

**THE HISTORY OF THE STAPLES RUG
A REMARKABLE, OVERSIZED, TWO-FACED NAVAJO WEAVING**

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July 1, 2008

ABSTRACT

The Staples rug is a remarkable, oversized, two-faced Navajo weaving, from the Transition Period, that survives today in the Navajo textile collection at the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) in Flagstaff, Arizona. The rug was woven between 1885 and 1890 at the behest of pioneering trader Juan Lorenzo Hubbell at Hubbell's Trading Post in Ganado, Arizona. C. N. Cotton, himself a noted trader and former Hubbell partner, acquired the rug and used it on the floor of his dining room in Gallup, New Mexico. Later, Cotton sent the rug to his friend and fellow trader Berton Staples to have a hole repaired. For unknown reasons, Staples retained the rug at his trading post in Coolidge, New Mexico, on the floor of his living room, until his death in 1938. Staples friend, archaeologist Winifred Gladwin, acquired the rug after Staples death for partial settlement of incurred debts. The rug was used on the floor of Gladwin's Gila Pueblo headquarters in Globe, Arizona. After dissolution of the Gila Pueblo in 1950, Mrs. Gladwin gifted the Staples rug to the Arizona State Museum (ASM) at the University of Arizona in Tucson. In 1958, following the donation of her valuable textile collection to the MNA, Mrs. Gladwin requested that the Staples rug be transferred to Flagstaff to join the rest of her collection. The ASM agreed to permanently loan the Staples rug to MNA and the rug was transferred on February 17, 1959, where it remains today. The Staples rug was last exhibited at the MNA in 2004.

THE HISTORY OF THE STAPLES RUG

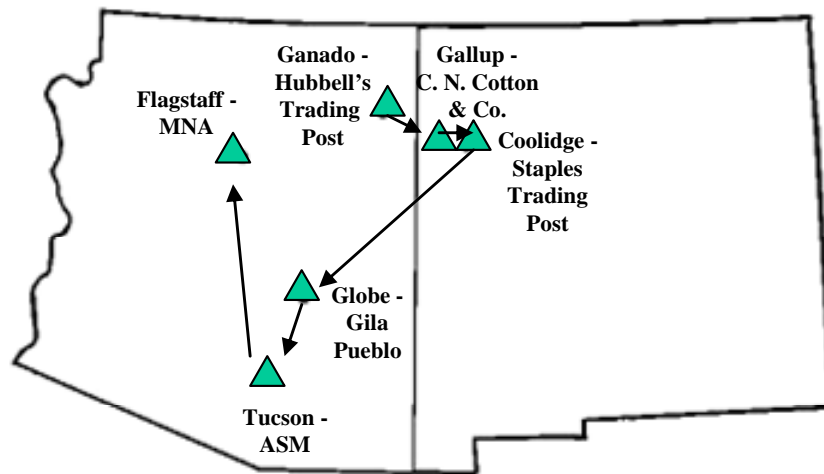
A REMARKABLE, OVERSIZED, TWO-FACED NAVAJO WEAVING

INTRODUCTION

The Staples rug is the earliest known and certainly the oldest surviving two-faced Navajo rug in existence. Given that it is also one of the largest rugs ever woven, the Staples rug is truly a Southwestern textile treasure. Produced between 1885 - 1890, the Staples rug is today part of the Navajo textile collection at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Roadmap of this Paper

For context, this paper first provides a short history of Navajo weaving through the Transition Period and then introduces the Staples rug and how it might have been produced. The paper then traces the 115-year-plus history of the Staples rug, from its probable origin at Hubbell's Trading Post in Ganado, Arizona, through its subsequent ownership by trader and wholesaler C. N. Cotton in Gallup, New Mexico, to trader Berton Staples in Coolidge, New Mexico, to archaeologist/collector Winifred Gladwin in Globe, Arizona, to the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, Arizona, and finally to the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, Arizona.¹



In its 115-year-plus history, the huge Staples rug has traveled almost 700 miles around the states of Arizona and New Mexico. (Map by Bob Ring, 2008)

Snapshot of Navajo Weaving Through the Transition Period

According to Dr. Joe Ben Wheat, noted anthropologist and Navajo weaving expert, “It is probable that the Navajo learned to weave sometime around 1650.” By 1706, “They were weaving enough cloth for their own needs and to provide a surplus for trade.” (Wheat 1992: 3) The Navajo learned to weave on upright looms from Pueblo Indians, who fled into Navajo sanctuaries following their revolt against the Spanish in New Mexico in 1680. During the Classic Period (1700-1850), crude clothing (for personal use) was the main weaving product – dresses, shirts and breechcloths, shoulder blankets, leggings, belts, hair cords, and ponchos. There was some trade in wearing blankets with the Spanish in the 1700s. Later in the period, Spanish enslavement of some Navajos produced “slave blankets,” wearing blankets with a strong Mexican influence. In the Late Classic Period (1850-1863), a popular shoulder wrap for men, called the Chief Blanket, the serape, and the poncho serape were the major products. This period was characterized by experimentation in design and pattern, greater technical excellence in spinning and weaving, and import of European cloths and yarns to obtain certain bright colors, e.g., bright red from bayeta cloth.

This golden age of Navajo weaving, was interrupted in 1863, when, after many years of skirmishes with the U. S. Army, the Navajo were defeated, and the Navajo people were imprisoned, 300 miles from their homeland, at Bosque Redondo, near Fort Sumner, on the Pecos River, in New Mexico. Deprived of natural wool, Navajo weavers were given man-made yarn to make blankets for sale. After a treaty with the U.S. in 1868, the Navajo were released from captivity, returned to their homeland - now the Navajo Reservation - and started rebuilding their sheep flocks and wool supply.

At the beginning of the Transition Period (1868-1890), Navajo weavers were introduced to commercial yarn, which produced an explosion of color in their weavings. European cloth imports were replaced by Germantown yarn, a coarse three or four-ply aniline-dyed yarn, manufactured in western Pennsylvania.

A second major influence on Navajo weaving during the Transition Period was the Indian trader. By the late 1870s, government licensed traders were setting up shop all across the reservation and promoting regional styles of weaving and new designs that would appeal to a broader market. In 1882 the railroad was completed across the southern edge of the reservation, increasing the supply of commercial yarns and chemical dyes to the Indian traders who supplied these items to the Navajo. A new market for Navajo weaving was created by the traders who constantly coached the weavers on Anglo preferences in pattern, color, size, and quality of textiles. The main weaving product during this period “transitioned” from blankets for personal use to rugs, heavier and larger weavings. Germantown yarns weren’t pushed as hard by the traders, and the weavers turned back to handspun wool. Note: The definition of weaving periods and the summaries of Navajo weaving in the Classic, Late Classic, and Transition Periods were drawn from H. L. James well-known *Rugs and Posts, the Story of Navajo Weaving and Indian Trading*. (James 1988: 9, 10)

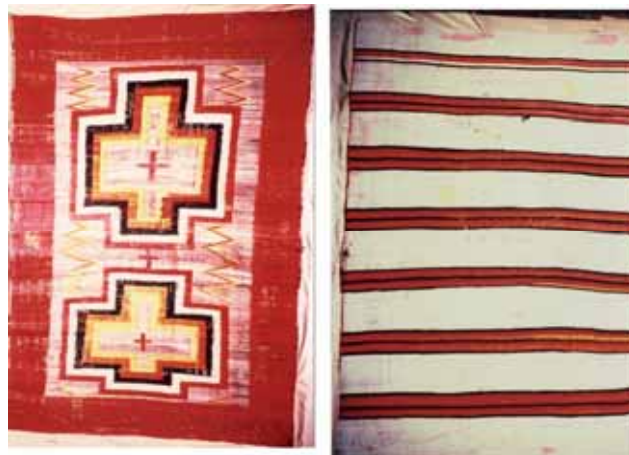
Two-faced weaving is regarded as a technical innovation of the Transition Period. Kate Peck Kent offers the following description, “The weave produces a blanket or rug with entirely different patterns on its two surfaces. The work surface usually exhibits a complex tapestry design, and the underside a pattern of simple stripes.” (Kent 1985: 81)

The two-faced weave was first reported (and named) by anthropologist Washington Mathews in 1900. (Amsden 1934: 58) Based on several trips to the Navajo country and careful questioning of Thomas W. Keam, well known trader from Keam’s Cañon, Mathews concluded that the first two-faced weaving was accomplished in about 1893. (Mathews 1900: 639, 640) Other expert opinions on the year of the first two-faced weave, listed in chronological order of their publications, include Charles Amsden, 1885 (Amsden 1934: 61) and Kate Peck Kent, 1875 (Kent 1992: 13).

The origin of the two-faced weave among the Navajo is not clear. According to Kate Peck Kent, “It is not a process known to the Pueblo people, either prehistorically or historically. It is familiar, however, to Anglo-American handloom weavers and may have been taught to Navajo women by one of them.” (Kent 1992: 13) Other possibilities include teachings by Spanish Colonial weavers, who practiced a form of double weave, or independent invention by Navajo weavers themselves.

Introduction to the Staples Rug

The Staples rug measures 18 feet, 4 inches long by 12 feet, 2 ½ inches wide. As documented by southwestern textile consultant Laurie Webster, “Side A is patterned with two red, orange, green, black, and white concentric crosses on a rectangular gray ground. A solid red cross appears between the crosses and at the center of each cross. Orange and green zigzags radiate from the crosses. The design is framed by a solid red border. Side B is patterned with groups of orange, red, and black stripes on a white ground.” (Webster 1989: 4)



The Staples rug, woven between 1885 and 1890, survives today in the Navajo textile collection of the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA). (Courtesy MNA, Photo No’s. 33966 and 33967)



The Staples rug, like the huge rug in this photo, was undoubtedly woven outdoors on an oversized loom, probably strung between trees. (Courtesy Museum of Northern Arizona, Staples Family Album, Photo No. MS 22-14-43)

TRADER JUAN LORENZO HUBBELL

Juan Lorenzo Hubbell was born in 1853 in Pajarito, New Mexico. He was the son of “James Lawrence Hubbell, a native of Vermont, whose parents were English, and Juliana Gutierrez, the daughter of a proud old Spanish pioneer family.” (Blue 2000: 6)

According to Frank McNitt, author of the well-known and respected *The Indian Traders*, Hubbell bought what was to become the Hubbell Trading Post in 1878. (McNitt 1962: 201) The post was located along the Pueblo Colorado (Spanish for “Red Town”) River, near the town of Ganado. In the early years, the post was known as the Pueblo Colorado Trading Post.

In order to understand the environment in which the Staples rug was sponsored and produced, it is necessary to look at the relationship of Juan Lorenzo Hubbell and C. N. Cotton. On September 23, 1884, needing help to run his trading post, while he fulfilled a second job as Sheriff of Apache County, Hubbell sold a half interest in the post to C. N. Cotton. (Blue 2000: 61) Apparently wanting to devote more time to politics, Hubbell sold Cotton his remaining half interest in the trading post on June 22, 1885. A number of letters written by Hubbell or Cotton, dated June and July, 1885, informed customers, suppliers, and government offices that Cotton had purchased Hubbell’s interest in the trading post. (See the Hubbell Papers, AZ 375, University of Arizona Special Collections, Box 91, Cotton Letter Book 9/1884 - 4/1886) While Cotton concentrated on trying to expand the market for Navajo textiles, Hubbell continued to

work at the trading post, energetically trying to improve the design, colors, and quality of the Navajo weavings. In a letter to the Oregon City Manufacturing Company on May 28, 1889, Cotton announced his intention of opening a warehouse in Gallup, New Mexico, almost 50 miles east of the trading post, for the purpose of wholesaling Navajo textiles. (Hubbell Papers, Box 93, Cotton Letter Book 2/1888 – 1/1889) By the early 1890s, Cotton had moved to Gallup permanently to develop his wholesale business. And in the words of David M. Bruge, former curator of the Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site, “In 1895 Cotton sold the Ganado post back to Don Lorenzo, who had probably managed the store since Cotton’s move to Gallup.” (Bruge 1993: 31)

In their book on Navajo weaving traditions, authors Alice Kaufman and Christopher Selser express the opinion that, “Juan Lorenzo Hubbell became the best-known trader in the Southwest as well as the one who had the greatest early influence on the development of the twentieth-century regional style.” (Kaufman/Selser 1985: 67) Kate Peck Kent gets a little more specific, “He insisted on excellence in weaving, and also sponsored the production of exceptionally large rugs and of special order rugs in odd sizes.” (Kent 1992: 14) Though he offered native wool blankets by the pound, from \$0.75 to \$2.50, in a 1902 catalog, Hubbell also advertised individual rugs from 2 ¾ feet by 3 ¾ feet for \$9, up to 12 feet by 12 feet square for \$150. (Hubbell 1902: 3)

So where and when did the idea to use blankets as rugs originate? One data point is a letter from C. N. Cotton, dated November 2, 1887, in which Cotton is talking about “Navajo Indian blankets which can be used as rugs.” (Hubbell Papers, Box 92, Cotton Letter Book, 5/1886 – 1/1888)

As reported in Kaufman and Selser’s book, “In fact, oversize rugs, rugs made to order in sizes larger than five by seven feet (too large and heavy to use anywhere but on the floor) were a specialty of Hubbell’s. The designs of these rugs were not revivals of Classic Period designs but rather the incorporation of Classic Period design elements (crosses, terraced diamonds, and stripes) into a bordered rug pattern that was somewhat oriental in appearance and complexity.” (Kaufman/Selser 1985: 69) These rugs were typically red, black, gray, brown, and white and very popular with the Anglo buying public.

Writing in *Navajo Rugs: Evolution of the Ganado Style 1890 – 1920*, authors Joann Boles and Lois E. Dickey summarize Hubbell’s business approach, “Hubbell maintained the rug business, his best business, by paying weavers for high standards, patronizing good customers, advertising extensively, and establishing a network of influential and helpful business acquaintances.” (Boles/Dickey 1982: 102)

The weaver (or weavers) who produced the Staples rug is unknown. Moreover the exact year the rug was completed (it may have taken more than one year to weave) is also not known with certainty. Referring to the origin of the Staples rug, Gladys Reichard, writing in *Navajo Shepherd and Weaver*, says it “may have been made as early as 1886.” (Reichard 1936: 173) Also referring to the Staples rug, Kate Peck Kent wrote in *The Navajo Weaving Tradition – 1650 to the Present*, “One outsized rug, woven at

Ganado, probably in 1895 and now in the collection of the Museum of Northern Arizona, is a two-faced weave measuring twelve by eighteen feet.” (Kent 1985: 86)

But according to Navajo weaving expert, Charles Avery Amsden, writing in his milestone book *Navajo Weaving – Its Technic and History*, “My own investigations carry this weave back to about the year 1885.” Amsden’s sources for this date were none other than Berton Staples, who when interviewed by Amsden in the early 1930s, was then the owner of the two-faced Staples rug, and C. N. Cotton, the previous owner of the rug. Cotton was sure of the approximate date of 1885, “because it was made about the time the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (now the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe) reached Gallup. That was in 1882.” (Amsden 1934: 61) Later in his book Amsden says, “The largest piece of Navajo weaving known to me is the two-faced rug² owned by Mr. B. I. Staples.” (Amsden 1934: 95)

We can now narrow the window for the origin of the Staples rug from 1885 - 1895 to 1885 - 1890. Famed western and Native American photographer, Ben Wittick, took a well-known picture of Hubbell’s Trading Post, thought by Charles Amsden to have been “taken in late nineties.” (Amsden 1934: 186/187) The Staples rug can be seen in the upper right background of the photo, hanging on a very tall fence or propped up on a huge frame. Kent’s book contains an almost identical Wittick photo (see below) dated “about 1885 – 1895” in the caption.³ (Kent 1985: 16)

Though a careful review by the author of the Hubbell Papers at the University of Arizona did not produce a specific reference to anything like the Staples rug, the author noticed that Hubbell’s stationary letterhead, starting on a certain date, and for many years thereafter, included a similar Ben Wittick image of Hubbell’s Trading Post, including the Staples rug in the background. The first Hubbell letter to carry this unique letterhead (see below) was dated May 14, 1890 and addressed to C. N. Cotton &



*The Staples rug is seen hanging in the background to the right of Hubbell’s Trading Post in this 1890 photo by famed photographer Ben Wittick. Juan Lorenzo Hubbell is seated in the foreground examining a rug held by a Navajo woman.
(Courtesy Museum of New Mexico)*

Company in Gallup, New Mexico for the purpose of ordering goods. (Hubbell Papers, Box 95, Hubbell Correspondence 1878-1909) So we can be confident that the Staples rug existed at Hubbell's Trading Post in 1890. This is about the time that C. N. Cotton was shifting his operations to Gallup, leaving the Staples rug "hanging on the fence" so to speak.



A Ben Wittick image of the Staples rug first appeared on J. L. Hubbell's stationary letterhead on May 14, 1890.
 (Source: ASM Special Collections, Hubbell Papers, Box 95, Hubbell Correspondence 1878-1909)

TRADER/WHOLESALE C. N. COTTON

Clinton Neal Cotton was born on April 12, 1859 on a farm in central Ohio. As told by Cotton's grandnephew and biographer, Lester L. Williams, M.D., in 1881, at the age of 22, Cotton headed west and became a telegraph operator for the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. Cotton first worked at Guam, then the end of the westward building track, 138.8 miles west from Albuquerque, New Mexico. A short time later, the track was ten miles further west at Wingate, only about 10 miles east of Gallup, and Cotton was moved there to operate the railroad's telegraph. At some time during this period, Cotton met and befriended Juan Lorenzo Hubbell, already established at his Pueblo Colorado Trading Post, about 55 miles west in Arizona territory. (Williams 1989: 3, 4)

Less than three years later in 1884, C. N. Cotton was Hubbell's partner and owned half of the Pueblo Colorado Trading Post. "Although he had no previous experience as a trader, he had an unusual aptitude that was soon widely felt." (McNitt 1962: 208) Cotton influenced the trading post business in two key areas. First he became a disciplined businessman and over the years (mostly unsuccessfully), "would admonish Hubbell to pay less attention to politics and more to accounting, to be less generous

when buying rugs, to supervise his workers more strictly, or to be more prompt in filling orders.” (Bruge 1993: 65) Second, “C. N. Cotton was one of the first to realize the potentials of a large eastern market for Navajo rugs, and his efforts in this direction, starting about 1890 ... probably were the greatest influence.” (McNitt 1962: 211)

So as established earlier, by the early 1890s, Cotton was in Gallup permanently and by 1895, had sold the trading post back to Hubbell. Juan Lorenzo Hubbell continued to own and operate the trading post until his death in 1930.⁴

By 1901 Cotton had his own Gallup store stationary with the letterhead announcing, “C. N. Cotton – Indian Trader and Wholesale Dealer in Indian Traders’ Supplies and Navajo Blankets.” The earliest such letter found in the Hubbell Papers was dated March 24, 1901, and addressed to “Friend Lorenzo.” (Hubbell Papers, Box 19, Correspondence by C. N. Cotton – Early 1900s)

Hubbell and Cotton remained close friends and business associates for many years. The C. N. Cotton Company was incorporated in Gallup in January, 1903. (Williams 1989: 38) Cotton’s business grew steadily and Cotton himself became a prominent Gallup businessman. In effect, Cotton acted as Hubbell’s agent for Navajo rugs.



*The C. N. Cotton Company was incorporated in Gallup, New Mexico in January, 1903.
(Courtesy Aranyu Publishing, Inc., C. N. Cotton and His Navajo Blankets)*

There is no specific record of how or when the Staples rug became the property of C. N. Cotton and was moved from Hubbell’s Trading Post to Gallup. However, according to Williams, Cotton’s biographer, “While C. N. Cotton and J. L. Hubbell were always close friends and associated in enterprises, Hubbell ran up a considerable debt to the C. N. Cotton Company and on February 6, 1918 turned over to the C. N. Cotton Company a stock of merchandise ... to satisfy a debt.” (Williams 1989: 40) This could have been the action that transferred the Staples rug to C. N. Cotton.



C. N. Cotton's and Gallup's first automobile.

*C. N. Cotton and his wife Mary Alice are seated in the rear seat – 1904.
(Courtesy Aranyu Publishing, Inc., C. N. Cotton and His Navajo Blankets)*

According to McNitt, speaking of the Staples rug, “ ... it was eventually acquired by Cotton. For years the rug remained on the floor of Cotton’s home in Gallup, but a table leg finally frayed a hole in it. Cotton sent the rug off to Coolidge, where his trader friend Berton I. Staples, offered to have it repaired. Staples for some reason retained possession of the rug ... ” (McNitt 1962: 211) Williams adds the tidbit that the rug was used “on the floor of the dining room in the Cotton home.”⁵ (Williams 1989: 24)

TRADER BERTON I. STAPLES

Berton I. Staples came west from Vermont in 1926 and settled in the Wingate Valley, a mile west of old Guam, where C. N. Cotton had worked as a telegraph operator more than 35 years previously. According to McNitt, Staples built “a trading post – a sort of pueblo style palace – using for the foundations the same stones ... ” that others, including the *Anasazi* had used there before, many years ago. “With no thought at all to the locality’s past names, but with a Vermonter’s admiring nod to the man then in the White House, Staples named the place Coolidge. ... Staples’ building had a long running porch of upright posts and horizontal vigas separating two adobe rooms each measuring twenty-five by fifty feet. An extension of the open porch and a third room of some grand dimensions were added, to the east, with funds and encouragement provided by the well known archaeologists Harold and Winifred Gladwin. From their Gila Pueblo headquarters at Globe Arizona, the Gladwins came to Wingate Valley for archaeological research, based their operations at Staples post ... ” (McNitt 1962: 237)

Another view of Staples' background and establishment in Coolidge, is provided by the son of avid southwest art collectors, Mr. and Mrs. Charles de Young Elkus, who visited Staples' Trading Post annually, from the east, for many years, "There was a wonderful man named Berton I. Staples who had come west for his health. He had been a dress designer in New York. When he came I do not know, but in 1926, he was well established. He established a trading post on Highway 66 at Coolidge, New Mexico, which he called Crafts del Navajo." (Elkus Papers, Trading Posts: 1)



Berton Staples poses with three Navajos in front of Staples' Crafts del Navajo trading post.
(Courtesy Museum of Northern Arizona, Staples Family Album, Photo No. MS 22-14 -33c)

According to McNitt, Staples⁶ and his fabulous trading post drew "interesting personalities – artists, writers, and Hollywood actors - who for one reason or another stayed with him summer after summer as paying guests. Among these visitors were Alma Wilmarth Ickes, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, who wrote *Mesa Land* at Coolidge; Malvina Hoffman, the sculptor and writer of *Heads and Tails*; Gladys Reichard, who wrote *Spider Woman* here; and the novelist and short story writer, Gouverneur Morris." (McNitt 1962: 238)

One of the examples of Navajo art that Staples must have loved to show his guests was the Staples rug, shown in the photo below. The rug was used for many years on the floor of Staples' living room. (Letter from Harold Gladwin to Ned Danson, 7/24/61)



*Mrs. Berton Staples pulls back a corner of the Staples rug, hung on a huge frame
at Staples' Trading Post.*

(Courtesy Reichard 1936: Plate XIIb)

Staples retained possession of the rug until his death in an automobile accident in the fall of 1938.⁷ When Staples died, he was in debt to the Gladwins for “a large sum.” So the Gladwins took his “large collection of magnificent historical blankets” to the Gladwin’s Gila Pueblo headquarters in Globe, Arizona. (Letter from Lee Wyman to Ned Danson, Director of the Museum of Northern Arizona, 12/29/59)

ARCHAEOLOGIST/COLLECTOR WINIFRED GLADWIN

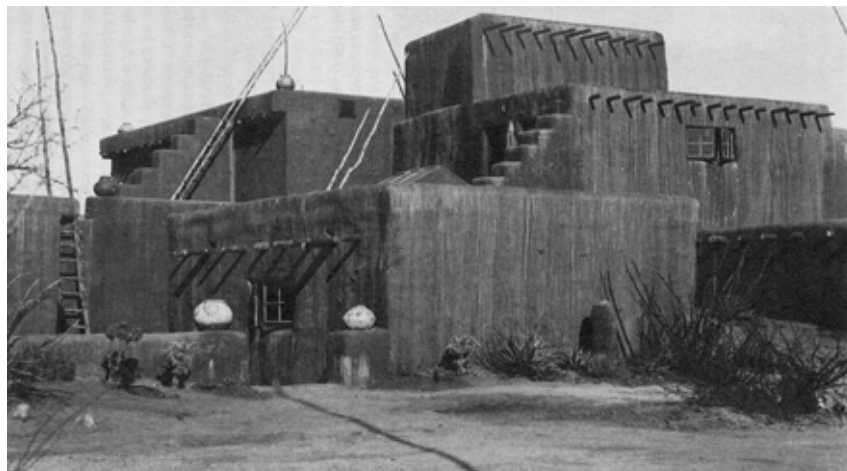
Gila Pueblo was a private institution devoted to archaeological research. Construction had started in 1928, but it wasn’t until 1936 that the nonprofit organization was incorporated. The organization’s primary objective, as stated in its Articles of Incorporation, was, “To promote means for study of archaeology and anthropology and research concerning these subjects and to publish the results of such study and research.” (Haury 1988: 49)

Harold S. Gladwin was the co-founder of Gila Pueblo and Director of the institution throughout its existence, until it closed in 1950. Gladwin was born in 1883 in New York City. After a short experience in cattle ranching, and a 20-year career as a stockbroker, Gladwin moved west to Santa Barbara, California in 1922. Here began his keen interest and involvement in the natural sciences. Soon Gladwin was helping to

excavate archaeological sites in Texas and New Mexico, and by the late 1920s was busy with Gila Pueblo in Globe, Arizona. Gladwin was the driving force behind the Gila Pueblo. According to former ASM Director Emil Haury, who worked for Gladwin at Gila Pueblo from 1930 to 1937, “His mental energy and breadth of outlook ... were mind boggling ...” (Haury 1988: 59) For over 20 years Gladwin and Gila Pueblo attracted important scholars and researchers.

Winifred Jones MacCurdy became Winifred Jones Gladwin by marrying Harold Gladwin in 1933. Prior to that she had participated in the early development of Gila Pueblo. According to Haury, “When the early construction of the modern Gila Pueblo ran into trouble, it was she who took over and directed the work to be done. Although not an architect or an engineer, she could and did bring to the operation the touches that spelled the difference between austerity and clumsiness of space and the ideas that made for a cozy and functional working environment. Furthermore, it was her resources that made the accomplishment possible.” (Haury 1988: 62) She was Harold Gladwin’s behind the scenes inspiration and stabilizing force.

By the mid 1930s Gila Pueblo had grown to a three-story sprawling structure, with 40 rooms on the ground floor, mostly offices and laboratories, and apartments for the researchers on the upper floors. “By all odds, the most splendid and largest room of all was the council hall. It measured some 30 feet by 45 feet and had a high ceiling.” (Haury 1988: 20)



East entrance of Gila Pueblo – about 1935.
(Courtesy Arizona State Museum, ASM Neg. No. 73207)

After Berton Staples death in 1938, his magnificent oversized, two-faced rug was taken to Gila Pueblo, where it was used on the center of the floor of the huge council hall. (Letter from Winifred Gladwin to Ned Danson, 8/21/58) The Staples rug and other fine pieces from Staples’ Crafts del Navajo became the core of Winifred Gladwin’s remarkable Navajo textile collection.

By 1950, “the loss of professional staff and the erosion of Gladwin’s own excitement about supporting and managing an institution ... ” led to the closing of Gila Pueblo Archaeological Foundation.⁸ (Haury 1988: 64) Mrs. Gladwin took her personal collection of fine Navajo textiles to the Gladwin’s home in Santa Barbara, California. She gifted the Staples rug, along with the rest of the Gila Pueblo collections, to the University of Arizona, where Emil Haury, the Gladwins’ former colleague and friend was Director.

After the closing of Gila Pueblo, the Gladwins went back to Santa Barbara, where they stayed active with local museums and the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. After many years of ill health, Winifred Gladwin died in 1965. Harold Gladwin died at age 99 in 1983.

ARIZONA STATE MUSEUM

In 1958 Mrs. Gladwin donated her valuable textile collection to the Museum of Northern Arizona and requested that the Staples rug be transferred to Flagstaff to join the rest of her collection. (Letter from Winifred Gladwin to Emil Haury, Director, Arizona State Museum, 12/4/58) An agreement was reached to loan the Staples rug to the Museum of Northern Arizona on a permanent basis, because of a State of Arizona regulation that state property cannot be given away. (Letter from Emil Haury to Winifred Gladwin, 12/18/58)

MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA

The Staples rug was transported to Flagstaff on February 17, 1959. It remains an important part of the Gladwin collection at the Museum of Northern Arizona. The most recent display of the Staples rug by the Museum was in 2004.



*The Staples Rug was last displayed at the Museum of Northern Arizona in 2004.
(Photo by Bob Ring, 2004)*

NOTES

1. In 1989, while under contract to the Museum of Northern Arizona to document their Navajo textile collection, Dr. Laurie Webster researched and first reported on the Staples rug. (Webster 1989). Dr. Webster is currently a southwestern textile consultant and teaches classes on the subject at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The Staples rug was first brought to writer Bob Ring's attention in 2000 when he was challenged to "find it and write about it" by two Navajo weaving instructors, who knew part of the story, but had lost track of the rug. Ring's search brought him to the Museum of Northern Arizona, to the rug itself, and to Dr. Webster, who generously shared her report and research papers.
2. Charles Amsden, in 1934, was the first person to report on the existence of the amazing "12 feet by 18 feet, 2 inches" two-faced rug. Since B. I. Staples was the owner of the rug at the time, the name "Staples rug" has been used subsequently to identify the weaving.
3. The photo in Amsden's book shows Hubbell seated in the foreground. That photo (perhaps the better known of the two) subsequently appeared in, among other publications, McNitt's book (1962), Kaufman and Selser's book (1985), and James' book (1988). The second photo, with Hubbell standing in the foreground, appears in Kent's book (1985) and Williams' book (1989).
4. Besides the trading post business, Hubbell remained active in politics and building up his collection of southwestern art. Hubbell's Trading Post became a mecca for eastern visitors and southwestern artists. At his death in 1930, Hubbell bequeathed the trading business to his children. The family oversaw the business, sometimes hiring managers. Hubbell's Trading Post operations were challenged by the Depression; overgrazing of the Navajo range, which caused a mandatory reduction of sheep; and relatively unsuccessful New Deal programs intended to increase income on the Navajo nation. "By the 1960s most trading posts were converting to self-service. ... But the past lived on at Hubbell's Trading Post, where business followed the old patterns. ... Finally in 1967, the National Park Service undertook to preserve the site. It did not come easily, however. ... The efforts of Dr. Edward B. Danson, director of the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, were the key to success, for only the word of an eminent scholar could overcome the doubts that the old trading post had true historic values, bringing long-delayed recognition to the role of the reservation trader in Native American History." (Bruge 1993: 74, 75)
5. In April 1934, C. N. Cotton became ill and he ceased all trading. Cotton died on September 20, 1936. Cotton's grand nephew and biographer, Lester L. Williams, MD, sums up, "... my family always regarded him as famous and wealthy, one member of the family who had made a success of his life." (Williams 1989: 1)

6. During the early 1930s, Staples actively worked to improve the quality of wool through selective breeding experiments with Dorset and Rambouillet strains of sheep. (Amsden 1934: 201) Staples also served as director of the Gallup Ceremonial for many years. He also was the first president of the United Indian Traders Association (UITA), formed at Gallup in 1931, and remained its president until his death. The UITA was formed to maintain high standards of workmanship and materials in Navajo weaving and for other native crafts. In a letter to Lorenzo Hubbell (J. L. Hubbell's son) dated January 3, 1938, the UITA tells of "application of new Government rug tags to Navajo textiles." The letterhead identifies Berton Staples as the president of the UITA and C. N. Cotton as the Treasurer. (Hubbell Papers, Box 81, United Indian Traders Association file)

7. After Staples' death in 1938, his trading post was bought and operated by others for many years. Finally, in 1955, a fire destroyed the old building. (McNitt 1962: 238) Today, Coolidge Exit 44 on Interstate 40, east of Gallup, New Mexico is still there, but virtually nothing remains of the old town.

8. The Gila Pueblo facility has had several owners since the Gladwins' departure. In 1952, the National Park Service took the facility over and used it as the headquarters of Southwestern National Monuments. Later the facility became the National Park Service's Western Archeological Center. In 1972, Eastern Arizona College acquired the property and established a Gila Pueblo campus. (Haury 1988: 70, 71) Today, Gila Pueblo Campus survives as a public, two-year undergraduate school.

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