some idea of the scope of her work is provided by Maurice McCabe's recording:

Mrs. Wauneka, of course, was long connected with the health problems of our people. The communicable diseases, the lingering chronic-type illnesses, childhood diseases, she was very familiar with and was able to make her point in advising the members of the Tribal Council as to the clinics, clinical care and whatever it might have been. . . . She was equally effective in speaking about the grazing and livestock problems on the reservation. She knew about carrying capacities, she knew permitted numbers, she knew the grazing regulations, she knew about sheep, of course, and knew very much about the raising and management of cattle herds. . . .

Mrs. Wauneka knew the oil and gas business, she knew well spacing, she knew the value of production at the wellhead, both gas and oil, and all the derivatives of petroleum. She was instrumental in adopting regulations regulating the oil producers on the reservation. She was equally familiar with the mining aspects of our Navajo reservation resources. . . . She and others developed terms to describe radioactive substances and things of that sort. She was much concerned over the mining of the coal resources of the Navajo reservation. More particularly was she interested in the restoration of the ground, too, so that it would be productive insofar as forage where livestock was concerned. Long before there was any thought about destruction of the ground surfaces . . .

Mrs. Wauneka was also very concerned about the range, the timber resources of the reservation, the water resources, and there isn't a subject that I know of that she did not learn thoroughly and was very conversant with in the management of those resources. . . .

Mrs. Wauneka is also very knowledgeable about school management—education—elementary systems, secondary school systems, college level education, and knew the applicable laws and regulations concerning all of these levels of education. . . .

Yes, she was a very persuasive speaker and knew her subject very well and was able to give information as background on any deliberation before she made her point with her audience. I

¹⁶⁷ McCabe quoted in Arrington, "Annie Wauneka, 56-57.

¹⁶⁸ Beginning in 1938 the Navajo Tribal Council had established standing committees to assist it in making decisions by conducting research in special areas, reporting on their findings, and making recommendations. Each committee had a special focus, such as Budget and Finance, Health, Youth, and Judiciary.

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believe it goes without saying that she was very influential and is still very influential on the reservation.¹⁶⁹

In February 1952, Wauneka made the first of what would become dozens of trips to Washington, D.C., to confer with and speak in front of members of Congress and other government officials. This was the first time a Navajo councilwoman represented her government in the United States capital. Some of her male counterparts on the Tribal Council had jokingly suggested she make the trip just to look after them, and one asserted her husband should decide whether she could go. Nonetheless, she boarded the train and embarked on her first journey beyond Arizona and New Mexico.¹⁷⁰ Within a few years and after several trips to the capital, she was known there as a powerful spokeswoman and leader. Ron Wood, a Navajo executive of the Indian Health Service reported: “Most of us, when we went to Washington, we’d have to meet with legislative aides. But when Annie Wauneka came to town, senators would cancel appointments to meet with her personally.”¹⁷¹

Taking up the Cause of a Lifetime: Improving Navajo Health

Although Annie Dodge Wauneka strove for improvement of Navajo people’s lives in myriad ways throughout her long and exemplary career, improving the health of the Navajo people was her first major focus and is frequently cited as her greatest accomplishment. During her first term in office she was assigned to the tribe’s standing committee on health, and she became its head two years later. As the only woman delegate, she was thrust into the role as the Tribal Council’s leader in the fight against tuberculosis. She rapidly became a widely recognized pioneer in the effort to improve Navajo medical care and a spokesperson for increasing federal support for Native American health.¹⁷² Dr. Robert Shaw, who worked with and was influenced by Wauneka throughout his time as director of the Indian Health Service, judged: “I know of no individual who takes greater pride in the rich heritage of the American Indian nor do I know of anyone whose career more perfectly symbolizes the measured progress of the Indian people.”¹⁷³

The concerns of Navajo leaders regarding the lack of adequate healthcare available on the reservation increased in the postwar years as they searched for not only more funding but better solutions. “The Tribal Council became more assertive as a government critic and advisor and as a direct sponsor of medical programs. With direction from the tribal Health Committee, council members became more concerned with specific details of how medical programs functioned and more aware of other possible avenues for reaching their health care goals,” analyzes historian Wade Davies.¹⁷⁴ Entering a period of new possibilities due to oil revenues, the tribe was able to encourage and help support nongovernmental organizations that offered to expand services through innovative medical programs. At the same time, the Health Committee bolstered the council’s efforts to determine how federal medical funds were expended.¹⁷⁵

The successful fight against tuberculosis on the reservation began with an outbreak of another disease. In December 1951, the Navajo boarding school near Tuba City contacted the Communicable Disease Center (CDC, later known as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) seeking assistance in dealing with an epidemic of infectious hepatitis among its students, teachers, and nurses. Investigator Charles LeMaistre with the CDC’s Epidemiologic Intelligence Service was dispatched and found the school in “a near panic

¹⁶⁹ McCabe quoted in Arrington, “Annie Wauneka,” 57-59.

¹⁷⁰ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 79.

¹⁷¹ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

¹⁷² Matt J. Dellapenna, Jr. “Pioneers in the Indian Health Service: Dr. Anne Dodge Wauneka,” *The IHS Primary Care Provider*, 35 (March 2010) 3: 57.

¹⁷³ Dr. James Shaw quoted in *Navajo Area Newsletter*, February 1984, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 62.

¹⁷⁵ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 62.

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situation.”¹⁷⁶ During his examinations of the boarding school patients, he discovered numerous people with untreated lethal varieties of tuberculosis. Prior to his job at the CDC, LeMaistre had worked with Dr. Walsh McDermott at New York Hospital to develop treatments for the disease. LeMaistre consulted with McDermott, who was a leading TB researcher and Cornell University Medical College professor. At that time, three companies independently studying drugs to treat tuberculosis were focused on the same one—isoniazid—and McDermott was conducting trials of the medication at New York Hospital for Squibb. He realized the Navajo people were exactly the population he could use as research subjects for testing the new drug.¹⁷⁷

In March 1952, McDermott’s medical team met with the Navajo Tribal Council and informed them tuberculosis was ravaging the reservation, with rates of infection nine to ten times higher than the general population of the United States. The physicians offered to provide free treatment for severe cases of TB, with Squibb donating isoniazid for the study. Navajo leaders, encouraged by the offer of medical research and treatment following years of inadequate healthcare, invited the Cornell team to begin the project in hospitals at Fort Defiance, Tuba City, and Ganado. In April, Wauneka presented a motion to the council for funding the doctors’ travel expenses that passed unanimously. In exchange for their support, the delegates requested subsequent updates on the project.

Hospital beds for tubercular patients on the reservation soon filled. Congress appropriated money for securing four hundred beds at facilities in other parts of the Southwest, and Dr. Kurt W. Deuschle, head of the tuberculosis program at the Fort Defiance hospital during 1952-54, arranged for patients with less severe cases to be transferred to off-reservation institutions.¹⁷⁸ During this period of developing a treatment protocol, Deuschle began formulating a concept for community health programs for which he became noted.¹⁷⁹ The Fort Defiance facility also became the site of meetings between the doctors, Wauneka, and the Tribal Council Advisory Committee, where members viewed the tuberculosis bacilli under a microscope and learned about the new drug treatment.¹⁸⁰

In January 1953, the Cornell team reported to the council that, despite the efficacy of isoniazid, many Navajos did not seek or remain under medical care, and the disease continued to spread. The physicians asked for the council’s help in educating the people about the causes of tuberculosis and benefits of modern treatments, as well as convincing them to complete the required hospital time necessary for a cure. As Wauneka later described, a major portion of her life’s work began with a June 1953 council meeting when she was unexpectedly appointed chair of the Health and Welfare Committee:

Doctors reported that the tuberculosis was killing Navajos like flies. This man, he got up and looked around and said, “Where’s the lady?” He said, “You women can take care of the sick far better than we men can. So let’s appoint her and get her to work.” I’d heard about the

¹⁷⁶ David S. Jones, “The Health Care Experiments at Many Farms: The Navajo, Tuberculosis, and the Limits of Modern Medicine, 1952-1962,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 76 (Winter 2002) 4: 759.

¹⁷⁷ Jones, “The Health Care Experiments,” 760-63 and McDermott, quoted in Jones, 763. Jones indicates that the perfect population for McDermott’s research would include “many people suffering from acute military [a disseminated form of] tuberculosis who had not yet received the benefits of antibiotics. Such patients were rare.” McDermott also noted that testing the drug on the Navajo people would facilitate understanding of treatment in poor rural areas. In 1955, McDermott won the Albert Lasker Award, often called “the American Nobel,” for his work on the development of isoniazid (*New York Times*, October 19, 1981).

¹⁷⁸ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 79-80; Jones, “The Health Care Experiments,” 766.

¹⁷⁹ Ichan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, “Community Medicine, Department of, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, (Kurt Deuschle, MD), Records, 1948-2000,” <http://icahn.mssm.edu/about/ait/archives/collection/community-medicine>. Deuschle drew upon this experience when he co-authored *The People’s Health: Anthropology and Medicine in a Navajo Community* (1970), which was considered a major contribution to medical anthropology and Navajo health.

¹⁸⁰ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 67.

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tuberculosis, but there was nothing I knew about tuberculosis. They didn't even give me a chance to say yes or no. Made a motion, second, voted and I was in. I had my work cut out.¹⁸¹

Although she had no formal training in medicine, Wauneka knew the value of individual initiative from her experience with the influenza and trachoma epidemics of her boarding school years and had observed her father's ability to work with both Navajos and non-Indians. She elaborated, "So under Sam Ahkeah's leadership they felt that I should become a member to at least try to help the health officials, which is Indian Health Service. . . . They chose me to be a health educator."¹⁸² As Wauneka's biographer, Carolyn Niethammer, assessed, "Annie's decision to accept the challenge of chairing . . . the Health and Welfare Committee, committing all of her formidable will and energy to tackling the tuberculosis problem, was the major event that defined the next thirty years of her life, eventually thrusting her to the national platform of Indian health care concerns."¹⁸³ During this process she also was instrumental in the creation of a model community health program that became the foundation for many later efforts.

Wauneka's approach to the problem demonstrates the care she took in dealing with many difficult issues during her career. Before beginning to communicate with anyone she thoroughly studied the disease and its treatments.¹⁸⁴ At the time, the entire concept of germs was foreign to Navajo people. As former Indian Health Service administrator Ellouise De Groat recalled, "She [Wauneka] wanted to know what the TB germs were, so she looked at them under a microscope."¹⁸⁵ Because there was no Navajo word for tuberculosis, she created one: *ja-ade*, which meant "the bugs you cannot see."¹⁸⁶ Grandson Milton Bluehouse, Jr. reports she examined old pamphlets about TB in Spanish and translated information about how to avoid the disease into English and then Navajo.¹⁸⁷ She toured hospitals on the reservation and in other states, speaking with patients and finding that what they needed was someone to listen to their fears and questions and answer them clearly.¹⁸⁸ In this process she also discovered that no one had explained to the patients how long it might take to cure tuberculosis, thus they did not realize how long they needed to remain in the hospital. Once Wauneka understood these problems, she spent countless hours explaining the causes of misunderstanding and lack of trust in western medicine, as well as developing ways to improve the situation.¹⁸⁹

The councilwoman found the key to changing her peoples' attitudes was successful transmission of information. She explained, "My primary job is communication—getting the Navajo people to understand modern medicine and accept it. Traditionally, we are inclined to place reliance on our own medicine men, who will treat us at home amid our families without surgery or needles." She also understood the medical requirements of curing the disease and why it made Navajo people feel uncomfortable: "Modern medicine, on the other hand, requires us to spend many months in a distant hospital . . . the different surroundings, strange people and strange foods

¹⁸¹ Wauneka, quoted in Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 84-85.

¹⁸² Annie Wauneka, Testimony, US Senate. Hearings before the Special Committee on Indian Affairs, 101st Cong., February 2-9, 1989, Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 112.

¹⁸³ Niethammer, *I'll Go and Do More*, 85.

¹⁸⁴ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse reports her mother read a lot ("lights would be on late at night") and attended medical conferences to learn more about healthcare issues. Annie Dodge Wauneka became well versed in medical terms and studied how to translate them into Navajo.

¹⁸⁵ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

¹⁸⁶ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2 and January 1, 2000, 47.

¹⁸⁷ Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Interview, December 12, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), September 30, 1953 and January 1, 2000, 47. For example, in September 1953 Wauneka visited sanitariums in Denver, Boulder, and Colorado Springs, Colorado, as well as Albuquerque, New Mexico.

¹⁸⁹ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse states her mother's method was to say: "Now, I told you about it, what are you going to do about it?"

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make us unhappy unless we can be made to understand the benefits.”¹⁹⁰ She realized the lack of connection between traditional Navajo and modern western medicine.

Central to the issue was the distrust many Navajo people felt toward doctors, modern drugs, and hospitals, and the difficulty physicians and other medical personnel had in understanding and appreciating the Diné worldview. Traditional Navajo people believed tuberculosis resulted from such factors as coming into contact with something struck by lightning. They were certain medicine men provided the necessary advice, natural remedies, and ceremonies for restoration of health. Many also had an aversion to illness and considered it best to avoid places where people had died; thus, they were wary of hospital stays.¹⁹¹

To ensure the success of the TB eradication program, Wauneka realized she needed to communicate immediately with the medicine men who practiced traditional Navajo healing methods. She initiated a major campaign to discuss with them the possibility of traditional healing and modern medicine both providing essential services. She recalled: “[F]irst I spoke to the medicine men on the reservation about what I had learned. In turn, the medicine men explained to me the old Navajo beliefs about what causes illness. It was hard for me, but I had to learn both the old and the new to be able to interpret to the Navajo.”¹⁹² She told the native healers: “There is no reason why we shouldn’t work together. I am in no way opposed to the traditions of our people. In our home we speak our tongue and my children are proud of their Navaho heritage. Medicine men are a part of our way of life and will remain so even though we take advantage of modern medicine.”¹⁹³ With this type of reassurance, the medicine men began to understand and cooperate with the program to combat tuberculosis.¹⁹⁴ In 1955, Tribal Vice Chairman Scott Preston stated: “There are those diseases that we medicine men have given up on. We know that you white doctors have better cures than we do. One of the diseases of that sort is tuberculosis.”¹⁹⁵

In the councilwoman’s view, one of her earliest victories on the Tribal Council was overcoming the older members’ opposition to even inviting the Indian Health Service to the reservation, as many at that time were against any kind of federal involvement in tribal issues.¹⁹⁶ Health Service officials such as Dr. Charles S. McCammon, assistant IHS area director, later asserted that the councilwoman made the department’s work much easier by convincing her fellow community representatives that modern medicine would be of benefit in the treatment of diseases.¹⁹⁷ At the council level, “Wauneka, along with Paul Jones and other tribal leaders, worked diligently to turn the Health and Welfare Committee into a well-informed and influential body,” comments Davies. “The committee served as the ideal mediator among Western medical providers, the Tribal Council and Navajo patients because it fostered simple, straightforward communication,” he notes.¹⁹⁸ Wauneka

¹⁹⁰ *Medford (Oregon) Mail Tribune*, September 4, 1963, 6. Darwyn Lowery reports Wauneka knew a lot about plants used in traditional healing, their names, purposes, and what elements to use. She learned about these from talking to elderly people: “One particular medicine man was Old Man Yellow Hair. She would visit on several occasions and drove around and collected herbs and plants. When she was going off to far places he would pray for her.”

¹⁹¹ *Morning Star* (Rockford, Illinois), September 19, 1963, 33; Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Interview, December 12, 2016.

¹⁹² Annie D. Wauneka, “Helping A People to Understand: A Navajo Leader Taught Herself and Then Others How to Fight Tuberculosis,” *American Journal of Nursing*, 62 (July 1962), reprinted in *The IHS Primary Care Provider* 35 (March 2010) 3: 59.

¹⁹³ *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1963, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse states that when a patient demanded a medicine man, Annie Wauneka would explain the request to the doctor, who would allow it.

¹⁹⁵ Preston quoted in Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 66.

¹⁹⁶ *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1963, 6.

¹⁹⁷ *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1963, 6.

¹⁹⁸ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 66.

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clarified, “The Navajos haven’t been deliberately resistant to modern health methods. It’s just that they didn’t understand, and you’ve got to throw yourself into explaining things.”¹⁹⁹

To accomplish her work in the broader community, she traveled across the Navajo reservation to speak with and educate people. She recalled, “They gave me a vehicle and I drove from hogan to hogan. I slept wherever the sun went down and started again the next day.”²⁰⁰ The reservation spread across millions of acres and had few paved roads, many routes that became impassible during rain and snowstorms, a limited number of gas stations, and widely dispersed settlements. Families often resided in remote areas, establishing camps consisting of one or more dwellings of persons related by clan and lived without motorized vehicles or utilities. The concept of a woman traveling alone day after day in isolated rural areas for the purpose of reaching out to people was not customary, but represented Wauneka’s unique blend of pragmatism, strength, dedication, hard work, and courage. She stated, “By myself, I began traveling through the reservation. I spoke at meetings, showed slides and pictures and talked to people in their hogans.”²⁰¹ “She went to pretty much every dwelling in the nation to teach about tuberculosis,” reports grandson Milton Bluehouse, Jr.²⁰²

Wauneka’s efforts both impressed and influenced the Tribal Council and the federal and university medical personnel.²⁰³ An important aspect of her work was strengthening the tribe’s partnership with the Cornell group and the tribe’s support of the Navajo-Cornell Field Health Research Project at Mary Farms, Arizona. The experimental program that Dr. Walsh McDermott began in 1952 provided healthcare that “bridged the gap between traditional and western medicine, and pioneered the field of community medicine,” according to Indian Health Service historian Matt J. Dellapenna, Jr.²⁰⁴ The project’s goals were to treat people suffering from diseases with modern healthcare and antibiotics, train Navajos in medical procedures, and also study the “cultural impact of modern medicine on natives from an impoverished society,” notes an IHS history by Rife and Dellapenna.²⁰⁵

Dr. Kurt W. Deuschle soon left government service to work with Dr. McDermott and operate associated clinics at Many Farms and Rough Rock. The experiment continued until 1962 and is credited with innovation of the health visitor program, which hired Navajo people who were former tuberculosis patients and provided them with basic medical knowledge and skills. After an apprenticeship they made home visits, thus expanding the reach of the program. The home visitors, considered “invaluable,” were described as “culturally fluent and trusted by the community,” with their knowledge of family lifestyles, traditions, and religion.²⁰⁶ The effort compiled valuable demographic information, became a model for medical anthropology, and resulted in worldwide fame for the medical team due to its pioneering methods.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁹ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 66.

²⁰⁰ Wauneka quoted in *Navaho Area Newsletter*, February 1984, 1. Milton Bluehouse, Jr. states that Wauneka “always remembered where the roads were” in later years.

²⁰¹ *Morning Star* (Rockford, Illinois), September 19, 1963, 33. As Wade Davies discusses, by 1959 there were still about 235 Navajos who were contagious and refused to seek medical care. Wauneka and other council delegates believed they threatened the health of the tribe. The delegates sought to reason with the holdouts and then, if necessary, commit them to hospital care (*Healing Ways*, 97).

²⁰² Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Interview, December 12, 2016.

²⁰³ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 66.

²⁰⁴ Dellapenna, Jr. “Pioneers in the Indian Health Service,” 57.

²⁰⁵ Rife and Dellapenna, Jr., *Caring and Curing*, 25 and Hubbard, Interview, December 15, 2016.

²⁰⁶ Jones, “The Healthcare Experiments at Many Farms,” 781.

²⁰⁷ Rife and Dellapenna, Jr., *Caring and Curing*, 25.

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“Everything Under the Sun”: Wauneka’s Innovations and New Initiatives

Annie Dodge Wauneka did not confine her work to tuberculosis. She began to attack the underlying conditions that led to poor health. She focused on such things as improving sanitation in people’s homes, obtaining better care for pregnant women and children, and securing ear and eye examinations.²⁰⁸ As part of her outreach program she taught people the value of improved nutrition in fighting disease, carrying examples of fresh fruits and vegetables into the homes she visited. She emphasized the value of utilizing canned meat and powdered milk as components of meals and the importance of drinking and cooking with unpolluted water.²⁰⁹

In remote rural areas, she noticed food stored on dirt floors, outhouses erected close to dwellings, and sources of water contaminated by pollutants. She realized the importance of providing education about the benefits of modern sanitation and housing conditions. Again, convincing people of the value of her suggestions was not easy. As Wauneka described, “When I first told people they should put windows in their hogans, cover the dirt floor with boards and keep their drinking water in a protected barrel, the old people often asked, ‘If all the things we do are so bad, how does it happen we have lived so long?’”²¹⁰ She found an effective way of convincing skeptics was to take them to an unsanitary hogan and introduce them to a person suffering from tuberculosis. Returning to the Tribal Council, she advocated convincingly for money to improve housing and visited education departments in Arizona and New Mexico to request that they add teaching of hygiene and techniques for prevention of disease to their curriculums.²¹¹

Wauneka also proved instrumental in changing Native American healthcare at the federal agency level and helping lawmakers and agency officials understand the best approaches to Indian problems. After his appointment as the fourth Indian Health Service Director in 1953, Dr. James Shaw traveled to the Navajo Reservation to learn about the state of its inhabitants’ health. There, he first met Councilwoman Wauneka, who chaired the Health Committee and provided him with many insights. As a result of his first trip, Shaw became convinced of the necessity of improving Native American health, changing the existing healthcare system, and working collaboratively with local populations. As former IHS Director Charles W. Grim recounted, Shaw “became an underground champion for moving the Indian health program out of the BIA and effectively worked behind the scenes to help broker the needed support for the Transfer Act.”²¹² The *Gallup Independent* later observed about Wauneka, “She was influential in gaining the support of Indian tribes for the efforts of the American Lung Association to transfer responsibility for health and hospital facilities from the Bureau of Indian Affairs [in July 1955] . . . to the Public Health Service. The move helped to improve and modernize these services.”²¹³

Navajo patients who sought western medical care often lacked access to trained medical translators, and misunderstandings about their care frequently occurred. In 1959, after several years of work, Wauneka and IHS doctors published a Navajo-English medical dictionary.²¹⁴ When compiling the dictionary, Wauneka, in some cases, invented new words to describe medical concepts and practices foreign to the Navajo. Doctors, nurses, other medical professionals, and Navajo patients all benefited from the dictionary.

²⁰⁸ Dellapenna, Jr. “Pioneers in the Indian Health Service,” 57.

²⁰⁹ *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), September 19, 2016.

²¹⁰ *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1963, 6.

²¹¹ *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), September 19, 2016.

²¹² *The HIS Primary Care Provider*, 33 (December 2008)12: 391-392. In 1955 the Indian Health Service became part of the U.S. Public Health Service.

²¹³ *Gallup Independent* (New Mexico), June 21, 1975, 6.

²¹⁴ Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 121-122.

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During 1960-61, in another of her innovative steps, Wauneka initiated a weekly Navajo-language radio program discussing health topics and explaining how modern medicine successfully treated illness. Her presentations were described as simple and direct.²¹⁵ She covered prevention and treatment of various health problems: “I talked about everything under the sun about health that pertains to my People. I went with the cycle of the weather, like in winter I’d be talking about pneumonia; how to take care of yourself, how you must be dressed; and then when the spring came I’d talk about flies and diarrhea.”²¹⁶ Shaw believed the radio program was one of Wauneka’s efforts that helped secure Navajo confidence in sanitarium care.²¹⁷ Older members of the nation still recall the broadcasts on KGAK in Gallup and KCLS in Flagstaff, which were sponsored by Pet Milk.²¹⁸

The milk company also provided support for one of Wauneka’s more creative efforts aimed at combating one of the biggest problems on the reservation: a high infant mortality rate due to gastrointestinal diseases and diarrhea, which often resulted from contaminated water. The councilwoman understood the reluctance of Navajo women to entrust their offspring to physicians and their modern treatments. She also realized IHS doctors might not understand the parents’ culture and beliefs relating to children and medicine. To provide an opportunity for both groups to interact in a pleasant environment, Wauneka started a baby contest at the annual Navajo Tribal Fair in Window Rock. She recruited reservation doctors to serve as judges, and they used the opportunity to screen the contestants for signs of medical problems. Journalist Jerry Kammer reports that “such shrewdness typified the life of Annie Wauneka.”²¹⁹ Winning babies received prizes such as clothing, diapers, gift certificates, and cases of Pet milk. Wauneka also took advantage of the fair’s large crowds to provide educational information about tuberculosis and other diseases at a booth that offered related film screenings, posters, and brochures.²²⁰

Tuberculosis Improvement Brings Recognition and New Causes in Healthcare

Wauneka’s efforts to improve health on the reservation paid off, with the number of people suffering from tuberculosis falling by 35 percent and the death rate for Navajo infants declining 25 percent during the 1960s.²²¹ In 1963, she evaluated the tribal tuberculosis program: “Since we began in 1951, we have brought about 1,800 cures and arrested cases, and with our present program tuberculosis is no longer a serious health problem.”²²² Indian Health Service executive Ron Wood observed, she had “convinced the Navajo people that a hospital was a place to go to get better, not a place to die.”²²³

Respect for the councilwoman’s work led to her appointment to numerous committees and boards dealing with Native American healthcare. “She was a vocal and visible spokesperson on national Indian health issues,” judges Dellapenna, Jr.²²⁴ Within her own nation she served on the Navajo Area Health Board, Navajo Health Authority Board of Directors, Navajo Nation Health Foundation, and the Navajo Way. In 1956, Wauneka was called to serve as a member of the US Surgeon General’s Advisory Committee on Indian Health.

²¹⁵ Lela Waltrip and Rufus Waltrip, *Indian Women* (New York: David McKay, 1964), 136-137.

²¹⁶ Liz Sonneborn, *A to Z of American Indian Women*, Rev. ed. (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2007), 266.

²¹⁷ Davies, *Healing Ways*, 96.

²¹⁸ Begay, Interview, December 13, 2016.

²¹⁹ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 26, 1977.

²²⁰ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1977, H1-H2.

²²¹ *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), September 19, 2016.

²²² *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1963, 6.

²²³ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

²²⁴ Dellapenna, Jr., “Pioneers in the Indian Health Service, 57.

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The 1960s brought increased federal funds for programs benefitting Native Americans as a result of New Frontier and Great Society programs.²²⁵ After her tuberculosis work began to achieve substantial success, Wauneka focused on what she described as the “number one killer” of Navajo citizens: alcohol. She chaired the Tribal Council’s Alcoholism Committee, a three-person group that planned and conducted research into the causes of Navajo alcoholism, conducted studies and clinics into the care of alcoholics, and together with state and federal agencies educated the people about the effects of excessive use.²²⁶ As growing numbers of Navajo people were killed in automobile accidents after buying liquor at stores near the reservation, the councilwoman worked for the closure of those businesses. However, she understood the difficulty of eliminating the complex problem entirely: “I realize the Navaho drinking problem will never be solved as long as our present high unemployment remains. Many men have simply nothing else to do. There is not enough farming and herding to keep everybody busy. But while we are working to provide more jobs, we can at least get rid of these easy sources of liquor supply.”²²⁷

Annie Dodge Wauneka served on the board of the Navajo Health Authority, created in 1971 as a nonprofit group that offered many health education and prevention programs.²²⁸ In the early 1970s, encouraged by President Nixon’s remarks in support of increasing medical training for Native Americans, Wauneka and the Tribal Council initiated efforts to establish an American Indian School of Medicine that would instruct native people from all tribes in the health professions. She collaborated with Dr. Taylor McKenzie, the only Navajo physician at the time, in an effort to make the school a reality. For five years they sought support from other tribes and the federal government, raised money, and searched for suitable locations for a campus. Wauneka worked with others to develop ideas for how the medical training would operate, formulating plans for offering instruction in traditional medical practices through a Department of Native Healing Sciences. Unfortunately, the federal government found the medical school concept unfeasible and ultimately turned it down. Establishing the institution was not possible without federal funding, so the long-desired school never opened.

Wauneka continued her involvement in health issues until the end of her time on the council. For example, when the threat of Swine Flu surfaced in America, she joined others involved in health issues and worked to prepare for an immunization campaign in 1976. Memories of the 1918 flu and its impact on her people were still fresh in her mind when she joined other healthcare leaders for a two-day training session conducted in Navajo. She cited poor nutrition and resistance to vaccination as reasons why flus became epidemics and advised health workers that technical terminology was difficult to convey in Navajo, but they must define everything. She believed there would be some mistrust of the vaccination program that would diminish with education. Her ever-present sense of humor surfaced as she commented, “A lot of people think swine flu immunization means you shouldn’t eat pork.”²²⁹

The councilwoman contributed both inspiration and funds for young people to enter health careers. A nurse visited Irma Wauneka Bluehouse to inform her that “Annie was the reason she entered her profession, had inspired her career” after Wauneka made one of her many high school appearances to tell the students that nurses and other medical professionals were needed on the reservation. When the young woman required money to continue with her education she turned to Wauneka, who listened to her problem and went

²²⁵ Wilkins, *The Navajo Political Experience*, 62.

²²⁶ The Navajo Tribal Council, *Your Navajo Tribal Council*, undated pamphlet, Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

²²⁷ *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), August 18, 1963, 37.

²²⁸ Hubbard, Interview, December 15, 2016.

²²⁹ *Farmington* (New Mexico) *Daily Times*, September 17, 1976, 1.

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immediately to withdraw the necessary amount from the bank. Bluehouse reports her mother never discussed that type of assistance; the family sometimes learned about it from the beneficiaries.²³⁰

After leaving the council in 1979 Wauneka continued to be a force in Navajo healthcare. John Hubbard, Jr., who began working with the Health Service in the mid-1980s, found that she was on an IHS advisory board and still “a very prominent and influential community member, who commented on everything.” He became an area director in 1993 and continued to work with the then elderly Wauneka, who “would ask about all sorts of things—my ideas, people, health . . . she was pretty active in that way through the mid-1990s.” Hubbard notes he later found out that “Annie was involved in so much more than I was even aware of.”²³¹

Presidential Medal of Freedom and Other Recognition for Healthcare Work

In the late 1950s, Annie Dodge Wauneka began receiving awards for her efforts to improve healthcare and other aspects of her people’s lives. As her grandson Milton Bluehouse, Jr. notes, she entered a new phase of life when her widespread recognition led to speaking engagements throughout the reservation, around the United States, and beyond.²³² In 1958, the Arizona Press Association selected her as its Woman of the Year. In 1959, she was chosen as Outstanding Worker in Public Health in Arizona by the state’s Public Health Association.²³³ Awards from the Society of Public Health Educators and the National Community Health Representatives followed. The Indian Achievement Award of the Indian Council Fire was presented to Wauneka in 1959. In 1963, she became the first Native American honored by the Western Tuberculosis Conference for her efforts against the disease.²³⁴

Wauneka’s greatest period of national recognition began with her Presidential Medal of Freedom award. In February 1963, John F. Kennedy signed an executive order revamping the former Medal of Freedom, conferred sporadically since 1945, as the annually awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom. The highest civilian honor bestowed in peacetime, the Presidential Medal of Freedom is given to those “who contribute significantly to the quality of American life.” President and Mrs. Kennedy redesigned the medal, and the Distinguished Civilian Service Awards Board chaired by Undersecretary of State George W. Ball nominated potential recipients. The board included such illustrious citizens as Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg. George Ball stated that President Kennedy carefully reviewed the select list, adding and subtracting names and delaying awards for some until the following year: “The Presidential Medal of Honor, he felt, should be given only after careful thought, always sparingly so as not to debase its currency.”²³⁵

President Kennedy sent a letter notifying Wauneka of her selection along with thirty other noteworthy individuals, including luminaries such as singer Marian Anderson, musician Pablo Casals, labor leader George Meany, architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, photographer Edward Steichen, and author Thornton Wilder.²³⁶ The ceremony was scheduled to take place in Washington, DC, on December 6, 1963. The national trauma caused by Kennedy’s assassination two weeks before the date of the event called into question whether it would proceed as planned. However, President Lyndon Johnson declared: “Over the past 2 weeks, our Nation has known moments of the utmost sorrow, of anguish and shame. This day, however, is a moment of great pride....

²³⁰ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

²³¹ Hubbard, Interview, December 15, 2016.

²³² Milton Bluehouse, Jr., Interview, December 12, 2016.

²³³ *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), April 24, 1959, 13.

²³⁴ *Navajo Times* (Window Rock, Arizona), September 19, 1963, 5.

²³⁵ *New York Times*, December 7, 1963 and July 5, 1963.

²³⁶ John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, “President Kennedy’s Executive Order 11085: Presidential Medal of Freedom,” “Archivally Speaking” blog, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference>. Kennedy selected thirty-one individuals for awards; President Johnson added two additional recipients.

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There is little we do not now know of evil, but it is time to turn once more to the pursuits of honor and excellence of achievement that have always marked the true direction of the American people.”²³⁷ The awards were conferred in the White House’s State Dining Room, with members of the Supreme Court, the Cabinet, Congress, and other important guests in attendance. In addition to the living honorees, posthumous medals were awarded to President Kennedy and Pope John XXIII. Unobserved by most guests, Jacqueline Kennedy viewed the ceremony privately from a small anteroom.²³⁸

Annie Dodge Wauneka became the first Native American to receive the Medal of Freedom, awarded in recognition of her service on the Navajo Tribal Council and “her long crusade for improved health programs [through which] she has helped dramatically to lessen the menace of disease among her people and improve their way of life.”²³⁹ She elected to wear traditional Navajo clothing made by a local seamstress to the ceremony, as she always did on her Washington trips. Her outfit was ornamented with silver and turquoise Navajo-crafted jewelry, including a necklace from her late father’s collection that drew much praise. As the *Navajo Times* described: “In the plush splendor of the high government offices making a striking contrast to the natural beauty of her lands of red bluffs, hogans and marks of progress, outspoken Annie Wauneka moved among national and world leaders with ease and self-confidence and was a celebrity in her own right.”²⁴⁰ During the evening Wauneka presented President Johnson with a bolo tie, a traditional Navajo men’s adornment.²⁴¹

Interior Secretary Stewart Udall held an additional reception in Wauneka’s honor during the visit and complimented her as one of only three women receiving the medal in 1963. He remarked: “Annie has been a kind of one-woman Peace Corps in Navajoland. It is my feeling that in honoring you today, we did not only honor you, your family, and friends, but also all of the Indian people of the nation.”²⁴²

The Medal of Freedom brought Wauneka not only increased prestige but extensive national recognition. Articles about her life and work appeared in newspapers across the country. She used the opportunity as a way of spreading information about the Diné to people unfamiliar with their culture. In each interview she discussed her work to improve life on the reservation and what challenges remained. *Life* magazine sent photographer Carl Iwasaki to the reservation to document Wauneka’s home life and her work in preparation for a major article about her receipt of the Medal of Freedom. However, the magazine’s editors eventually dropped the story believing “the Washington pictures would be too sad because of the death of President Kennedy.”²⁴³

In March 1965, CBS News filmed a thirty-minute television documentary, “The Navajos and Annie Wauneka,” as part of its “The Twentieth Century” series. The program was highlighted in newspapers throughout the country and featured news anchor Walter Cronkite as narrator. A summary of the documentary described it as “an inspirational study of the work of Navajo Mrs. Annie B. [sic] Wauneka in dispensing health education to

²³⁷ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks with Under Secretary of State George Ball at the Presentation of the Medal of Freedom Awards,” December 6, 1963, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=26165>.

²³⁸ *New York Times*, December 7, 1963, 1 and 14.

²³⁹ *New York Times*, December 7, 1963, 1 and 14.

²⁴⁰ *Navajo Times* (Window Rock, Arizona), November 27, 2013.

²⁴¹ Lyndon Baines Johnson to Wauneka, December 13, 1963, Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

²⁴² *Navajo Times* (Window Rock, Arizona), November 27, 2013.

²⁴³ Arch Napier, Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Mrs. Annie Wauneka, January 7, 1964, Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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the impoverished Navajos of the American Southwest. You'll get a feeling of the enormity of her undertaking and her dedication to the service of her people."²⁴⁴

After she received the Medal of Freedom, Wauneka continued to garner numerous accolades and awards for her work in improving public health and other accomplishments. In 1972 she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Albuquerque. Subsequently, she was widely known as Dr. Wauneka.²⁴⁵ At a conference on lung diseases in Montreal, she received the 1975 American Lung Association's Will Ross Medal, its highest volunteer honor, presented for "outstanding contributions in the prevention and control of lung disease." Wauneka was cited as "the nation's outstanding Indian in the field of Indian health."²⁴⁶ The *Gallup Independent* noted, "Dr. Wauneka is considered the most powerful force in introducing modern medicine to her native Navajo tribe and improving health conditions, with special attention [to] tuberculosis control programs."²⁴⁷

Champion of and Role Model for Native American Women

Annie Dodge Wauneka strongly advocated for women's rights both at the chapter level and in the halls of the Tribal Council. Her concern for all Navajo women is well documented and vividly remembered by many people as shaping their lives. She advised her daughter Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, "If you become a leader you have to know a person, know everything about them. You cannot get upset with them. To become a leader, test your root, when it becomes so deep you can't pull it up, then you are ready to be a leader."²⁴⁸ Her belief in women's abilities evidenced itself in her encouragement of them to reach higher, work harder, and accomplish more than they sometimes imagined they could.

A role model to women throughout her nation, Wauneka notably inspired and motivated several who ran for office. Nancy Chee, who became chapter secretary and then three-term president of the Klagetoh Chapter, began working with Wauneka in 1957. She reveres the councilwoman as her mentor and exemplar: "I wanted to talk like her and do everything she did. She carried herself with respect and I admired the way she spoke to people." Wauneka taught Chee how to do her job and introduced her to the people. The younger woman recalls that whether at the chapter house or her own home, people would arrive asking the councilwoman for help.²⁴⁹

Former Klagetoh Chapter Vice President LaVerne Joe remembers Annie Dodge Wauneka advising her when she was a young woman: "You need to help your people one day." Joe believes the councilwoman inspired people to "go to school, make a positive impact on yourself and your community." She realized that "if Annie Wauneka went through it, I can go through it." Joe believes Wauneka's outlook changed the lives of everyone in the nation: "Annie Wauneka rebuilt the Navajo. She said we Native Americans count. We have one another; we have to work to move forward together . . . that's what makes us strong. Her mission was to instill hope in the community."²⁵⁰

Irene Stewart, who ran for the Tribal Council to represent Chinle in 1955, reported she became discouraged by her inexperience in making campaign speeches. Stewart told Wauneka, the only woman on the council at that time, that she thought she would lose the election. The Klagetoh councilwoman responded: "Oh come on, don't

²⁴⁴ *Daily Reporter* (Dover, Ohio), March 6, 1965, 20.

²⁴⁵ She also received honorary doctorates from the University of New Mexico in 1985 and University of Arizona in 1996. In addition, the College of Ganado and Cook Christian Training School honored her for her accomplishments.

²⁴⁶ *Gallup* (New Mexico) *Independent*, June 21, 1975, 6.

²⁴⁷ *Gallup* (New Mexico) *Independent*, June 21, 1975, 6. Wauneka served as a director of the Arizona Lung Association for a time.

²⁴⁸ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2016.

²⁴⁹ Nancy Chee, Klagetoh, Arizona, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 12, 2016.

²⁵⁰ LaVerne Joe, Klagetoh, Arizona, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 12, 2016.

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talk like that; do your best and make up your mind to win. I want you to win over the two men and be with me in the council meetings. We'll join up and really work; there is plenty to do. We will go places together, so work hard. It is not hard at all when you really put all you've got into it. You've had more education than I've had."²⁵¹

Wauneka's influence extended to women of the tribe regardless of background or situation. Speaking in Navajo, eighty-seven-year-old Marie A. Lee of Klagetoh describes Annie Wauneka as "like a mother to me." The councilwoman attended Lee's traditional Navajo wedding at a hogan in 1952 and gave the couple advice, recommending that the young woman take care of her children and husband. Wauneka also wanted the Lees to have their marriage blessed at the Catholic Church, which they did. She would visit Marie Lee's home and talk with her, greeting Marie as a daughter, based on their clan relationship. She encouraged Lee to continue with her weaving, recognizing her talent in producing beautiful rugs and saying: "Don't leave your weaving behind. Stand behind your work no matter what. Your mind, your body goes into the rug." Lee states, "I respected her a lot; I miss her. After she died, I didn't want to weave anymore. I just did a few more."²⁵²

When the American women's rights movement re-emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, its leaders recognized Wauneka as a powerful leader in the Native American community. She attended Gerald Ford's presidential inauguration, and he selected the councilwoman as one of thirty-five people to serve on the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year in January 1975. The group received the task of recommending ways to encourage equality of women and men and promote observance of International Women's Year. To accomplish this, commissioners conducted research and held meetings in every state and territory to discuss women's issues, with a goal of removing impediments to the full participation of American women in national life. Wauneka traveled around the reservation asking women to tell her about their problems and concerns, which she found included inadequate housing, unemployment, alcoholism, and lack of quality medical care. She also encountered some men's mistrust about the motives of her investigation and concluded, "I don't know how long it'll take me to be active in that particular area [women's equality], because I'm beginning to find more problems than I ever did the past 25 years."²⁵³

In September 1975, Wauneka organized a Southwest Indian Women's Conference in Window Rock, where she urged women to be active participants in determining the future of the Navajo Nation while also keeping the important aspects of traditional culture alive. She cautioned, "These changing times and changing attitudes can be detrimental to women. It's not just how men see us, but how we see ourselves. As we begin to demand expanded roles in the political, social, and cultural life of our people, we must not surrender our unique Indian identity."²⁵⁴ She also asserted that "Indian women must have access to employment, training, education, and the political processes if they are to contribute fully and responsibly to the life of their Indian tribes, the Indian community, and Indian families."²⁵⁵

In a famous statement submitted to the National Commission on the Observance of Women's Year entitled "The Dilemma for Indian Women," Wauneka emphasized the necessity of addressing the issues of "equal treatment, opportunity and recognition of the Indians and Tribal Government" before the unique role of women could be discussed, advising the complex problem should be viewed as one of achieving Native American

²⁵¹ Irene Stewart, *A Voice in Her Tribe: A Navajo Woman's Own Story* (Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1980), 57.

²⁵² Marie A. Lee, Klagetoh, Arizona, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, Translated by Klagetoh Vice President LaVerne Joe, December 12, 2016.

²⁵³ S.I. Myers, Transcript of Interview with Annie Wauneka, Klagetoh, Arizona, October 19, 1975, New York Times Oral History Program, Listening to Indians No. 74, 17-19.

²⁵⁴ *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), September 19, 2016.

²⁵⁵ *Gallup* (New Mexico) *Independent*, September 25, 1975, 1.

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rights, including issues such as protection of land and resources and strengthening tribal government.²⁵⁶ In October 1976, four hundred women attended the Arizona Indian Women's Conference in Phoenix, organized as a result of Wauneka's conference the previous fall. The women attended workshops focusing on issues affecting their lives, such as education, employment, and equal opportunity. The culmination of all the gatherings and the completion of Wauneka's service on President Ford's National Commission was the National Women's Conference held in Houston in November 1977, a historic event that drew women leaders from every sphere of American life, received extensive journalistic coverage, and was televised live on public broadcasting stations.²⁵⁷

Ladies Home Journal honored the Klagetoh councilwoman as one of its 1976 Woman of the Year designees, along with nine other significant women given awards in various categories, such as First Lady Betty Ford, anthropologist Margaret Mead, opera singer Beverly Sills, and poet Maya Angelou.²⁵⁸ The honorees were described as "a special breed of heroine: American women who, through their own achievements, inspire other women to new heights." Those receiving the awards were selected by a panel of prominent women based on a poll of the magazine's readers. Wauneka received the honor for her educational leadership. On the evening of April 8, the event at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York City was broadcast in a live ninety-minute NBC television program, with an expected viewing audience of thirty million people. A short documentary of each woman's life was shown.²⁵⁹ In a formal photograph of the group taken that evening, the First Lady and Annie Wauneka stand together smiling with their arms linked. Following the ceremony, the ten recognized women attended a midnight champagne reception in their honor hosted by Cartier at their Fifth Avenue store.²⁶⁰ The contrast between Wauneka's world of public service on the reservation and that through which she traveled outside Navajo country was often immense.

Other Areas of Focus

As summarized above, Annie Dodge Wauneka's work covered the broad scope of Navajo life; there were few issues affecting her people that she did not influence. The following two examples illustrate her wide-ranging efforts.

Throughout her adult life Wauneka emphasized the importance of education for all children and sponsored programs that bolstered educational success. One example of her work in the field was an innovative initiative resulting from her understanding that many families she represented had little money to spend on children's school clothes. She believed the lack of adequate apparel kept students away from their classes. In response, she reached an agreement with the Henry Hillson Company in Albuquerque, a wholesale clothing business, to provide school garments. In 1955, the Tribal Council appropriated \$350,000 to purchase school clothing, and Wauneka negotiated with the company to deliver all the apparel required by Navajo students from elementary through high school.²⁶¹ Included in the big bag of clothing each student received were several types of shoes.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Dr. Annie D. Wauneka, "The Dilemma for Indian Women," *WASSAJA* (September 1976), 8.

²⁵⁷ Shelah Leader Gilbert and Patricia Rusch Hyatt, *American Women on the Move* (Boulder, Colorado: Lexington Books, 2016), ix; Kurt Peters and Susan Lobo, eds., *American Indians and the Urban Experience* (Lanham, Maryland: Alta Mira Press, 2001), 140.

²⁵⁸ *New York Times*, April 9, 1976.

²⁵⁹ Wauneka received her award from Jill Ruckelshaus, presiding officer of the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. Documents in the Gerald F. Ford Presidential Library indicate the First Lady's staff prepared thirty-four drafts of Mrs. Ford's acceptance speech; it is likely that Annie Wauneka composed hers without assistance.

²⁶⁰ Frances K. Pullen Papers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, box 1, folder 1976/04/08, Ladies Home Journal Woman of the Year Awards, New York City, www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0003/1069095.pdf.

²⁶¹ Robert Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-61: A Decade of Progress*, Report No. viii, 1961, 19, Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

²⁶² Irma Wauneka Bluehouse and Darwyn Lowery, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December

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The *Navajo Year Book: 1951-61* reported the program guaranteed each school child possessed an adequate wardrobe for classes and the weather and judged it “has proven to be a valuable incentive to school enrollment and attendance.”²⁶³

In October 1955, *Time* magazine featured Wauneka in a story covering her efforts to secure improved schools for students on the reservation and the failure of the United States to fulfill its 1868 treaty’s educational promises to the Navajo.²⁶⁴ She became an ardent advocate of increasing federal support for education and Navajo control of their schools, speaking on behalf of these issues at Congressional hearings. She also was instrumental in bringing the 1965 Head Start program for early childhood education to the reservation, including a classroom on the grounds of Klagetoh Chapter House. During the 1970s, former Tribal Vice President Edward T. Begay worked with the councilwoman, Dr. Donald Nobel, and others to improve the Navajo school curriculum, especially in science. The goal was to “get students educated in positions such as doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, and scientists—go to college.” He recalls Wauneka as “very vocal about parents becoming more involved in school,” and states “she was emphatic about good education and also the power of the Navajo Area School Board Association.”²⁶⁵

Another of Wauneka’s areas of service focused on issues relating to senior citizens.²⁶⁶ She attended the 1961 White House Conference on Aging and continued to actively work to improve the lives of elders throughout her career. An example of her efforts was a 1970 planning session for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging held at Klagetoh Chapter House that received national press coverage. More than 185 people attended the chapter house meeting, arriving by pickup truck, horse and carriage, and on foot. A 102-year-old woman and one in her late 70s walked two days to reach the site. Annie Dodge Wauneka, then sixty years old herself, served as translator for the meeting and encouraged the people present to express their thoughts, which included statements about such things as the difficulties cutting firewood and hauling water home at an advanced age. In its coverage of the session, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* described Wauneka as possessing “both influence and power among her tribe.”²⁶⁷ In 1983, the National Association for Human Development, a private organization that prepared health education materials for groups working to assist older Americans, praised Wauneka as someone who “has given inspiration and leadership that no other Navajo leader has done. She is a symbol of courage; a mother to all who cross her path. We give great homage and honor this day to Dr. Wauneka who has touched and has taught us all the true meaning of dedication and service.”²⁶⁸

Later Years on the Council

During Wauneka’s later years on the Tribal Council dissension escalated between that body and the tribal chairman. The Klagetoh councilwoman was considered part of the “Old Guard” bloc, a group some saw as resistant to change.²⁶⁹ In 1963, Raymond Nakai was elected chairman; once in office he clashed with members of the Old Guard, who still held the controlling votes on the council.²⁷⁰ The council blocked much of Nakai’s agenda, but in 1966 he won re-election along with a more supportive group of legislators, who approved

14, 2016, Window Rock, Arizona.

²⁶³ Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-61*, 335, Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

²⁶⁴ *Time*, October 24, 1955.

²⁶⁵ Begay, Interview, December 13, 2016.

²⁶⁶ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse states her mother advised her: “Don’t you ever bypass an elderly lady [while driving]—pick her up. You come from those people.”

²⁶⁷ *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), December 10, 1970, 68.

²⁶⁸ National Association for Human Development, quoted in *Navajo Area Newsletter*, February 1984, 1.

²⁶⁹ Begay, Interview, December 13, 2016.

²⁷⁰ Iverson (*The Navajo Nation*, 85) asserts the era was characterized by “the most divisive factionalism perhaps in all of Navajo political history.”

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elements of his program. Nakai's tenure brought an emphasis on private investment in developing tribal resources, including coal reserves, and the creation of the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity, which funded a tribal legal aid office. Councilwoman Wauneka was critical of Theodore R. Mitchell, the first director of the legal aid agency, whose actions brought an extended and bitter legal dispute.²⁷¹

In 1970, Peter MacDonald decisively defeated Nakai, becoming tribal chairman and gaining support of the majority on the council. His election coincided with President Richard Nixon's promulgation of a new policy of Indian self-determination focused on "supporting the concept of tribal self-sufficiency while affirming the trust relationship," according to American Indian Studies Professor David E. Wilkins.²⁷² Iverson concludes that during the 1970s "the Navajos exerted major efforts to take charge of their social, political, and economic existence" under the new administration, including an assertive posture toward the BIA.²⁷³

As one of the tribe's most articulate and forceful speakers, Wauneka continued to travel to Washington, D.C., to testify before Congressional committees and meet with agency officials in the 1970s. Former Navajo Tribal Council Vice President Edward T. Begay entered office in 1973 as a young man, and he and the councilwoman, who was on the Executive Committee with him, "worked in all politics—county, state, national, even the United Nations—we wanted to introduce other people to the Navajos." They often were selected to go to Washington on behalf of the council to testify on budgets and legislation impacting the Navajo. He describes Wauneka at that time as "vibrant, very energetic, very personal, well mannered, and very kind. She took me under her wing as far as political matters were concerned." She advised him, "If you aren't criticized you aren't doing anything." He found Wauneka "very outspoken in English and Navajo whether with the U.S. Senate, Congressmen, and other officials" in matters pertaining to budgets, the land base, and a sustainable economy.²⁷⁴

Chairman MacDonald resisted the Navajo and Hopi Land Resettlement Act, which Wauneka also opposed. In April 1972, she appeared before the Indian Affairs Subcommittee of the House Committee on Indian Affairs and spoke against the proposed legislation, which would require removal of thousands of Navajos from the disputed land, partition surface rights, and impose livestock reduction in the area. In her opening remarks, the councilwoman indicated she was giving her personal views about the subject, and she continued with delivery of an impassioned statement denouncing the proposal. She bluntly and methodically listed her objections, providing detailed information and statistics supporting her point of view and suggesting better alternatives. The speech exemplified her ability to convey information in a clear, effective manner without evading difficult subjects: "This bill is a perfect example of a white man's solution to the Indian problem. You wonder why the problem never gets solved. It's because every white man is an expert on Indian problems, but nobody listens to the Indians. Now please tear up this stupid bill and listen to an Indian."²⁷⁵

In her last term in office, the Klagetoh councilwoman began to think of retirement, telling an interviewer in 1975, "I want to come home and spend my extra life at home with my family, grandchildren."²⁷⁶ Although categorized as a member of the "Old Guard," especially in regard to practices she felt were not part of Navajo culture, Wauneka did voice support for the American Indian Movement (AIM) and drew criticism from council members who believed the group included troublemakers. After AIM members were jailed following a protest

²⁷¹ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 89-97, 100, and 105.

²⁷² Wilkins, *The Navajo Political Experience*, 62.

²⁷³ Iverson, *The Navajo Nation*, 125.

²⁷⁴ Begay, Interview, December 13, 2016.

²⁷⁵ Annie Wauneka, "Give the Vacant Public Land Back to the Indians," Statement, Indian Affairs Subcommittee of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, April 17-18, 1972, quoted in Arrington, "Annie Wauneka," 113.

²⁷⁶ Myers, Transcript of Interview with Annie Wauneka.

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and takeover at the Fairchild Semiconductor manufacturing plant in Shiprock, she defused the situation on the scene and subsequently agreed to bail the protestors out as long as they promised to return for the required hearing. Wauneka later reported she advised them: “If you don’t return, I’ll be sitting in jail.”²⁷⁷ Siding with AIM led some people to call the councilwoman “AIM Annie” and “Annie Get Your Gun” behind her back. However, Peterson Zah reported that she just laughed at the nicknames.²⁷⁸

An Active Life after leaving the Council

On November 15, 1978, Annie Dodge Wauneka, then age sixty-eight, narrowly lost her seat on the Tribal Council by sixteen votes. Historian Helen M. Bannan analyzed that “a controversial dispute with a white lawyer [Theodore Mitchell], disagreements with powerful Navajo tribal chairman Peter MacDonald, and her outspoken criticism of peyote” led to her defeat.²⁷⁹ Wauneka later reflected, “I didn’t campaign, and I think my time was up. I think the people wanted someone younger.”²⁸⁰ She left office in January 1979.

Although no longer a tribal government official, Wauneka continued to play an important role in the fields of Native American healthcare and education, attending conferences and meetings and giving interviews about the topics she had focused on during her career. She also maintained her wide-ranging efforts to learn and understand other cultures and improve Navajo lives. In 1980, she traveled with a group of Native American women to China. While there she went outside in the early morning to say a prayer and “she saw lots of Chinese ladies out exercising—she joined them,” reports Irma Wauneka Bluehouse.²⁸¹ During their stay the women visited with representatives of minority groups in that nation, and when she returned home Wauneka indicated she found the lives of Chinese and Navajo people had some similarities.²⁸²

After her retirement Wauneka served as an instructor at a special seminar to teach campaign skills sponsored by the Council for Navajo Women in 1982. Designed for women who were running for council seats at the time, the seminar included advice on strategy, voter contact, tribal election laws, and other topics.²⁸³ Wauneka also monitored the actions of the tribal government and strategically offered her opinions, as in 1982 when Chairman MacDonald suggested the tribe would be better served by contracting directly with the BIA Washington office and bypassing the area office. Wauneka asserted the concept was part of a “hasty, secret plan” that the Navajo people had never discussed or approved. The *Navajo Area Newsletter* reported that she “fired off a telegram to certain senators and representatives protesting the attempted takeover and accusing MacDonald of raising a political issue for this fall’s elections.”²⁸⁴ She supported Peterson Zah in his successful effort to replace MacDonald as tribal chairman in that year.

The Navajo Nation bestowed one of its highest honors on Wauneka in April 1984, designating her “Our Legendary Mother of the Navajo Nation” for “her loving and caring service and humanitarian efforts among her people.” No other Navajo woman has ever received the award. The recognition came on Wauneka’s seventy-fourth birthday and was marked by a two-day celebration and observance in recognition of her dedication of “her life unselfishly and tirelessly to the wellbeing and welfare of her people”; for her long years of service on the Navajo Tribal Council; in recognition of her work on numerous committees, boards, and commissions; to

²⁷⁷ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 14, 2016.

²⁷⁸ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

²⁷⁹ Helen M. Bannan, “Wauneka, Annie Dodge,” in *Treaties with American Indians: An Encyclopedia of Rights, Conflicts, and Sovereignty*, ed. Donald L. Fixico (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 912.

²⁸⁰ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), December 7, 1997, H1-H2.

²⁸¹ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 14, 2016.

²⁸² *Navajo Area Newsletter*, December 1980, 1.

²⁸³ *Farmington* (New Mexico) *Daily Times*, July 18, 1982, 16.

²⁸⁴ *Navajo Area Newsletter*, January 1982, 1-2.

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highlight her distinguished career, making her the most honored and decorated Indian woman in America; and because she “enlightened and inspired the Navajo people.”²⁸⁵ A series of events at Window Rock were sponsored by the Office of Navajo Women.

She continued to receive many invitations to give speeches, accept awards, attend events, and present her views on important tribal matters. In 1984, she attended the Republican National Convention as a delegate in order to convince those attending that their party had not kept the promises President Ronald Reagan made to Native Americans regarding issues such as better housing, jobs, and educational facilities.²⁸⁶ In that year, Charles Kuralt presented a profile on Wauneka on his “Sunday Morning” television program, which described her as “the Navajo woman who brought twentieth century medicines to treat the tuberculosis epidemic on the reservation.”²⁸⁷ During the same year, she attended a conference of the Institute for Resource Management at Canyon de Chelly, where she discussed the issues of mining on Navajo land and became friends with Robert Redford.²⁸⁸ The University of New Mexico presented her with a doctorate of humane letters in 1985.

Wauneka traveled to Washington, D.C., in 1989 to accept an award from the Indian Health Service as a representative of all the tribes. In that year, she appeared before a U.S. Senate Select Committee investigating the federal government’s relationship with American Indians, which delved into accusations of corruption among tribal officials. A snowstorm at home almost prevented the seventy-nine-year-old woman from attending the hearing, but with her usual energy and persistence she appeared in Washington as requested. Committee Chairman Dennis DeConcini (D-NM) introduced her as “an esteemed member of the Navajo Tribe. She is a long-time tribal leader, a health educator, and recipient of many awards and honors. We have invited Dr. Wauneka as an independent and respected Navajo leader so that she might briefly share with us her first-hand experience on the reservation.”²⁸⁹

Co-chairman John McCain (R-AZ) also praised Wauneka, stating: “I have known her for many years. I think she can be described accurately as a spiritual leader of the Navajo people. She has been responsible for the eradication of disease and for efforts at preserving the unity of families on the Navajo Reservation. If I could find one person who I think could provide us with the kind of information we need, I think she would certainly be the one.” Wauneka spoke in her usual forthright manner, injecting a little humor, and using great precision in her responses to the committee’s questions. She emphasized subjects important to her life’s work, including health problems such as alcoholism and drug use, the necessity of improving young people’s educational opportunities to ensure a better life, and the importance of honesty in elected officials.²⁹⁰

In 1992, Wauneka made her final trip to Washington to receive an Indian Achievement Award at a presentation where she sat with President Peterson Zah and Senators John McCain and Peter Domenici. Her companion on the trip, Louise Nelson, worried about Wauneka’s health, but later reported, “As we entered that banquet hall, she just came alive. . . . When she went up to receive her award, she had her written speech, but she’d just glance at it. That was her turf, her territory.”²⁹¹

²⁸⁵ Navajo Nation, Proclamation, 1994, Annie Wauneka Collection, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

²⁸⁶ *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), August 2, 1984, 14.

²⁸⁷ CBS, Sunday Morning, “Charles Kuralt’s Portrait: Annie Wauneka,” 1984, summary description on WorldCat, <https://www.worldcat.org/title/charles-kuralt-portrait/oclc/931760>.

²⁸⁸ Sam D. Gill, *Mother Earth: An American Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 144. Wauneka’s family notes she later jokingly called Redford her “boyfriend.”

²⁸⁹ U.S. Senate, Hearings before the Special Committee on Indian Affairs, 101st Cong., February 2-9, 1989, Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 112-116.

²⁹⁰ U.S. Senate, Hearings before the Special Committee on Indian Affairs, 112-116.

²⁹¹ Nelson, quoted in Niethammer, *I’ll Go and Do More*, 240.

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The University of Arizona awarded Dr. Wauneka an honorary doctorate in law in 1996. Three years earlier she had received a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and could not attend the presentation ceremony. Her grandson Milton Bluehouse, Jr., accepted the award and observed: "I didn't know she was famous until about my senior year in high school. Before that, I figured she was just my grandmother. I thought, grandmothers do these things. They jump in their trucks and go everywhere."²⁹²

Annie Dodge Wauneka passed away at the age of eighty-seven on November 19, 1997. Navajo Nation President Albert Hale eulogized her as "our legendary mother" and "the most honored Navajo in our history." All tribal offices closed for a day to honor her memory. In 2000, Wauneka was inducted posthumously into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York. Joyce Strothman, Arizona president of the American Association of University Women, detailed the reasons for Wauneka's award: "What stood out was her compassion for people, her unselfish love working for all people, her great contributions to health."²⁹³ In 2002, the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame also inducted their native daughter, lauding her hard work for better schools, housing sanitation, crop irrigation, and healthcare.²⁹⁴ Demonstrating her continued significance to the nation, President George W. Bush singled her out in his 2006 Proclamation for Women's History Month: "Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Annie Wauneka worked to educate her native Navajo community about preventing and treating disease."²⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

On March 3, 2017, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez issued a statement celebrating all women on International Women's Day. In particular, the leaders paid tribute to Annie Dodge Wauneka, whose lifetime of leadership and work was dedicated to improving the health and welfare of the Navajo people. Her life was called an inspiration to young people and she was extolled for continuing "to be the driving force for change on the nation."²⁹⁶ Wauneka rose from the humblest beginnings to the heights of power and prestige and served as a positive force as she worked to better the lives of the Diné, preserve their culture and identity, and help them navigate the changing world. Klagetoh Chapter House is significantly associated with her life's work and emblematic of her devotion to the Navajo people.

²⁹² *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), September 19, 2016.

²⁹³ *Navajo Times* (Window Rock), September 7, 2000, A9.

²⁹⁴ Arizona Women's Hall of Fame, "Annie Wauneka (1910-1997)", <http://www.azwhf.org/inductions>.

²⁹⁵ George W. Bush, "Proclamation 7985—Women's History Month, 2006," February 27, 2006, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65287>.

²⁹⁶ Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, Proclamation, March 3, 2017, <http://www.opcp.navajo-nsn.gov>.

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CHAPTER HOUSES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE NAVAJO NATION

Introduction of the Chapter Idea

The 1963 Klagetoh Chapter House is part of a movement on the Navajo reservation that began in the 1920s, when the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) encouraged development of community political units known as chapters to facilitate greater dissemination of information and increase participation of Navajo people in tribal government.²⁹⁷ In 1927, Leupp Agency Superintendent John G. Hunter conceived of the chapter as a place for organized community meetings, election of local officials, decision-making by majority rule, and cooperation on public works projects, as well as disseminating OIA information. He based the concept on New England town hall meetings. Success with chapter creation at the Leupp Agency in 1928 led to expansion of the concept to other parts of the reservation. Hunter conferred with respected community leaders such as Henry Chee Dodge to gauge their interest and receive their help in organizing chapters.²⁹⁸ Yellow Policeman, the first Tribal Council representative from Klagetoh, visited the homes of families living in the area to inform them of a new means of discussing problems and concerns as well as learning about news from Fort Defiance.²⁹⁹ About eighty chapters organized within a decade.³⁰⁰

Former Tribal Council Vice Chairman Howard Gorman was present when the concept of chapters was introduced at Ganado and recalled: “Yes, I was there, and all of us thought it was a good idea, for it built upon what was already present, that of organized group meetings.”³⁰¹ Traditionally, the Navajo people living in a certain geographic community had gathered to settle issues and discuss events while at ceremonial gatherings. In the new chapter scheme, the OIA encouraged members to elect three officers (president, vice president, and secretary) to manage discussions and plan projects for the community, such as building a meeting place or constructing roads, bridges, and irrigation systems. Hunter instructed those who assisted in developing the chapters that after the election of officers they should stand back and “Let it roll, let it roll.”³⁰² The first chapter meetings convened at crossroads or trading posts, where a good supply of water was available and people stood or sat on the ground. When asked about women’s roles in the early days of the chapter meetings, Gorman stated, “The women never did have a big part in talking at a meeting, but they always voted, and since we did a lot more talking than voting the women were always in the background.”³⁰³

During 1933-34, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service established land management districts to address the issue of overgrazing on reservation land and used the chapters as geographical subunits for the issuance of grazing permits. The chapters continued as vital components of the community during the voluntary livestock reduction efforts initiated by the government. Former Gallup Area Indian Affairs Officer Robert Young indicated they “allowed a place for the people to discuss and cuss the government program.”³⁰⁴ When the federal government launched a policy of forced stock reduction, beginning with horses in 1937 and especially with sheep and goats in 1943, the chapters became centers of resistance. The agencies then ceased to support the chapters and schools became centers of community activity.³⁰⁵ Although several chapters disbanded, Williams found more than half continued to hold “unofficial” meetings during the livestock reduction period.³⁰⁶

²⁹⁷ Robert W. Young, comp., *Navajo Yearbook 1951-1961: A Decade of Progress* (Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Agency, 1961), 335.

²⁹⁸ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 121.

²⁹⁹ Chapter Profiles Notebook: Klagetoh, undated, document A5K6 80, Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

Council people elected after Yellow Policeman represented both Klagetoh and Wide Ruins.

³⁰⁰ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” xi and 139.

³⁰¹ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 118.

³⁰² Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 122.

³⁰³ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 118-120.

³⁰⁴ Robert Young, quoted in Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 140.

³⁰⁵ Robert Young, quoted in Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 140.

³⁰⁶ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” xi and 139.

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Revitalization of the Chapters

Following the end of livestock reduction, the Tribal Council revived the chapter system. In 1955, it initiated a program recognizing the importance of the community organizations as effective places for presenting information, project planning, discussion, and mediation of disputes. As part of its effort to revitalize the system, the council created a process for official certification of individual chapters and indicated it would “encourage and foster these community organizations to the greatest extent possible.”³⁰⁷ Larger appropriations resulting from tribal resource leasing led to expansion of and renewed interest in the chapters and an extensive chapter house construction program. A Tribal Council resolution in May 1958 authorized an appropriation of \$2.5 million for construction, maintenance, and repair of chapter houses over a period of five years.³⁰⁸ The Tribal Council’s Advisory Committee certified the chapters, which then became eligible for construction grants. In 1959, with reorganization of the Navajo Executive Branch, the Community Services Department employed fieldworkers to coordinate chapter programs. By 1964, more than \$4 million in appropriations resulted in remodeling and new construction of chapter houses.³⁰⁹

The buildings served as centers for local government and community centers and accommodated educational, social, and recreational programs. In addition to serving as meeting places, builders hoped the houses would host adult education classes, medical clinics, and recreational activities for adults and youths, as well as facilitating chapter fundraising and other activities. To assist in planning for the new construction, local officials provided detailed information about their chapters. Individual chapters assumed responsibility for the costs of operation and maintenance of the houses and agreed to follow policies and procedures established by the Tribal Council. For a project to move forward, at least one hundred adult chapter members had to endorse it.³¹⁰

The Community Services Department (by 1961 known as the Community Development Department), through its Design and Construction Office, planned to present each chapter with several pre-approved architectural plans for new buildings from which they could choose. To receive a new chapter house a community was required to select a construction site with a nearby developed water source and proximity to schools, medical clinics, or other services. Each chapter house was to include, at a minimum, an assembly room, conference room, and kitchen; optional facilities included restrooms, sewing spaces, showers, and laundries. One of the purposes of a modern building was to introduce Navajo people to new technology and materials, such as running water, electricity, windows, and tables and chairs.³¹¹ Local Navajo laborers received employment preference, while builders, registered architects, or engineers completed the designs and the Design and Construction staff supervised the projects.³¹²

A Demonstration of Wauneka’s Leadership: Klagetoh Chapter House History

When the new chapter house construction program began, most reservation residents lived in scattered rural locations rather than clustered settlements. The chapters were “an essential meeting place for the local community because people didn’t have vehicles. They might ride in on a horse,” notes Darwyn Lowery.³¹³ Klagetoh possessed a 1930s stone chapter house (east of the current building, now demolished) located across from the local trading post along the road to Ganado.³¹⁴ People arrived at the chapter meeting by wagon and

³⁰⁷ Navajo Tribal Council, Resolution CJ-20-55, June 20, 1955.

³⁰⁸ Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-1961*, 336.

³⁰⁹ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 154.

³¹⁰ Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-1961*, 336 and 340.

³¹¹ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 166.

³¹² Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-1961*, 338-339; Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 155.

³¹³ Darwyn Lowery, Interview, December 12, 2016.

³¹⁴ A fire station now stands on the site of the 1930s chapter house.

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spent the entire day in the area.³¹⁵ A 1930s OIA school (demolished), which first brought electricity to the area, stood within a short distance of the old Klagetoh Chapter House.³¹⁶ During the earlier era, chapter members supplied most building materials and labor for a chapter house, while the OIA provided things like building plans, nails, and cement. Williams found that some 1930s chapter houses resembled hogans, although they were larger and had windows. Construction materials for the buildings included logs, stone, and adobe. A few had more than one room, including kitchens and storerooms; most had no plumbing or utilities.³¹⁷

By the 1950s, the Klagetoh Chapter held meetings twice a month, with an average of ninety-five people present.³¹⁸ The chapter house was a basic structure, with no power or water. Community members sat on the floor during meetings, which was not uncommon within the system.³¹⁹ An undated letter written by Annie Wauneka in the late 1950s requested paint for the chapter house walls and ceiling, as well as lumber to build benches.³²⁰ The Tribal Council certified the Klagetoh Chapter on February 15, 1956, making it eligible to apply for renovation or construction of a new building.

“Let Us Know if You Are Remembering Us”: *Klagetoh Chapter Members Move Forward with Construction*
In April 1958, a rededication of the old chapter house occurred, presumably after some improvement. Despite this rededication, Klagetoh members moved forward with efforts to secure a new building. In November 1959, Klagetoh Chapter officers wrote to the Director of Community Services indicating they had examined preliminary drawings for a new chapter house and approved them unanimously, with an exception: they wanted the building to be constructed of native stone and have a tile floor.³²¹ The chapter’s determination to use stone for their building resulted in a substantial delay, because it would be costlier to construct and require preparation of new architectural drawings.

By 1961, new chapter houses stood in thirty-nine communities, including Wide Ruins, one of the two chapters Wauneka represented. She expected that Klagetoh’s building would be started in the same year. However, securing a new Klagetoh Chapter House continued to test the councilwoman’s patience and persistence. She discussed the community’s plans for a new building with Public Services Division Director G. Warren Spaulding and apparently anticipated that some work by the chapter members could activate the project before all the steps specified by the tribal program were completed. Specifically, the Klagetoh Chapter began preliminary work to obtain the stone they wanted before their final application was submitted. Early in 1961, chapter members located a suitable source of sandstone from a canyon in the area and quarried it themselves. Assisting them were builders of the Wide Ruins chapter who had quarried stone for their own new chapter house.

Wauneka and other members of the chapter discussed their preferences for the new building with program administrators and government leaders, who took their opinions seriously. In April, Director Spaulding reported that Chairman Paul Jones informed him the Klagetoh Chapter already had quarried “a quantity of rock” for their

³¹⁵ Chee, Interview by Simmons and Martorano, 12 December 2016.

³¹⁶ The boarding school closed in 1959 due to a major water shortage.

³¹⁷ Williams, “The Function of the Chapter House System,” 124.

³¹⁸ Larry B. Moore, Acting Director, “Request for Information to Develop Program of Chapter Houses,” undated [ca. 1956], Chapters: Klagetoh, Navajo Nation Government Documents Collection [hereafter cited as NNGDC]. Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

³¹⁹ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 12, 2017.

³²⁰ Mrs. Annie Wauneka to McCabe and Begay, Tribal Office, undated [late 1950s], Chapters: Klagetoh, Construction, NNGDC.

³²¹ Boniface Bonney, Sam Yazzie, and David Curley, Klagetoh Chapter House, to Director, Community Services, November 7, 1959, Chapters: Klagetoh, Construction, NNGDC.

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new chapter house. Spaulding sent an employee to inspect the rock and determine its suitability. He also inquired whether the Klagetoh members had submitted the required application for a new building and what type they wanted.³²²

It is not surprising the members preferred stone for their new chapter house, as it was utilized in their existing building and for the Navajo Council Chamber in Window Rock. According to Wauneka's grandson Darwyn W. Lowery, stonemasonry was a traditional skill passed on through generations, and many experienced masons lived in the Klagetoh vicinity.³²³ Stephen C. Jett and Virginia E. Spencer's study of Navajo architecture confirms that "a considerable number of Navajos gained experience in modern construction methods through employment on government, Tribal, and mission projects such as administrative buildings, schools, chapter houses, chapels, etc."³²⁴ Wauneka's daughter, Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, remembers that each of the workers possessed his own tools and "they really took care of them."³²⁵ The workers knew the qualities of the stone, available local supplies made it a natural and logical choice for the chapter house, and local residents possessed the skills and tools to quarry it.

The Klagetoh Chapter held a meeting on May 7, 1961, attended by about ninety community members, the chapter officers, and the councilwoman. After careful consideration, they approved a proposed site for the construction and requested a survey for withdrawal of the land. Next, the group planned to resume hauling previously quarried stone to the site. Wauneka suggested the chapter wait until they received a new architectural design for the building from Community Services before taking further steps.³²⁶

By late August 1961, Councilwoman Wauneka expressed dismay over the lack of progress in receiving plans for the new building. She wrote a letter to Director Spaulding that embodied her forceful and direct approach to dealing with issues important to the chapter, as well as the extent of her power in dealing with government agencies. After noting she had contacted Spaulding several times "as to my proposed new chapter house to be built at Klagetoh," Wauneka recounted that the previous winter the community initiated the project using public works money and acquired and quarried the necessary stone, which was ready to be hauled to the construction site. She reported that the "community hates to use cinder blocks, so they went to work and got all the stones out." She then concluded bluntly: "What are the plans. We intend to haul them [the stones] again to the location if need to be done. About 70 to 100 loads. We are requesting construction fund it should not be more than what an actual cost for building. Let us know if you are remembering us or are we just push [sic] aside and forgotten."³²⁷ The councilwoman's influence is reflected in Spaulding's terse note written on August 22, 1961 to Department Head Ralph B. Jones: "We must move ahead on Klagetoh Chapter House. What needs to be done? Do we have an application? Have they chosen a type?"³²⁸

³²² G. Warren Spaulding, Director Public Services Division, Memorandum to Ralph B. Jones, Head, Community Development Department, April 17, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Construction, NNGDC.

³²³ Darwyn W. Lowery, Interview by Laurie Simmons and Marilyn Martorano, Window Rock, Arizona, December 14, 2016. Lowery recalls the masons wore traditional Navajo attire when working.

³²⁴ Jett and Spencer, *Navajo Architecture*, 111.

³²⁵ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, Window Rock, Arizona, December 14, 2016.

³²⁶ Jimmy Begaye, Community Worker, Community Development Department, Memorandum to Ralph B. Johns, Head, Community Development Department, May 7, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³²⁷ Mrs. [Annie] Wauneka to G. Warren Spaulding, Director, Public Services Division, undated [August 1961], Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³²⁸ G. Warren Spaulding, to Ralph B. Jones, Head, Community Development Department, routing slip, August 22, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

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Spaulding responded to Wauneka the following day, reminding her that the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council had approved only two types of chapter buildings, which did not include the stone one Klagetoh preferred, and also had instructed his office that no more chapter buildings were to be built of native stone due to the “excessive cost.” He evaluated the proposed Klagetoh building as “an exception to the present policy of the Advisory Committee and [it] is somewhat in a special category because the Advisory Committee apparently approved the use of Public Works funds with which to quarry the rock.” Therefore, he believed the committee had sanctioned the use of stone, and his department wanted to obtain an estimate for construction of the building type Klagetoh preferred and other necessary steps.³²⁹

On August 28, 1961, Ralph Jones advised Design and Construction Head Robert Krause that Wauneka had “pressed this office to begin immediate plans” to bring Klagetoh’s request for a chapter house before the Navajo Tribal Council. Jones noted his department had delayed moving forward with the building until Krause’s office produced an accepted plan, but repeated requests motivated him to “have their desires satisfied at an early date.” Jones asked Krause for a survey of the site and an estimate of costs for a stone chapter house due to quarrying completed by the chapter.³³⁰

In September 1961, Councilwoman Wauneka signed Klagetoh’s application for construction of a new chapter house, along with officials of the chapter. The officers indicated the community’s population totaled approximately five hundred. The application requested a Type 3D chapter house, with the “building to be constructed preferably with native stone which is being quarried in the area and ready to be hauled to the site.” A tribal well stood approximately five hundred yards from the site. The proposed interior layout included main and small meeting rooms, a kitchen, laundry, women’s and men’s shower and rest rooms, and a storage room. Furnishings desired included “chairs, tables, bulletin boards, a 50 Star US Flag, safety equipment such as fire extinguishers.” The chapter planned to host community activities such as “weekly movies, bingo parties, outdoor recreation activities such as basketball games and softball games,” as well as a women’s sewing club. Operation and maintenance costs would be covered by payroll deductions, screening movies, selling concessions, and hosting bingo and sewing functions. The chapter reported \$650 in available funds and no outstanding bills.³³¹ Members of the Klagetoh Chapter approved its application for a new chapter house on September 2, 1961 and sent it to the Community Development Department with the understanding that construction would wait for Robert D. Krause to determine the appropriate type and design of the building.³³² With pressure from Klagetoh’s councilwoman to produce a design that honored Navajo tradition and incorporated the aesthetic of the chapter members, Krause met the challenge.³³³

³²⁹ G. Warren Spaulding to Mrs. Annie D. Wauneka, August 23, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³³⁰ Ralph B. Jones to Robert D. Krause, August 28, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Construction, NNGDC. The specific design was indicated as “Type 3D.”

³³¹ Klagetoh Chapter, “Application for Construction or Improvement of Chapter Facilities,” September 2, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Construction, NNGDC.

³³² Jimmy Begaye, Community Worker, Community Development Department, Memorandum to Ralph Johns, Head, Community Development Department, “Application for Request of a New Chapter House at Klagetoh,” September 7, 1961, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³³³ Krause (1921-2011) had served in three branches of the armed services, received a degree in structural engineering, and worked for two architectural firms in New Mexico before becoming head of the Design and Construction Department in 1961. His obituary indicated that while with the Navajo government, “he developed an innovative program that trained and hired tribal members to design and build projects on the reservation.” In 1963 he moved to Santa Fe and opened his own engineering company. Krause was known as “a professional who was always ready to undertake a challenge in order to make something—no matter how difficult—work in a creative and proper manner” (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 2011, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/santafenewmexican/obituary-print>).

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Klagetoh did not receive the final go-ahead for its new chapter house until the following year because of insufficient tribal funds.³³⁴ Finally, on August 8, 1962, the Tribal Council passed a resolution authorizing \$65,000 for construction of a new Klagetoh Chapter House, indicating: “This chapter house is to be constructed from plans . . . by Design & Construction Department, which have been approved by the Klagetoh community people.” The resolution further stipulated that the construction would be completed using the architect’s plans and specifications and “plans shall be simple and functional and that all unnecessary items adding to the cost of the building for appearance only shall be eliminated.”³³⁵ At the end of August, a work authorization specified construction for an estimated \$81,298; further amendments raised the total to about \$101,000.³³⁶

“Dedicated for the Good”: Klagetoh Chapter House Opens

Tribal officials inspected and accepted the chapter house, judging it complete, on March 25, 1963. Dedication ceremonies took place on Mother’s Day, May 12, 1963, a date that honored Wauneka, who worked tirelessly for creation of the type of building the chapter envisioned. The *Navajo Times* observed it “was a red letter day for the people of Klagetoh . . . [and] eventful for Councilwoman Annie Wauneka, who saw the fruition of a cherished dream amidst many comments of praise and congratulations.”³³⁷ Dignitaries, visitors, and chapter members attended the dedication, with the crowd estimated at more than one thousand people. Medicine Man Sam Yazzie and Chapter President Boniface Bonney, assisted by Rose Nez, performed the ancient Blessing Way ceremony for the building; the ritual was traditionally conducted with completion of a new hogan to ensure the future wellbeing of those who utilized it.³³⁸

Master of Ceremonies Howard W. Gorman informed guests that “Annie Wauneka is responsible for much of the development of what you see around you, and it is appropriate that we pay tribute to her at this dedication on Mother’s Day.”³³⁹ Among the many who extolled the councilwoman’s service to the nation was State Senator George Amaya, who described her as a great Navajo leader and mother who had “advised, criticized, and sometimes, even wanted to spank me—and she was usually right.”³⁴⁰ Boniface Bonney praised the local community, which joined together to quarry local stone and erect the building. He noted it represented the first chapter house constructed from new plans prepared by the Tribal Design and Construction Department; previous chapter houses were designed by outside architects. Robert D. Krause highlighted the “splendid cooperation” of the chapter members in completing the building.³⁴¹

In the dedication’s closing remarks, Wauneka discussed the importance of the chapter house being “dedicated for the good. Good leadership, good prosperity, and all good things we want to come out of this.”³⁴² She referred to the Navajo belief that people are predestined to experience some problems, but create other problems

³³⁴ Ralph B. Jones, Head, Community Development Department, Memorandum to G. Warren Spaulding, Director, Public Services Division, “Capital Additions, Chapter Houses,” [1961], Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³³⁵ Advisory Committee, Navajo Tribal Council “Resolution of the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council Authorizing Construction of Certain Chapter Houses on the Navajo Reservation,” August 8, 1962. The tribal council viewed these construction projects as community improvement self-help efforts, and employment preference was given to qualified local workers. The local wage scale for work specified payment of \$1.30 per hour for common labor and \$2.00 for semi-skilled workmen.

³³⁶ Paul Jones, Chairman, Naval Tribal Council, Work Authorization for Klagetoh Chapter House, August 31, 1962, Navajo Nation Collection, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³³⁷ *Navajo Times*, May 16, 1963.

³³⁸ Jett and Spencer, *Navajo Architecture*, 17.

³³⁹ *Navajo Times*, May 16, 1963.

³⁴⁰ *Navajo Times*, May 16, 1963.

³⁴¹ *Navajo Times*, May 16, 1963.

³⁴² *Navajo Times*, May 16, 1963.

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for themselves. She also discussed the four monsters of the Navajo emergence story, who remained in the world so that people would continue to aspire and develop.³⁴³

Chapter Activities of the Early Years

Completion of the new building added immensely to the chapter's ability to expand its services to the community. In 1964, a letter from Wauneka and other council members reported "the Chapter House is in constant use," but added that "without sufficient water, beneficial programs cannot be carried out."³⁴⁴ The Community Development Department utilized the building for chapter-wide programs focused on citizenship, recreation, education, and health.³⁴⁵ In 1968, the chapter asked the BIA to provide additional telephone facilities in the area. The one and only telephone line in the vicinity was installed at the chapter house and continued to serve the entire Klagetoh community. A request for additional facilities signed by Councilwoman Wauneka indicated the line experienced heavy use, making communication difficult in times of emergencies.³⁴⁶

During the years of Wauneka's service on the Navajo Tribal Council, the chapter house, as the only public building available for community gatherings, housed activities associated with the tribal government, community events, educational programs, health-related services, fundraising, and recreational diversions. An annual event strongly associated with Wauneka was the Mother's Day celebration, which featured lots of cooking by older women of the community. The councilwoman spent the day preparing food alongside the other women and brought rolls of material and other supplies for use in the chapter's sewing program. The chapter house still sponsors a small Mother's Day celebration in Wauneka's honor.³⁴⁷

One of the biggest events of the year was the Christmas party for members, with the councilwoman playing a major role in the planning and proceedings. In his journal, Father Blasé of St. Anne Mission in Klagetoh recorded his attendance at a 1965 Christmas dinner and party at the chapter house, where he was invited to speak about "what Christmas means." He recorded that "Annie Wauneka had the Tribal Band out for the celebrations," and noted that she interpreted for Blasé and did "an excellent job."³⁴⁸ Also noted in the St. Anne Mission journals was a 1969 Christmas party held at the chapter house for about nine hundred people, which included dinner, a traditional dance performance, and bingo.³⁴⁹ Other events the chapter house sponsored with Wauneka's active participation included a spring festival with food, music, speeches, dances, and songs.³⁵⁰ In 1966, the chapter house organized a sale of rugs woven by women members that raised more than \$2,500 to pay utility bills and other expenses of the chapter.³⁵¹

³⁴³ Klagetoh Chapter House, "Dedication Program," May 12, 1963, Chapters: Klagetoh, NNGDC. Local women butchered fifteen head of sheep, and community worker William Morgan, Sr. reported that "some of the women worked in the new chapter house kitchen well into the night making cakes and native corn mush for the next day." Following the dedication ceremony, the chapter provided food for all in attendance, including roasted mutton, mutton stew, fry bread, corn mush, vegetable salad, cakes, and coffee. In the afternoon, Chinle Boarding School students performed several traditional dances in front of the new chapter house.

³⁴⁴ Annie Wauneka to Samuel W. Billison, Director of Public Services Division, May 26, 1964, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³⁴⁵ Young, *Navajo Yearbook 1951-1961*, 335.

³⁴⁶ Klagetoh Chapter, "Proposed Resolution Requesting the Bureau of Indian Affairs to Provide Additional Telephone Facilities in the Area of the Klagetoh Chapter of the Navajo Tribe," March 16, 1968, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³⁴⁷ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse, Interview, December 14, 2016.

³⁴⁸ St. Anne Mission (Klagetoh) House Chronicle, December 29, 1965, 123. The House Chronicle consists of a journal kept by the Franciscan brothers at Klagetoh.

³⁴⁹ St. Anne Mission (Klagetoh) House Chronicle, December 31, 1969, 154.

³⁵⁰ William Morgan, Sr., Memorandum to Andrew Pete, Acting Head, Community Development Department, Klagetoh Spring Festival, May 15, 1964, Chapters: Klagetoh, Correspondence, NNGDC.

³⁵¹ *Navajo Times* (Window Rock), March 17, 1966, 12.

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In 1974, California journalist Joey Ham traveled to Klagetoh hoping to attend a meeting of the chapter and observe the famous Annie Dodge Wauneka. Ham wrote of the councilwoman in a subsequent column: “Annie Wauneka . . . was a tall, stately woman dressed in a handsome version of the traditional Navajo costume.” Although the councilwoman was busy with chapter business when Ham arrived, the reporter described her warm manner. A woman in the audience, identified by the reporter as “of a leading Navajo family,” commented that “only Annie Wauneka could dictate exactly how she wanted a new chapter house to be built.”³⁵²

Klagetoh Chapter House After Wauneka

Klagetoh is one of 110 chapters across the Navajo reservation today. As LaVerne Joe reports, the chapter house is the scene of activity all week long.³⁵³ The building continues to house bimonthly meetings of its members attended by the council delegate, as well as other gatherings to discuss local issues. It serves as a voting site, contains the offices of the chapter’s staff, and is a location for meetings of community organizations. The building hosts health clinics; education, housing, and employment programs; activities for seniors; and food distributions.³⁵⁴ The chapter house also sponsors social events for the community, including a New Year’s Eve celebration that began during Wauneka’s era, which features revelers playing the traditional Navajo Shoe Game and everyone yelling at the stroke of midnight.³⁵⁵ Other holiday parties, bingo games, and wedding and funeral receptions are held frequently. The chapter house also serves as a location for some people to weave, make quilts, and sew clothing.³⁵⁶

COMPARABLE CONTEXT

Within the Navajo Nation no other woman elected to political office has achieved a level of national significance and influence comparable to Annie Dodge Wauneka. American Studies Professor Jennifer Nez Denetdale deems Wauneka “the most prominent woman council delegate,” while noting that other women have served on the council and at the chapter level. No Navajo woman has yet become tribal president, although two have run, one in 1986 and 1990 and the other in 1998.³⁵⁷

Within the universe of all Native American tribes, few women have achieved the broad national prominence of Wauneka, a pioneering political leader with a lengthy career in public service who brought beneficial change to myriad sectors of Navajo and Native American life, especially through her work in improving Indian health. Wauneka’s efforts to better her people’s lives through almost three decades of work brought recognition at the national level seldom matched by other women during her own or other eras. The following Native American leaders, discussed in chronological order, are considered potentially comparable to Wauneka. Only two, Susan LaFlesche Picotte and Eliza Burton Conley, are associated with currently designated NHLs. The relatively small number of Native American women leaders whose significance rises to a level for comparison with Wauneka underscores the high level of her national importance and achievements.³⁵⁸

³⁵² *Chula Vista* (California) *Star-News*, October 10, 1974, 31.

³⁵³ La Verne Joe, Klagetoh Chapter Vice President, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 12, 2016.

³⁵⁴ Joe, Interview, December 12, 2016.

³⁵⁵ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse and Darwyn W. Lowery, Interview, December 14, 2016.

³⁵⁶ Chee, Interview, December 12, 2016.

³⁵⁷ Jennifer Nez Denetdale, “Chairman, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 21 (Spring 2006): 15 and 25. In 2017 only one woman served on the twenty-four-person Tribal Council.

³⁵⁸ This nomination was submitted and approved prior to Debra Anne Haaland’s appointment as the 54th U.S. Secretary of the Interior in March 2021. Haaland is an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo and served as the U.S. representative from New Mexico’s First Congressional District from 2019 to 2021. Haaland is the first Native American to hold the position of Secretary of the Interior, despite the department’s longtime association with American Indian affairs.

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Susan LaFlesche Picotte. Susan LaFlesche Picotte (1865-1915), the first Native American woman physician, worked in the first Office of Indian Affairs as a doctor.³⁵⁹ She was born on the Omaha reservation in eastern Nebraska; both of her parents were of half-white and half-Omaha descent. After graduating from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1889, Picotte received appointment as the government physician at the Omaha Agency Indian School to care for school children as well as residents of the reservation. She served as chairperson of the State Health Committee of the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs, which Professor Valerie Sherer Mathes found "involved [her] politically in the effort to get health-related bills through the Nebraska legislature. She also took the lead in bringing about several health-specific reforms, such as the campaign against tuberculosis, the house fly, and the common drinking cup."³⁶⁰ Picotte also was instrumental in getting a hospital built in the reservation town of Walthill in 1913.³⁶¹ She fiercely campaigned against alcohol as a local leader in the Temperance movement, served as a letter writer and interpreter for tribal members, and advocated for tribal interests involving land issues. Picotte frequently communicated with the OIA in Washington, DC, and in 1910 served as a tribal delegate to a meeting with the Secretary of the Interior in Washington concerning land allotment problems.

Although Susan LaFlesche Picotte, the first Native American woman physician, did not serve in elective office, she is comparable to Wauneka as her medical practice and advocacy included public health activities similar to those developed and supported by the Navajo leader: improving the health of her fellow tribal members and addressing social and political issues. Her active life spanned twenty-six years but occurred several decades prior to Wauneka and several other Native American women who became leaders. The 1913 Picotte Memorial Hospital in Walthill, Nebraska, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993 for its association with Susan LaFlesche Picotte. The NHL website notes that "although Dr. Picotte's tenure at the hospital was brief—she died two years after it was opened—the hospital is significant because of its association with Picotte, who pioneered in providing health care for American Indians."³⁶²

Eliza Burton Conley. Eliza Burton Conley (1869-1946), a member of the Wyandot tribe, graduated from the Kansas City School of Law in 1902 and practiced law in the Kansas City, Kansas, area. Conley and her sisters gained prominence in defending the city's ca. 1843 Wyandotte National Burying Ground, a cemetery set aside by treaty for the burial of Wynadots removed from Ohio. When commercial development threatened to remove the cemetery in the late 1890s and early 1900s, Ms. Conley began a legal battle to defend the burial ground, which resulted in her becoming the first Native American woman to argue a case before the US Supreme Court. Unsuccessful in the courts, Conley and her sisters continued to guard the burial ground which was protected by Congressional legislation in 1916. Conley was buried there and the cemetery was designated an NHL in 2016 for its association with her. Conley's active life preceded that of Wauneka and she was not a tribal political leader, but she did go to Washington, DC to defend Native American land rights.³⁶³

Betty Mae Tiger Jumper. Betty Mae Tiger Jumper (1923-2011) became the first woman elected Chairwoman of the Seminole Tribal Council (1967-71) and has been cited as the first woman to hold the top leadership position

³⁵⁹ Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte: The Reformed and the Reformer," 61, in *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Native American Leaders*, L.G. Moses and Raymond Wilson, eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985).

³⁶⁰ Mathes, "Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte," 74.

³⁶¹ Rife and Dellapenna, Jr., *Caring and Curing*, 4.

³⁶² Picotte Memorial Hospital, National American Indian Heritage Month feature, 2001, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/indian/2001/picotte.htm>.

³⁶³ Wyandotte National Burying Ground (Eliza Burton Conley Burial Site), Kansas City, Kansas, NRIS number 100000794, National Register of Historic Places, 1971, National Historic Landmark 2016; Lyda Conley: Wyandot Guardian and Lawyer, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Kansas.

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in any tribe. Born near Indiantown, Florida, to a Seminole mother and white father, she attended a day school locally before continuing her education at an Indian boarding school in North Carolina. She received training as a nurse at the Kiowa Indian Hospital in Oklahoma. Returning to Florida, Tiger Jumper helped establish the tribal health program on the reservation. The Seminole people organized a formal tribal government in 1957, and she was elected to the first Tribal Council. She joined the Board of Directors in 1959 before her election as Tribal Council chairperson. Liz Sonneborn included Tiger Jumper in a book of biographical summaries of Native American women, indicating the Seminole leader focused on “improving the tribe’s economy, housing, medical, and educational facilities” and was instrumental in founding the United South and Eastern Tribes, an organization joining the Seminole, Cherokee, Choctaw, and other southeastern tribes. She was one of only two women appointed by President Richard Nixon to the National Conference on Indian Opportunity in 1970.³⁶⁴ After serving one term as chair of the council, Tiger Jumper retired from politics, became the tribe’s director of communications, and founded the tribal newspaper. Sonneborn reports Tiger Jumper “lectured widely about Seminole history and culture and has toured nationally as a story teller.”³⁶⁵ The former Seminole tribal chairperson received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native American Journalists Association and the Folklife Heritage Award from the Florida Department of State, as well as induction into the Florida Women’s Hall of Fame.

Betty Mae Tiger Jumper’s productive life overlaps with the latter part of Wauneka’s career, and she is cited as the first woman elected as chairwoman of a tribal council. Tiger Jumper is unquestionably a significant figure in the political history of the Seminole people. She trained as a nurse and, like Wauneka, helped establish a tribal health program. In comparison to Wauneka her formal political tenure was relatively short, and she did not receive as much widespread recognition. Her post-chairmanship activities in journalism and preservation of Seminole folklore appear to be important, and her role in the creation of the United South and Eastern Tribes may bolster her potential for national significance.

Maria Pearson. Maria D. “Running Moccasins” Pearson (1932-2003) has been called the “Rosa Parks” and “founding mother” of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).³⁶⁶ Pearson was a recognized tribal elder among the Yankton Sioux, but unlike Wauneka, never held formal tribal office. Born in South Dakota, she lived in Iowa most of her adult life. Learning that Native American remains uncovered during highway construction in 1971 were being treated differently than white remains (i.e., sent to the State Archaeologist for study rather than reburied), she protested to the governor of Iowa. The state subsequently passed the Iowa Burials Protection Act in 1976, the first legislation protecting Native American remains. Pearson and others subsequently lobbied for passage of a federal law safeguarding remains and associated artifacts enacted in 1990. She was also active on other issues, including “alcoholism and substance abuse, juvenile justice, education and environmental conservation,” according to an obituary.³⁶⁷ Pearson served as an advisor on Native American issues to Iowa governors and received the Iowa Woman of Achievement award.

Pearson’s productive life spanned ca. 1971-90, overlapping the later part of Wauneka’s years on the Tribal Council. Pearson played a leadership role on the issue of Native American remains, a question of particular importance and sensitivity to indigenous people in the latter decades of the twentieth century. She cannot be compared to Wauneka in terms of holding public office or work in bettering Native American health. Research documenting Pearson’s specific contribution to the passage of NAGPRA would be needed to assess her potential national significance.

³⁶⁴ Liz Sonneborn, *A to Z of American Indian Women*, rev. ed. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 104).

³⁶⁵ Sonneborn, *A to Z of American Indian Women*, 104.

³⁶⁶ “Maria Pearson,” Ames Historical Society, Ames, Iowa, www.ameshistory.org.

³⁶⁷ “Obituary for Maria ‘Running Moccasins’ Pearson,” www.nativeweb.com, 2003.

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Wilma Mankiller. Wilma Mankiller (1945-2010) became the first woman elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, serving from 1985 to 1995. Born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to a Cherokee father and a white mother, Mankiller moved with her family to San Francisco in 1956 under a Bureau of Indian Affairs relocation program. She became involved in community organizing at the San Francisco Indian Center and founded the Native American Youth Center in Oakland.³⁶⁸ Returning to the reservation in the mid-1970s, she worked as an economic stimulus coordinator. After surviving a devastating automobile accident and a serious illness, Mankiller founded the Cherokee National Community Development Department and received praise for rebuilding the community of Bell, Oklahoma. In 1983, she was elected deputy chief of the tribe, running with Principal Chief Ross Swimmer. Following Swimmer's resignation in 1985, Mankiller became principal chief and won reelection in 1987 and 1991. Her budgetary spending priorities included health care and job training programs; she expanded tribal revenues and tribal enrollment. At Mankiller's suggestion, in 1994 President Bill Clinton convened a meeting of all tribal leaders in Washington, D.C., and she served as moderator. Poor health prevented her from seeking another term as principal chief in 1995, but she continued to lecture on "the need for solutions to the social and economic problems in American Indian communities," according to Sonneborn.³⁶⁹ Wilma Mankiller received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

Mankiller is nationally significant as the first woman to serve as a leader of the most populous Native American nation; she received widespread recognition for her accomplishments, including a Presidential Medal of Freedom. However, her active political life (1983-95) began a decade after Wauneka's political career ended and did not extend as long. She was not directly involved in the development of a Native American public health program, which was a major achievement of Wauneka's career. Like Wauneka, Mankiller possesses national significance as one of the most prominent and powerful Native American political leaders of the twentieth century and, like Wauneka, she inspired other women to achieve similar positions. At the time of Mankiller's death in 2011, past Yurok tribe Chairman Susan Masten remarked: "She was the first to step forward, although that's vastly changed in last 20 years. Many [women] are now heads of their tribes because of her. She helped create the aspiration of other women who maybe wouldn't have thought to run for office."³⁷⁰

Comparable Properties Associated with Wauneka

In 2014 National Park Service staff identified and examined properties associated with Annie Dodge Wauneka during a visit to the Navajo Nation. The list of properties for potential designation was further refined in 2016 during discussions with Wauneka's family members and with Klagetoh Chapter members and others who knew her, as well as field examination, and archival research.³⁷¹ Klagetoh Chapter House was identified as the most appropriate property for NHL designation based upon its close and lengthy association with Wauneka's productive life and in consideration of its appropriateness within Navajo cultural values. The chapter house is located within the political constituency she served for twenty-eight years, where she held chapter positions, and where she honed her political skills. The building reflects her insistence that the chapter's design preferences and traditions be acknowledged. From the completion of the chapter house in 1963 to the time she left office in 1979, Wauneka attended chapter meetings, reported to her constituents, and performed services such as addressing the questions and concerns of constituents in the building. She also attended social events, informational meetings, and political rallies there. The chapter house has always served as a community center and seat of decision-making, welcoming and accessible to all local tribal members. Of the potential properties

³⁶⁸ Sonneborn, *A to Z of American Indian Women*, 144-45; *New York Times*, April 6, 2010. The name Mankiller comes from a Cherokee military rank.

³⁶⁹ Sonneborn, *A to Z of American Indian Women*, 146.

³⁷⁰ *Washington Post*, 7 April 2010. The Cherokee Nation includes nearly a quarter million members.

³⁷¹ Christine Whitacre and Shirl Kasper, Annie Wauneka, "Evaluation of Associated Properties for Potential NHL Designation," trip report, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Office, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado, 2014.

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associated with Wauneka, Klagetoh Chapter House best reflects the Navajo concept of emphasizing an individual's connection with the community and is the building her family feels is most appropriate for designation; they indicate their preference is to recognize Klagetoh Chapter House because it is a property associated with Wauneka's long and distinguished public service within her community.

All of the properties discussed below are located within the Navajo Nation in Arizona.³⁷² There are no properties outside the Navajo Nation closely associated with Wauneka's national significance.

Tanner Springs Log House Complex, Wide Ruins vicinity, Arizona. Soon after their marriage in 1929, Wauneka and her husband George moved into this 1891 log house on a ranch operated by her father, Henry Chee Dodge. The property lies in a remote location eight miles west of US 191 and includes a frame barn and other outbuildings. The Waunekas managed the ranch for Dodge until his death in 1947 and then continued to operate the ranch with their children, raising sheep and cattle. Wauneka lived here when she was first elected to the Navajo Tribal Council, for the first fifteen years of her political career, and while she did much work to combat tuberculosis and in other ways improve the health and well-being of her people. The complex is still owned and operated by Wauneka's descendants as a working ranch.

While Wauneka lived on the ranch during much of her productive life, the property served as a residence and ranch for her and her family. The property did not play a major role in Wauneka's public life, although her constituents sometimes consulted her at her home. Additionally, Wauneka's descendants believe designation of the property would unduly honor her family ties over tribal and community associations.

Klagetoh House, Klagetoh, Arizona. Wauneka lived in a stone house in Klagetoh from ca. 1966 to 1993. The house previously had served as the principal's residence within the multi-building Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school and was turned over to the community when the school closed.

The stone house served as Wauneka's residence during the last years of her productive life on the Tribal Council (ca. 1966-79) but did not house public or tribal functions. It is not associated with her entire public life nor does it embody the Navajo concept of recognition of a community rather than an individual. Its integrity is also not high, as the house has stood vacant for many years and is missing windows, doors, and other building elements and has experienced vandalism and graffiti.

Henry Chee Dodge House, Sonsela Buttes, Crystal vicinity, Arizona. Wauneka's father, Henry Chee Dodge, built this house between 1899 and 1903. Dodge brought her as a baby to reside with him and she remained until leaving for boarding school in 1918, returning during summers and for a short period before her marriage.

Wauneka spent most of her early childhood here. The house is not associated with her adult life, during which she served on the Navajo Tribal Council and achieved national significance. The building is forty-eight miles from the constituency she represented and situated on a remote ranch. The house is more closely associated with Wauneka's father, Henry Chee Dodge, also an important Navajo leader.

Navajo Nation Tribal Council Chambers, Window Rock, Arizona. Wauneka attended Navajo Tribal Council meetings in this building throughout her career as a councilperson, from her election in 1951 to 1979. An important part of her political life took place within this building, where she discussed legislation, debated issues, and met other delegates and federal and state officials.

³⁷² The Fort Defiance Hospital, where Wauneka studied tuberculosis and its treatment for three months and attended meetings and met with patients there during the remainder of her public service, was demolished in 2016.

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The Council Chambers was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2004. Within the Navajo Nation the Council Chambers is analogous to the U.S. Capitol. The building is broadly associated with all Tribal Council delegates and Navajo political leaders over the years, whereas Klagetoh Chapter House was built with Wauneka's direct involvement and is more closely associated with her significant work for the people she served.

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6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Ownership of Property

Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Boundary of Property:

Contributing

Buildings: 1
Sites: 0
Structures: 0
Objects: 0
Total: 1

Noncontributing

Buildings: 0
Sites: 1
Structures: 1
Objects: 2
Total: 4

PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY

(Please see specific guidance for type of resource[s] being nominated)

LOCATION AND SETTING

The Navajo Nation today occupies 27,425 square miles located mostly in northeastern Arizona, but including parts of northwestern New Mexico and a small portion of southeastern Utah. The reservation occupies the most extensive Native American land area within the United States, larger than the states of West Virginia and Delaware combined.³⁷³ Klagetoh Chapter House stands in the small rural community of Klagetoh (Leegito) within the Navajo Nation in Apache County, Arizona, and is part of the Fort Defiance Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. An ancient place of habitation, Klagetoh once contained a sizable Anasazi settlement. As local resident and medicine man Franklin Begay observed, “Everywhere you see a mound, there’s probably a ruin under it.”³⁷⁴ Klagetoh, at 6,424 feet in elevation, is about twenty-nine miles west-southwest of Window Rock, the Navajo capital and seat of the Navajo Tribal Council Chamber (designated an NHL in 2004), and forty-four miles west of Gallup, New Mexico. A profile of the chapter house describes Klagetoh as “located within a small basin which slopes west from a large wash. It also includes a portion of the mountainous plateau that forms the basin. . . . The chapter is characterized by intersperses of grasslands, sagebrush, pinyon-juniper trees and rolling hills. A perennial spring is located within four miles of the present chapter house. It has been used to obtain water since the first inhabitants came to the area.”³⁷⁵ Sedimentary rock, abundant in the Klagetoh area, became an important traditional building material for the community.

³⁷³ Navajo Division of Health and Navajo Epidemiology Center, *Navajo Population Profile 2010 US Census* (Window Rock, Arizona, Navajo Nation: Navajo Division of Health and Navajo Epidemiology Center, December 2013), 4. Ten states are smaller in area than the Navajo Nation.

³⁷⁴ Franklin Begay quoted in “Annie and the Anasazi,” Chapter Series, *Navajo Times* (Window Rock, Arizona), June 27, 2013.

³⁷⁵ Chapter Profiles Notebook: Klagetoh, undated, document, A5K6 80, Navajo Nation Library, Window Rock, Arizona.

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The 2010 US Census recorded a population of 242 in unincorporated Klagetoh, while the chapter house draws its current membership of about 909 from its surrounding area of approximately 237 square miles.³⁷⁶ The chapter house occupies a slightly elevated site south of much of the developed Klagetoh community and is situated on the west side of US Highway 191 (milepost 397), fifteen miles south of the larger community of Ganado and twenty-two miles north of Chambers, Arizona, on Interstate 40. The site of Klagetoh Chapter House was chosen by the members for its easily accessed location and nearness to a then-extant older chapter house (demolished), a trading post (demolished), and the water well.³⁷⁷

The nominated area includes one contributing building, the chapter house, and four noncontributing resources in the landscaped courtyard in front of the building: the courtyard site, a low stone wall (structure), flagpole (object), and pergola (object). Toby Roanhorse, an Arizona State University landscape architecture student, created a design for the courtyard, retaining an existing stone wall, flagpole, and central concrete sidewalk. In July 2016 the chapter's summer youth employment students installed the plantings and other elements of the plan, including narrow leaf yucca, yarrow, piñon and fruit trees, sage, decorative grass, day lilies and daisies, gravel and rocks, stone and timber borders, a wood pergola, and paths. The area is designated the "Klagetoh Veteran's Courtyard" and dedicated to Code Talkers and Native Warriors. A row of trees shelters the building on the southeast, and paved parking is located to the northeast and southeast.

The stone wall and flagpole within the courtyard are assessed as noncontributing since their dates of construction could not be determined. No historic photos of the Klagetoh Chapter House could be located through inquiries to Arizona and New Mexico repositories, Navajo tribal departments, the Navajo National Museum, Wauneka descendants, and others. The *Navajo Times* carried photos of the 1963 dedication showing part of the interior but no exterior photos. The chapter house records are stored off-site in a storage trailer and are not accessible. The stonework in the wall employs the same stone as the chapter house but the mortaring (especially on the piers) appears somewhat different. The flagpole and stone wall appear to be shown in a 1992 Google Earth aerial photo of the site, but their construction within the 1963-79 period of national significance could not be documented.

PRESENT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior

The 1963 Klagetoh Chapter House is a square (approximately 75' x 75') building incorporating several elements reflecting traditional Navajo design. The northwest and southeast walls and the large chimney are composed of native sandstone quarried into rock-faced blocks of varied dimension, hauled to the site, and laid in random ashlar construction with recessed joints by skilled chapter house members and other local workers.³⁷⁸ As discussed above, the chapter members led by Annie Dodge Wauneka rejected the Navajo Tribal Council's decision to economize on construction by banning the use of stone for 1960s chapter houses. Klagetoh members were unanimous in the belief that indigenous stone was an important architectural element that would connect them with their heritage (the previous chapter house was stone) and result in the appearance they preferred. Acceding to the desires of the chapter and its persistent longtime councilwoman, the Navajo Tribal Council and governmental departments made an exception in Klagetoh's case.

³⁷⁶ Klagetoh Chapter House staff, Telephone Interview by Thomas H. Simmons, July 25, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, "Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics," 2010.

³⁷⁷ The Public Services Department specifications for new chapter houses included requirements for a nearby well and an inhabited building where custodial services might be obtained.

³⁷⁸ The building is not aligned with cardinal directions; instead, its walls face northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast.

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With input from chapter members, the Design and Construction Department led by Robert Krause planned a building that evoked the appearance of a hogan, a traditional dwelling style found throughout the Navajo Nation. An element conveying the style employed in Klagetoh Chapter House's design is the main entry facing toward the rising sun.³⁷⁹ In addition, the windows are small, and two walls are un-fenestrated. The lower portion of the roof is hipped, with a shallow pitch and widely overhanging eaves with exposed, tapered wood beams. The remainder of the roof is pyramidal, crowned by a central cupola.³⁸⁰ The roof and cupola are clad with standing seam metal roofing.

The front (northeast) and the southwest walls display vertical tongue and groove boards painted yellow and terminated at the corners by the projecting masonry walls of the northwest and southeast sides of the building.³⁸¹ Fenestration is elaborated by red-painted projecting boards framing the openings and by red window frames. The main entry at the east end of the façade contains flush, windowless, metal double doors facing a concrete-paved entrance area. West of the main entrance are three short two-part sliding sash windows with security grilles: one toward the east and two toward the west. The building name, Klagetoh Chapter House, in raised wood letters is placed on the blank wall between the one east and two west windows. An entry at the west end of the facade contains a single flush metal door.

The northwest masonry wall is un-fenestrated and rests atop a foundation of slightly tinted poured concrete. The central portion of the wall has a band of wood paneling along the top. A large cylindrical metal tank rests near the wall. The rear (southwest) wall is inset and displays a single six-panel wood door toward the west end. An inset bay containing an entry with double flush metal doors is at the east end of the wall. There are two enframed blank sections of wall (one near the west door and one near the east door). A concrete sidewalk extends along the wall between the projecting masonry end walls. The southeast masonry wall is un-fenestrated and has a large, central, projecting, rectangular sandstone chimney back, which has a tall stone chimney stalk with a stone cap.

Interior

The interior of the chapter house includes an entrance vestibule leading from the main doors to a very large open meeting room extending almost the full length of the building. As in traditional Navajo homes, the hearth or fireplace is a focal point of the design of the chapter house.³⁸² It is also a practical source of warmth during cold weather when the chapter house heating system is unreliable.³⁸³ The masonry southeast wall features a large, almost full-height sandstone fireplace with a large rectangular firebox and a quarry tile hearth. Trophies are on display on the fireplace mantelshelf. Two central stones above the hearth were carved with open-mouthed creatures resembling snakes, which caused concern because some members believed they were bad luck. The community wanted the carvings removed and efforts to do so effectively obscured them.³⁸⁴ The original ceiling above the fireplace end of the building is composed of dark brown-stained tongue and groove boards and projecting wood beams.

³⁷⁹ Jett and Spencer, *Navajo Architecture*, 17-19. Jett and Spencer report: "Eighteenth century hogans most frequently had northeast orientation, easterly was also common." The authors found that hogans share certain characteristics but also vary in form.

³⁸⁰ Jett and Shepard noted cupolas replaced smoke holes or were eliminated in modern hogans.

³⁸¹ The walls previously were painted white.

³⁸² Jett and Spencer indicate hearths were usually placed at the center of a hogan under a smoke hole in the roof or "rarely, against a wall."

³⁸³ Former Chapter President Nancy Chee points out that originally the building only had two wall heaters and the fireplace.

³⁸⁴ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse and Darwyn W. Lowery, Interviews, December 14, 2016; Chee Interview, December 12, 2016; *AZCentral*, "Navajo Zoo Cuts Snake Exhibit Over Tribal Beliefs," June 12, 2015, www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2015/06/12/navajo-snakes-beliefs-eliminate-zoo-exhibit/71149118/. In 2015 the Navajo Nation Zoo removed an exhibit of snakes because of the traditional belief that watching snakes could be unhealthy for mind and body.

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The floor of the meeting room is covered with white linoleum flooring. The ceiling in the middle of the room is a drop ceiling composed of panels, vents, and lights. At the other end of the room opposite the fireplace is a raised rostrum featuring stairs flanking a shared desk that serves as a podium/speaker's stand where chapter officials conduct meetings. The outside wall of the desk facing the audience is slightly concave and ornamented with Native American designs and the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation. The rear and side walls of the rostrum area display photographs of tribal leaders and community members, including Annie Dodge Wauneka, as well as a framed woven wool rug with the words "Klagetoh Chapter," made by chapter member Louise Etsitte, who is now one hundred years old. The ceiling displays the original stained wood, like that of the fireplace end of the room. Flanking the rostrum are closets. Along the southwest wall are spaces containing restrooms, a kitchen, and a storage room. Along the northeast wall is an enclosed area for the chapter offices; a portion of the original ceiling remains in the office area. The walls of the smaller rooms flanking the large open meeting room are clad with wood paneling.

HISTORIC PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Klagetoh Chapter House exterior displays a high level of historic physical integrity dating from its period of significance (1963-1979). When completed in 1963 the one-story, stone and wood building drew its inspiration from the traditional hogans that dotted the community. As Stephen C. Jett and Virginia E. Spencer, authors of *Navajo Architecture*, observe: "The Navajo's retention of a substantial portion of their non-western culture is reflected in the cultural landscape, particularly by the distinctive Navajo dwelling, the hogan."³⁸⁵ In keeping with this treasured architectural vocabulary, the building presented two walls and a large chimney composed of native sandstone, a main entrance on the northeast facing the sunrise, and a distinctive hipped and pyramidal roof with rolled roofing surmounted by a central projecting cupola/skylight with windows. The stone walls and chimney displayed rock-faced blocks laid in random ashlar construction with recessed joints. The frame walls featured expanses of vertical tongue and groove boards divided by bays of enframed openings. The nomination project found no historic photographs of the building; the precise appearance of the original windows and doors is unknown. The interior accessed by the main entrance included an entrance vestibule leading to a large open room with a massive stone fireplace at one end and a raised stage with a wood podium at the other. The windowed skylight provided illumination at the center of the open room. The ceiling was composed of stained tongue and groove boards and the floor was clad with black and gold tiles. The side walls contained entrances to a kitchen, restrooms, and a laundry facility.

INTEGRITY

Klagetoh Chapter House has functioned as originally envisioned from its completion in 1963 to the present day, serving as a home for the community's governmental, social, recreational, and educational programs. As these programs have matured and evolved with more than fifty-five years of use, some modifications to the building, mainly the interior, were required to improve functionality and meet changing needs. Some alterations are common among the chapter houses of the Navajo Nation from a similar time period, many of which have been heavily modified or replaced. Despite some changes, Klagetoh Chapter House remains largely intact and is an excellent representative of the chapter house revitalization and construction program sponsored by the Navajo Tribal Council during the late 1950s and early 1960s. More importantly, it is recognized for its tangible link to the life of its famous councilwoman, Annie Dodge Wauneka, and the property's essential physical features date to when Wauneka participated in and carried out activities at the Chapter House.

Alterations since the end of Wauneka's public service have not affected the building's essential physical features, which convey its national significance in association with Wauneka. The chapter house originally had

³⁸⁵ Jett and Spencer, *Navajo Architecture*, xv.

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rolled roofing and featured a central cupola/skylight with windows providing light illuminating the center of the large open meeting room. The building now has metal roofing, which also covers the skylight. The original appearance of the façade windows is not known; the current windows are replacements. White linoleum flooring now covers the original floor tile, which consisted of black and gold squares. Portions of the original ceiling of stained tongue and groove wood are hidden by a drop ceiling consisting of panels of ceiling tiles, lights, and vents.³⁸⁶ Closets were added on either side of the long rostrum desk, which was rebuilt in a curving shape. An original laundry area was converted into staff offices. The northeast and southwest walls of the large main room were wallboard; they are now covered with wood paneling.³⁸⁷ These alterations occurred in 1992.³⁸⁸ A courtyard enclosed by a low stone wall in front of the building included a flagpole and sidewalks before it was redesigned in 2016 with new plantings and other features, as described above.

Location. The chapter house retains the highest level of integrity of location, remaining on the original site chosen by its members in conformance with requirements established by the Navajo Tribal Council and its Community Services Department, including being near a water well and other inhabited buildings.

Design. The design of the chapter house displays a high level of integrity reflecting its historic appearance as conceived in collaboration between the chapter members and the Navajo Design and Construction Division and its head, Robert Krause. The process of its design is an integral part of the building's history, as the chapter house members, led by Annie Dodge Wauneka, demanded that it incorporate traditional features conveying a familiar, yet distinctive appearance. The building pays tribute to other Navajo architecture, such as the hogans found throughout the reservation and the acclaimed 1935 Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock. It retains its original form, massing, scale, and construction methods. The interior design, with its large open room and an elevated podium at one end, still reflects its function as the place in her constituency used by Wauneka to report and discuss important issues in a manner influenced by traditional Navajo customs. The principal modification to the exterior design is the installation of metal roofing, including covering the central cupola/skylight. On the exterior the form of the cupola is still expressed, linking the building to traditional Navajo design and maintaining its ability to convey its national significance.

Setting. Within the nominated area, the chapter house courtyard was redesigned in 2016 to enhance and activate the landscape immediately in front of the building and create an area honoring Navajo military veterans without negatively impacting the integrity of the building or the broader landscape. Surrounding the proposed NHL, the buildings associated with original or expanded chapter programs are present, including a post-1963 barn built of logs obtained from the mountains by local people at the direction of Wauneka. There is also a stone building originally utilized for women's weaving. Two metal Butler buildings previously on the school grounds were relocated to the site about 1996.³⁸⁹ Three buildings south of the chapter house are utilized for educational purposes. Despite these additions, the setting surrounding the chapter house evokes the original setting, as required by the Community Services Department, of building chapter houses near an already established settlement. Klagetoh retains its historic low density of development and rural character, qualities present during the period of significance and which were familiar to Wauneka and her contemporaries.

Materials. A high level of integrity of original materials is seen in the building's tongue and groove wood northeast and southwest elevations and un-fenestrated stone masonry walls on the northwest and southeast

³⁸⁶ Nancy Chee, former Chapter President, indicates the cupola/skylight never worked as intended.

³⁸⁷ Nancy Chee and Maggie Roanhorse, Klagetoh Chapter House, Interview by R. Laurie Simmons and Marilyn A. Martorano, December 13, 2016. Members of the chapter house staff believe the original walls were sheetrock.

³⁸⁸ Larry Rodgers, comp., *Chapter Images: 1996 Edition* (Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Nation, Summer 1997), 12.

³⁸⁹ Irma Wauneka Bluehouse and Darwyn W. Lowery, Interviews, December 14, 2016.

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elevations. Integrity of materials is also found in the stone walls and fireplace of the interior, as well as the displays of portions of the original wood ceiling. Metal roofing and replacement metal frame windows added in 1992 do not affect the property's ability to convey its national significance.

Workmanship. Klagetoh Chapter House displays a high level of integrity of workmanship, seen in the masonry construction of exterior walls employing sandstone blocks quarried in the area, hauled to the site, and laid in random ashlar masonry by chapter members and other Navajo workers. Each piece of stone reflects facing completed by an individual craftsman. Securing the stone, convincing the tribal government to create a design utilizing it, and placement of the stone by the area's skilled masons is a significant aspect of the building's history tied to the area's architectural heritage. The high level of workmanship is also seen in the tongue-and-groove wood on walls and ceilings, the hipped and pyramidal roof with a central cupola, and the massive chimney and fireplace.

Feeling. Klagetoh Chapter House maintains high integrity of feeling as a place of community gatherings and local decision-making. With its ornamentation confined to the beauty of its stone and wood elements and its distinctive roof, the building is readily identifiable as a chapter house, conveying strength and dignity conducive to a place where important decisions are made. It retains its sense of place and use from the period when Councilwoman Wauneka was active in the Navajo Nation Tribal Council. The interior with its massive stone fireplace, large open meeting room, elevated podium with photographs of Navajo leaders, and small accessory rooms, clearly continues to express the chapter house's history and purposes.

Association. The chapter house retains the highest level of integrity of association with Annie Dodge Wauneka, who influenced the design and construction of the building where she worked throughout her political career and whose people she represented for almost three decades. Wauneka was ever-present at the chapter house to participate in countless meetings, ceremonies, celebrations, conferences, and other occasions that benefited from the attendance of the chapter's celebrated Navajo Tribal Council member. The building houses the essential functions established during Wauneka's lifetime and remains as a direct link to a dynamic era of Navajo history when the chapter houses were reinvigorated and received tribal funds and support for new and improved facilities and programs. The building retains a strong and substantial association with Wauneka in her role as a leader in the Navajo Nation and her efforts to improve Native American lives.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)
[X] Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in only 4, 5, and 6 below)

- 1. NR #:
2. Date of listing:
3. Level of significance:
4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B_X_ C__ D__
5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G_X_
6. Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage: Native American; Health/Medicine; Politics/Government; Social History

- Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:
Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:
Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No.
Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.
Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

Location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office:
Other State Agency:
Federal Agency:
Local Government:
University:
Other (Specify Repository): Navajo Nation Library and Museum, Window Rock, Arizona

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Figures Log

Klagetoh Chapter House Location Map

Klagetoh Chapter House Sketch Map

Klagetoh Chapter House Floorplan

Figure 1. The location of the Klagetoh Chapter House (diamond indicated by arrow) is shown on this map of the Navajo Nation. Base map courtesy of Navajo Nation, Division of Economic Development, www.navajobusiness.com.

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Figure 3. Annie Dodge and George Wauneka were wed in a traditional Navajo ceremony in 1929 by medicine man Mr. Cut Hair (far right). George is reaching for wedding mush from the basket while Annie's father, Chee Dodge, is in the background. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Figure 11. Annie Dodge Wauneka visits a hogan on the Navajo reservation in 1963 during a photo shoot for a planned *Life* magazine profile. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona, Carl Iwasaki, photographer, 11 November 1963.

Figure 12. Annie Dodge Wauneka visits a family inside a hogan on the Navajo reservation in 1963. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona, Carl Iwasaki, photographer, 11 November 1963.

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Figure 17. Annie Dodge Wauneka visits in this late-1960s/early-1970s photograph with her biological mother, Mary Begay Shirley (1885-1972). Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Klagetoh Chapter House Location Map

(Image Date: 13 November 2015)

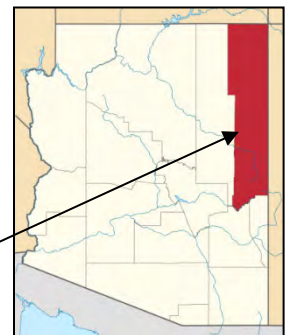


The white rectangle indicates the nominated area.

Point	Latitude:	Longitude:
1	35.499759	-109.530379
2	35.499521	-109.530169
3	35.499272	-109.530597
4	35.499512	-109.530808

Datum: WGS84

Klagetoh
Chapter House
(the area shaded red is
Apache County)



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Klagetoh Chapter House: Sketch Map



 Photo Location and Camera Direction

The white line indicates the nominated area. Numbers in circles are photograph locations with arrows indicating camera direction. Contributing status is indicated by "C" for contributing and "NC" for noncontributing.

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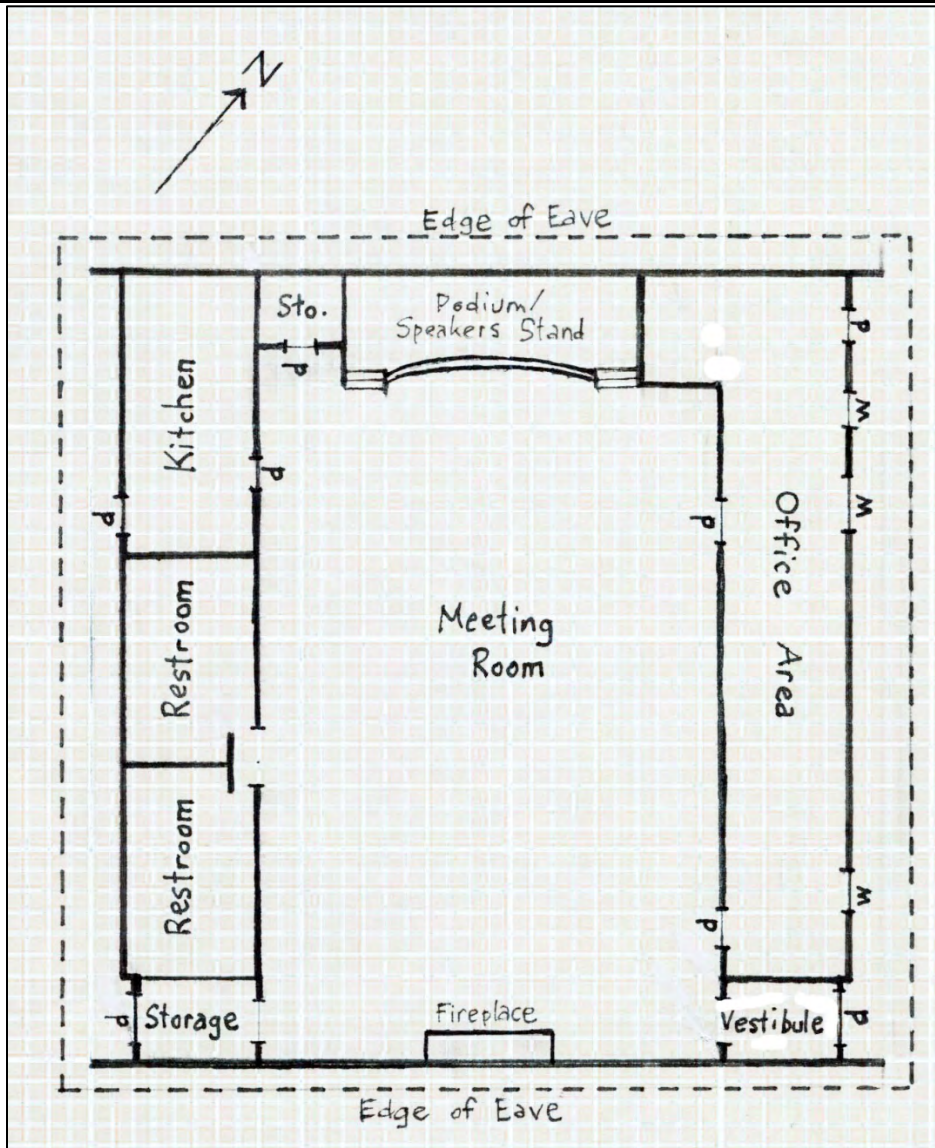
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Klagnetoh Chapter House Floorplan

The drawing is not to scale. The building is approximately 75' on each side at the edge of the eave. A lowercase "d" indicates a door opening; a lower case "w" identifies a window location.

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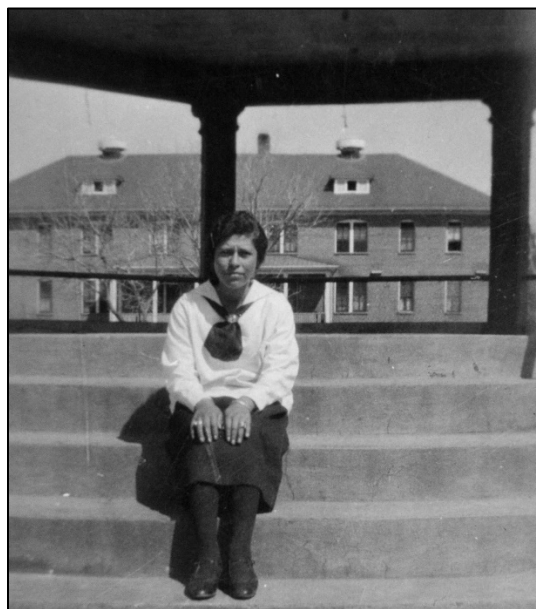


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Figure 3. Annie Dodge and George Wauneka were wed in a traditional Navajo ceremony in 1929 by medicine man Mr. Cut Hair (far right). George is reaching for wedding mush from the basket while Annie's father, Chee Dodge, is in the background. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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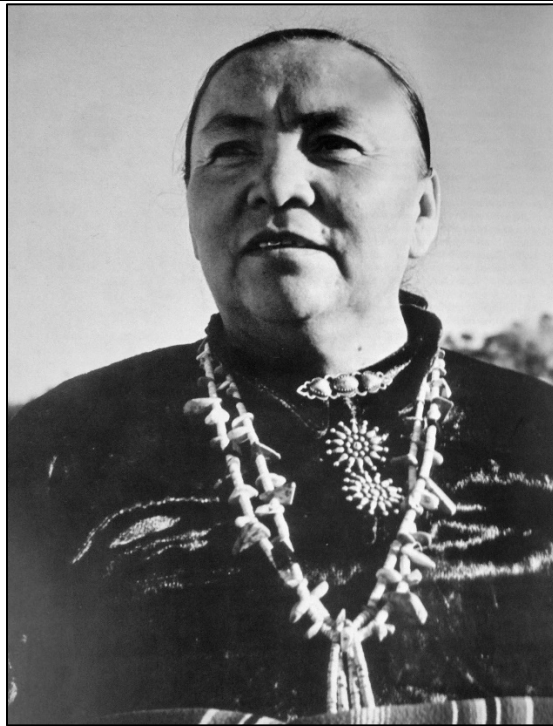


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Figure 5. Taken in March 1951 after the swearing in of the Tribal Council, this view of council chamber shows Annie Dodge Wauneka, near the center of the photograph, where she served as the only woman on the seventy-four-member body. Courtesy of Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, Laura Gilpin, photographer.

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Figure 6. During the 1950s Annie Dodge Wauneka took her campaign to improve Navajo health to the airwaves with weekly broadcasts on KGAK radio in Gallup, New Mexico, sponsored by Pet Milk. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Figure 7. Annie Dodge Wauneka attended the conference of the National Committee on Indian Health in New York in 1957. She is shown here with tribal representatives (left) from the Omaha and Oglala Sioux tribes and two medical members of the Indian Health Committee, Association on Indian Affairs. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Figure 8. Annie Dodge Wauneka and other members of the Navajo Council Health Committee are pictured on a visit to National Jewish Hospital, Denver, Colorado (ca. 1960s). Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Figure 9. A September 1959 frybread contest provided an opportunity for Annie Dodge Wauneka (right) to mingle with her people. Courtesy Cline Library, Special Collection, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona.

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Figure 12. Annie Dodge Wauneka visits a family inside a hogan on the Navajo reservation in 1963. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona, Carl Iwasaki, photographer, 11 November 1963.

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Figure 13. Annie Dodge Wauneka talks with a young patient in a corridor of the Fort Defiance Hospital, Fort Defiance, Arizona. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona, Carl Iwasaki, photographer, 11 November 1963.

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Figure 15. Councilwoman Annie Dodge Wauneka, ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Figure 16. Annie Dodge Wauneka made dozens of trips to Washington, D.C., to testify before Congressional committees on matters of concern to Native Americans. As shown here (ca. 1970s), she always wore traditional Navajo attire. Courtesy of Annie Dodge Wauneka Collection, Irma Bluehouse, Ganado, Arizona.

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Photograph Log

Photo 18. Front and southeast walls. View west.

Photo 2. Front (northeast wall) with Veterans Courtyard in the foreground. View south-southwest.

Photo 3. Southeast wall with front to right. View west-northwest.

Photo 4. Rear (southwest wall). View north.

Photo 5. Northwest wall with rear to right. View east.

Photo 6. Overview of Veterans Courtyard. View west.

Photo 7. Interior of meeting room looking toward the fireplace. View southwest.

Photo 8. Interior of meeting room looking toward the rostrum. View northeast.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

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Photograph 1. Front and southeast walls. View west.



Photograph 2. Front (northeast wall) with Veterans Courtyard in the foreground. View south-southwest.

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Photograph 3. Southeast wall with front to right. View west-northwest.



Photograph 4. Rear (southwest wall). View north.

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Photograph 5. Northwest wall with rear to right. View east.



Photograph 6. Overview of Veterans Courtyard. View west.

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Photograph 7. Interior of meeting room looking toward the fireplace. View southwest.



Photograph 8. Interior of meeting room looking toward the rostrum. View northeast.