

STORYTELLING OBJECTS, NAVAJO (DINE)

OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTS

Repository: Crandall Public Library.
Folklife Center
Glens Falls, NY.

Creator: Sunny Dooley, Window Rock, Arizona

Title: Storytelling Objects, Navajo (Dine)

Dates: 1999 - 2000

Quantity:

Identification: Folk Art

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sunny Dooley is a traditional Dine (Navajo) storyteller. She comes from the Four Corners area of the SW United States, from a community of 2500 cal Chi'CHil Tah (Where the Acorn Oaks Grow), New Mexico. Her grandfather on the mother's side is the Towering House clam, her patrilineal grandfather (Nalii) is the Tes'naa haa biltnii clan, and her father is of the By the Waters' Edge clan. Sunny tells stories of her matrilineal clam, the Saltwater People.

The stories, called Hane', are believed to be a sacred art form. A gift of the Holy People to the Dine', the stories recreate the world each time they are retold. They are a window to the people's worldview. Hane' tell why people, places, and things are the way they are; they share a wisdom and understanding of the past and the present, and a link to the future. Sunny tells the stories in a bilingual format, emphasizing the importance of the Navajo language in retaining the rich culture of her people. For the past ten years she has traveled throughout the United States, the first of her family to interpret these stories for non-Navajo audiences.

Sunny Dooley participated as a traditional artist-in-residence for the Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library's *Navajo Exploration* project, co-hosted by the Hyde Collection Art Museum in the Fall of 1999.

INDEX TERMS

Topics: Storytelling
Navajo (Dine') storytelling
Navajo (Dine') culture

Places: Four Corners, New Mexico/Arizona/Utah/Colorado
Chi'Chil Tah, New Mexico
Window Rock, Arizona
Glens Falls, Warren, New York

Important People: Dooley, Sunny

Form/Genre: realia

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: Storytelling Objects, Navajo (Dine)
Folklife Center
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Accession Information: Purchased from Sunny Dooley by Todd DeGarmo, 2000.

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea, 2019

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS

Ceremonial Basket (Tsa'a') – handwoven coil basket, made of non-poisonous sumac, usually crafted by a Dine' elder, considered sacred and only eaten out of during the Dine' wedding ceremony. Purchased from Mrs. Allen Brown, Ganado, Arizona.

Gourd Dipper (A'daa') – used at home to serve water. Gourds are usually planted and harvested only by the elders in a community, and only men cut the naturally hollow gourds in half. Made by Tom Dooley, Sr., Vanderwagon, New Mexico.

Hair Brush (Be a'zho) – made by Sunny Dooley, from grass harvested in Tsaile, Arizona, in the Fall, when the stems of the grass are strongest. Hair grooming shows kinship and affection and has associated songs and stories. As hair styles have changed, so have these practices.

Pottery (A'saa) – coil clay pot fired once with pine and/or pinon pitch finish to waterproof. Simple decoration around the neck. Ceremonial and decorative use. Anonymous maker, Tuba City, Arizona.

Rock brush (Ts'bay naaizho) – made by Sunny Dooley and used to gather the corn meal ground by the two grinding stones. The type of grass used, harvested in the Fall, will vary from region to region.

Stirring sticks (A'dis stin) – made by Sunny Dooley from the Greasewood Shrub harvested in the Fall. Each stick represents a quality of personal character to be stirred

into the food, such a peace, joy, happiness, love. An unmarried woman has 3 sticks; when she marries 2 more will be added; and for each child another stick will be added.