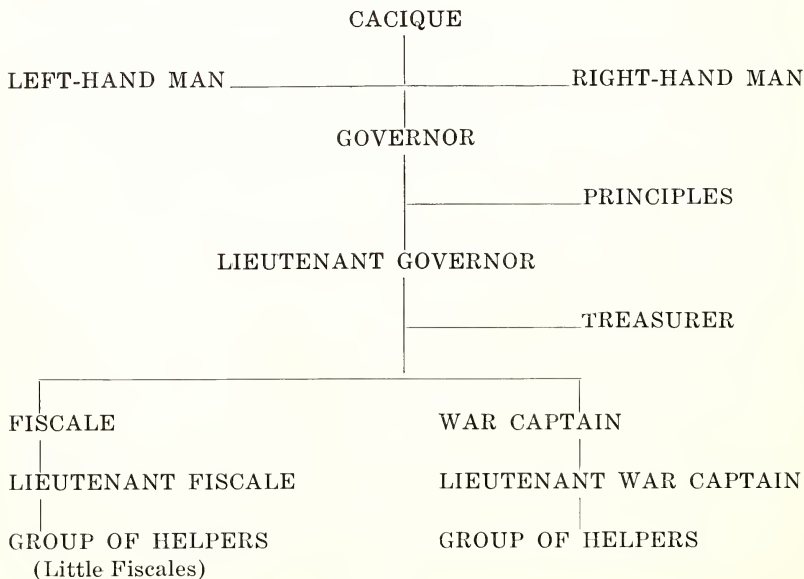


The Political Organization of the Tewa Indians

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The Tewa Indians comprise the pueblos of Hano (Hopi First Mesa) Nambe, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, San Juan and Tesuque. With the exception of Hano, this report encompasses all these pueblos and particularly Tesuque Pueblo. The political organization of the Tewas, with its hierarchy of officials, shows a strong Spanish influence. In the system of secular government the Indians have borrowed quite heavily from the dominant European culture. The Spanish type system of political organization was incorporated into Pueblo life, since a new series of relationships with the outside world became necessary. The Spanish-introduced system was accepted by the Indians to provide for some body of officials who would act in these capacities. The secular government was, and still is to a very large extent, under the direct supervision and control of the religious hierarchy, as are most other aspects of Tewa culture. Since the Pueblos have continued to need contact men with the outside dominant culture ever since the Spanish settlement of the area, it is not surprising to find that the European introduced system of government still persists and that the governing officials continue to play a dual role—secular and religious. Some of the governing officials have greater religious duties than others, but each office combines certain secular as well as certain religious duties and responsibilities.

The official who holds the highest religious as well as secular rank in each pueblo is the head-man or Cacique. The following will help to explain the hierarchy of officials:



Council—The above officers, with the exception of the Group of Helpers, form the executive governing Council. The term "executive" is used since these officers are present at each Council meeting, whereas the rest of the adult males in the pueblo, though eligible to sit and vote in the Council, are not obliged to exercise this right. The Council has to be unanimous in its decisions before it can take any action. There is a great deal of debating and sometimes tempers are lost before the Council reaches a decision. Sometimes the Council may fail to reach a unanimous decision, but this does not happen very often, since usually the Council members follow the opinions and judgments of their Cacique. The Council meetings are held in the kiva.

The governing officials may be elected from both the conservative as well as the progressive factions of the pueblo. However, since the conservative faction holds more religious power and since the secular government is to a large extent controlled by the religious hierarchy, the conservative faction tends to dominate the secular government in most Pueblos. The important secular officials are older men who hold various offices in religious societies. These officials hold the high offices in the secular government as a result of their high status in the religious life of the pueblo.

Cacique—There are two head-men or Caciques, one belonging to the Summer moiety and the other to the Winter moiety. The Caciques, are a part of the secular government as well as the heads of the religious societies which control the secular officers. Every January the Caciques jointly nominate the officials for election.

A head-man may inherit his office or be appointed to it. The inheritance, however, is not through blood ties, but as follows: Each chief has two assistants, one who sits on his right (the right-hand man) and one who sits on his left (the left hand man) at the council meetings. At the death of the Cacique, the right-hand man inherits his religious and thereby also his secular office. The left-hand man becomes the right-hand man of the new Cacique, and the new Cacique appoints a left-hand man to take his place. All these inheritances are subject to the approval of the Council, but once approved of, the Cacique is appointed for life. Technically the Council has the power to depose him; but, since the Council has to be unanimous in its decisions, before it can take any action, and since the head-man is very powerful both in the religious as well as the secular hierarchy, he is rarely, if ever, deposed. Though the informants are not unanimous on this, it is said that a Cacique, if deposed, has to be executed. The responsibility for such an execution falls upon the War Captain. Since this presents more difficulties in the present environment, the Caciques' appointment is of a more permanent nature than it was in the past.

The Cacique is the presiding priest of his moiety. He is chosen on the basis of his religious knowledge and his character. Each Cacique is responsible at all times for the welfare of the people belonging to his moiety. But as far as the religious as well as secular welfare of the whole pueblo is concerned, the Winter Chief is responsible for all affairs of all the people in the pueblo from November through March, and the

Summer Cacique takes charge from April through October. Though there is no question of rank between the two Caciques, and though each rules unmolested by the other in his own season, the Summer Cacique seems to be held in greater esteem by his people in Tesuque and Nambe.

Once he comes to office, the head-man is practically a dictator, though a benevolent one. The officers nominated by the head-man are always elected by the Council. The Cacique in power also has the right to depose any official. The head-man makes the major decisions, but he always sits with the Council and discusses all the matters with the Council members. Though he makes the major decisions, he cannot put them into effect without the complete approval of the Council. He has to be impartial in exercising his authority and control his temper at all times, and hence he avoids any personal interferences in the settlement of disputes between individuals or groups within or without the pueblo.

The Caciques conduct many ceremonies and rituals and are the custodians of many religious paraphernalia. They are highly respected and wise in the ways of the world, and have the interest of their people at heart. Otherwise, they would not be holding such high offices. Their character and ability are such that it is not difficult for the Council to back them up one hundred per cent. The Caciques are excused from community labor, and the only other reward they expect for their services is the personal satisfaction they obtain from finding solutions to the problems facing the peoples of their pueblo.

The Right-Hand Man and the Left-Hand Man

Each Cacique has a Right-Hand Man and a Left-Hand Man, who belong to the same moiety as their Cacique. Though these men may be nominated and elected every year, they usually continue in this office until the death of the Cacique. They are a part of the executive Council only during the season of their moiety's Cacique. If the Cacique is sick or is too old to perform his duties, the Right-Hand Man takes over some of his burdens. The office of the Right-Hand Man is very much like an apprenticeship for the office of Cacique.

Governor—At the time of appointing a new Governor, the Cacique nominates one of the Principales, usually according to his turn. The Governor who has completed his term of one year, becomes a Principale and may expect to be re-elected, usually three years hence, when it will be his turn again to serve as Governor. If the Governor dies while in office, the Cacique nominates one of the Principales and he is elected to office. The Governor's office is symbolized by the silver-headed canes, presented to him at the time of his election. These canes are kept in full view at the Governor's house, hanging on the living room wall along with a whip. The canes are carried by the Governor at important occasions, both religious and secular.

Though the Governor rarely makes any major decisions, he has considerable authority. This authority stems from the office he holds rather than the man who holds the office. Most Governors are old men who usually speak faltering English and know little about the things happening outside their realms of duty.

Next to the Cacique, the Governor is the most important person in the secular government. While he holds office, his authority is seldom questioned and his orders are implicitly obeyed. He gives orders for, and often directs and supervises personally, the many community projects, such as the digging of irrigation ditches, cleaning the pueblo, and building the fences. The Governor also serves as the mouthpiece of the Council. All announcements of secular as well as religious nature, come through the office of the Governor. He has to make speeches, upon public occasions such as funerals, marriages, and parent-teacher meetings. It is the Governor who settles disputes between individuals and groups in the pueblo and often sits in court with other officers of the Council to try cases of misdemeanors. The Governor is paid no compensation for his services except for the fact that he is excused from community labor.

The Governor of each Tewa Pueblo takes part in the meeting of the All Pueblo Council. Since these meetings are conducted in English, he takes along an interpreter, usually the Lieutenant Governor. If an important decision has to be made at the All Pueblo Council, the Governor does not have the authority to commit his people without first consulting his Council, since he cannot make any decisions or take any action without the full approval of the Council. Formerly, the Governors acted as the liaison officers between the pueblo and the outside world. At present, the Summer Caciques usually formulate the pueblo policies concerning the outside world and take upon themselves the responsibility of acting as Liaison Officers. For the benefit of the outsiders, the Governor is often glorified to draw attention away from the Caciques.

Principales—There are two or three Principales in the Council. They are ex-Governors and from them a new Governor is chosen every year. The Governor reverts back to the status of a Principale after serving his term of office, and hence technically, one can say that there are three or four Principales, counting the Governor, in the Council. The office of the Governor rotates among them, though in one pueblo, the Cacique appointed himself Governor. The Principales are appointed by the Cacique, and elected by the Council, by virtue of their religious positions in certain societies.

The Principales are older men, respected for their age and knowledge of their own people. They take a very active part in the discussions at the Council meetings, though their major function in the secular government of the pueblo is to act in an advisory and executive capacity. The only compensation they get for their services, is exemption from community labor.

Lieutenant Governor—As the very name of this office implies, the Lieutenant Governor is the assistant of the Governor. He is usually a young man and often acts as the interpreter for the Governor. Along with the Governor, he attends the meetings of the All Pueblo Council. He sees to it that the orders of the Governor are obeyed, and that the people of the pueblo carry out their duties towards the community. Except for the Treasurer, he is perhaps the most secular officer, for he

has few, if any, religious duties. He is nominated to his office by the Cacique and is elected by the Council for a period of one year. He supervises communal work and assists in it in the capacity of a 'foreman.' His most important duty is that of a 'sheriff'—the law enforcement officer of the pueblo.

Fiscales, Lieutenant Fiscale, Group of Helpers.—The Fiscales are in charge of the upkeep and maintenance of the Catholic church and all ceremonials connected with it. They see to it that the church is kept clean and is in good condition and that the church is provided with its share of the community produce. One of the Fiscales, usually the Lieutenant Fiscale, acts as a 'town crier.' He goes from house to house to relay messages, usually coming from the Governor, such as the time of Council meetings. The Fiscales also take an active part in the organization of dances which are open to tourists. Their chief duty, however, is to bury the dead and take care of the graveyard.

The Little Fiscales may be appointed by the Council without previous nomination by the Cacique, whereas the Fiscale and his Lieutenant are first nominated by the Cacique and then elected by the Council for a period of one year.

War Captain, Lieutenant War Captain, Group of Helpers.—The War Captain, his Lieutenant and Helpers form a semi-independent group from the Council. Though the War Captain and his Lieutenant are part of the executive Council they take comparatively little interest in the secular government. The War Captain's group works in close cooperation with the Cacique. They carry out the Cacique's orders, rather than those of the Governor, since their orders come most often directly from the head-man. The War Captain's group is in charge of all ceremonials and customs connected with the native religion. In consultation with the Caciques, they make the necessary arrangements for the religious and secular dances, for adoptions, retreats, and other religious ceremonies. They guard the person of the Cacique during religious ceremonies, and also the kiva and sometimes the whole pueblo when sacred ceremonies are being performed. Serious offenses of a religious nature are punished by the War Captain. The War Captain is also in charge of teaching the children, as well as adults, the rituals and dances of the native religion.

Though the War Captain, his Lieutenant, and Group of Helpers are concerned mainly with the performance of religious duties, one cannot separate them entirely from the secular group. Like the other officers in the secular government of Tesuque, the War Captain's group sit in Council and have to go through the same procedures of nomination and election and hold offices only for one year. However, in the case of the War Captain, his stay in office may continue indefinitely due to the lack of suitable candidates.

Treasurer.—The Treasurer is appointed by the Cacique and no particular period of time is assigned to his term of office. He is a regular member of the Council and is in charge of revenues derived from tourists, from lease of pueblo land, etc. No religious affiliations are tied in with

this office and the man is elected mainly for his ability in handling money. This office is a relatively new one and has been made necessary with the advent of a cash economy.

Conclusion—The government of the Tewa Pueblos exercises social control over the peoples of the pueblo through benevolent paternalism, and the Caciques are usually looked upon and addressed as "father." If a man seeks too much power he is considered evil and looked down upon. Hence, due to the demands of convention, men do not seek office, but are elected to do it. Once elected, they cannot refuse their responsibilities. Officers never boast of their positions and show no outward personal pride. These offices are considered a difficult and dangerous duty to be fulfilled, rather than a goal to be achieved; instead of craving for these positions they consider them as not very desirable, but necessary. Though there is pomp in their other communal ceremonies, the ceremony of installation to office is a short and simple one.

The Tewa Indians have been quite successful in adapting their governmental organization to cope with the influence of the White man's culture. With but a few exceptions, they have succeeded in maintaining law and order and they oppose the use of local or state police on their pueblo. New officers, such as the Treasurer, have been appointed to cope with the new situations. In the dealings with their people the officers try hard to be honest and just. Their political organization has facilitated contact with various private and U. S. Government agencies, and provided mechanisms for dealing more efficiently with the problems of the Indians. Their political organization has given the Tewa Indians the ability to present a united front to the outside world, to enact new laws to meet new emergencies from within and without, and to enforce these laws when such enforcement becomes necessary.