

A Brief History of Havasupai Formal Political Organization.

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Before their subjugation in the 19th century, the Havasupai, an aboriginal tribe in Northwestern Arizona, relied on hunting and gathering. In the warmer summer season they cultivated corn and beans by swidden agriculture in the Grand Canyon. Their agricultural plots were in the canyon and side canyons near springs. Winter villages had about 28 people with a group of male hunters at the core. The summer concentrations near resources comprised regional bands. The groups ranged over millions of acres adjacent to and south of the Grand Canyon. These groups had informal leadership with a "talker" as leader. The Havasupai had chiefs and sub-chiefs, whose number varied (Martin, 1966). These could be hereditary or merit ascension positions. The chiefs met on occasion to discuss issues related to the groups, but they had no formalized political organization. Authority was vested more in patrilocal group leaders. Navajo, a pre-eminent man, was the Havasupai chief for 40 years before 1900 (Martin, 1966).

The intrusion into the region by cattlemen after the war on Mexico forced most Havasupai into a restricted area in Havasu Canyon. In 1880, President Rutherford B. Hayes established, by executive order, a Havasupai reservation twelve miles long and five miles wide and centered on Havasu Creek. The survey crew assigned to mark the boundaries did not complete the task due to the difficult terrain and in deference to mining interests. The survey party reduced the reservation to only two miles inside Havasu Canyon. In 1882 the reduction to 518 acres was confirmed by executive order. A census in the same year registered 200 persons (Hirst). By 1900 chiefly authority was being undercut by the U. S. government (Martin, 1966). In 1918 Spier found the chiefs limited to giving advice and admonitions (Martin, 1966). Only 106 Havasupai survived a series of epidemics from 1900 to 1906.

In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act provided a legal base for tribal governments. Havasupai tribal government began with the adoption of the Havasupai Tribal Constitution on March 27, 1939. Prior to this time the tribe existed with only informal political organization. Chiefs, sub-chiefs, elders and heads of families were influential in decision making. The tradition of chiefs having authority was reflected in the composition of the Tribal Council. It initially consisted of a seven-member, of which three members were chiefs serving for life and four were councilmen elected for two-year terms. The four elected councilmen, but not the three chiefs, were subject to removal or recall from office. The Council had responsibility for managing tribal affairs, making contracts, hiring, and enacting ordinances. Initially the Tribal Council lacked the most basic necessities to carry out their charter. Resolutions were prepared and typed at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) office. In the beginning the Council was seen as little more than an instrument or rubber stamp of the BIA. Due to a lack of formal aboriginal political structures and due to their economic dependence, political dependence on the government resulted. In most ways the BIA was the government.

A shift in policy during the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency promoted Indian self-determination. With the aid of a federal grant, the cooperative Havasupai Development Enterprise was founded for the threefold purpose of developing a tourist industry on the reservation, establishing a tribal store, and improving farmlands and farming techniques. The council oversaw the Tribal businesses and hired the directors and managers. Since 1957 a Tribal

Court has operated under a law and order code. These institutions were essentially imposed by the federal government. At the same time the Tribal council was also a relatively non-autonomous body due to culturally defined regulatory principles (Martin, 1966). The interests and needs of families constituted an informal political process that strongly affected the Council's decisions.

During the Eisenhower administration a policy of termination was followed. Many federal services were withdrawn and the Havasupai school closed. In 1965 the last resident, non-Havasupai federal employee left the reservation. Efforts were made to relocate the Indians and the canyon population was decreasing. The Farming Enterprise was bankrupt and inactive by the 1960s. Agricultural production declined to a mere 8.2 acres under cultivation in 1963, down from 300 acres in 1897 and about 90 acres in 1956, The negative changes during this era disfavored any empowerment of the Tribal Council. By around 1960 conditions had reached a very low point in both economic situation and social/political organization.

In the 1960s the Havasupai economy was based on tourist trade, welfare, and wage employment. Tourism exploded and the main source of income in the 1960s was the tourist business. In 1963-1964 tourism accounted for \$34,000, or roughly half the tribal income. Of this sum half went to individual packers. The Tourist Enterprise owned two lodges and a campground, with salaried positions including a tourist manager and personnel at the lodges.

During the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies an ideology of economic development reversed the Eisenhower policy of termination. In 1962 the Tribal Council, under the leadership of Chairman Earl Paya, unanimously approved a resolution demanding return of nearly a quarter million acres of tribal lands. In 1963 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs visited Havasu Canyon and was subsequently instrumental in the Tribe receiving a \$20,000 Accelerated Public Works grant. In part the grant was to fund a new campground. The attempt to expropriate private use land for the facility led to a petition to recall the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. A Commission for Economic Development was set up with non-council people to resolve the matter. Eventually the campground was established on unclaimed land, illustrating the Tribal Council's weakness (Martin, 1966).

Other federal funds were infused into the local economy. Housing projects offered more jobs. Some BIA functions were transferred to the tribe. In 1964 the Havasupai school reopened, initially with only grades one and two, after a decade of removal of children to an Indian boarding school. In 1965 Sargent Shriver, head of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), visited Havasupai and urged the Havasupai to seek OEO grants (Hirst). By 1966 the Tribe, with grants, started a community action program to organize their resources and launched a head start program. The 1968 Bilingual Education Act and the 1972 Indian Education Act provided further funding. With a larger and more influential role the Tribal Council became more important in the community.

In 1968 the Indian Claims Commission offered the Havasupai \$1,240,000 for the deprivation of 2,2576,728 acres. The Tribe and the Commission approved the settlement. In 1973 the funds were distributed, with 25% going to the then 425 members. The remainder is held by the BIA in

trust and provides an annual income to the Tribe. With these developments again the role of the Council expanded and became more important to the community.

The Havasupai Constitution was amended in 1967, 1968 and 1972 (Hirst). The Havasupai are now governed by a seven person Tribal Council democratically elected by the tribe. The seven members serve staggered two-year terms; one year four are elected and the next three. A Chairman and Vice-Chairman are chosen from the council members, with the highest vote recipient becoming Chairman (Ruppert). The council meets once a month and at special meetings to handle pressing business. Meetings somewhat resemble town halls in that Tribal members are given the opportunity to address issues. The age of council eligibility was lowered from the previous 35 year limit. Salaries were also instituted and a broader range of Tribal members became attracted to the positions. An increase in women's jobs, particularly as teachers, has altered traditional sex roles. Since the early 1970's women have been elected to the Tribal Council and have been among its most active members. While the Council had once been a vehicle to personal power, especially in relation to land issues, now a wider range of issues and greater and more diverse responsibilities make the Council relevant to a larger segment of the population. The Council was becoming more effective politically.

In August of 1971, in response to a National Park Service proposed Grand Canyon National Park master plan, the Tribal Council initiated discussion of a determination of how to achieve self-sufficiency and independence. They reiterated what the tribe had demanded for a half century, return of title to their lands, and sought to have their land request incorporated into the Master Plan. The Park Service did not incorporate the Tribe's plan. The Council's appeal to Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture followed, again without positive results. An attempt to start talks with the Forest Service and the Park Service failed. Senator Barry Goldwater's plan to submit the legislation to expand the park led the Tribal Council to invite Senator Goldwater to the reservation.

Just before Goldwater's arrival the Tribal Council met in a special session and unanimously approved a resolution requesting the return of all Havasupai allotments and permit areas, of the Havasupai park residency area, of the railroad indemnity grant lands and of the Havasupai campground (Hirst). Goldwater supported the Tribal Council's request and submitted the Grand Canyon expansion bill (S.1296) on March 20, 1973, with a provision to add 251,000 acres to the reservation (Hirst). The Tribal Council sent members to Washington to testify at hearings. The Havasupai reservation provision was deleted in the Senate, but survived the House of Representatives and Conference Committee. In the last days of the Congress S.1296 was passed. On January 3, 1974, President Ford signed the bill into law. The enactment of Public Law 93-620 restored the largest amount of land ever returned to a single tribe. The Tribal Council's efforts had been very successful, and had served to unite the Tribe and to reinforce their sense of community interests.

The 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act permitted assistance funds to be given directly to tribes. This law empowered Indian tribes by making possible direct control of services. In 1975 the Havasupai Tribal Council requested that government funds be granted directly to the tribe. This change placed contractual control of services in the hands of the Council instead of the BIA. They have since operated the entire education program themselves,

as well as controlling other services. By 1975 tourism receipts reached \$200,000 (Martin, 1986). While wage income for the tribe totaled a mere \$7,820 in 1955, it reached over \$450,000 by 1975-76, half from federally funded programs in education health, law enforcement and community development (Martin, 1986). Because these funds were channeled through the Tribal Council the Council became important as an employer. This growth in the Council's importance and influence, together with the salaries offered led younger people to enter tribal government (Martin, 1986).

Today the Havasupai Tribal Council serves as a democratic and representative body of the Tribe, independent of outside control. What began as a federally imposed and ineffectual institution has grown and achieved success in providing the Havasupai Tribe with some sense of independence and self-determination. Nonetheless the Tribal Council remains very much dependent on the federal government. The withdrawal of funding by the government would once again collapse the Havasupai economy and affect the power, influence and authority of the Tribal Council. The Tribe survived for many centuries in a harsh desert. During the last century they have now survived an even harsher subjugation. Hopefully their present formal political organization will serve to further liberate them.

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