

to bind the youths of the Pueblo to the community as it exists and as it has existed over the centuries. Blue Lake, therefore, symbolizes the unity and continuity of the Pueblo; it is the central symbol of the Indians' religion as the cross is in Christianity. Because the symbolism of Blue Lake extends to the entire watershed, the entire area is sacred. The numerous shrines and holy places exist throughout the area because the watershed is sacred; the watershed is not made sacred by the presence of particular shrines. It would be a tragic misunderstanding to construe the Indians' religious use of the area as involving only occasional use of a few sacred precincts.

The strong leadership necessary to achieve progress for the Pueblo in the contemporary world requires the preservation of the religious base for the organization of power in the community. The traditional religion is the foundation of the social and political structure of the Pueblo. The sacred Rio Pueblo separates the two imposing adobe structures (surely the most famous Indian constructions on the continent) and thus divides the Pueblo physically into north and south areas. Each half of the Pueblo is organized in three kivas or societies, each of which is a religious as well as a social and political unit. Each kiva represents a separate religious system with a complicated structure of subgroups. All of the many religious organizations require secret practices of their members, most of which occur in the Blue Lake area at different times and places. The communal education of the sons of the Pueblo is accomplished both in the kivas and in the Blue Lake area. The governmental system of the Pueblo is determined principally by the religious leaders of the kivas. If the power of the Indians' ancient religion is weakened, the power of the kivas will diminish. The bonds between the Pueblo and her sons will weaken, the authority of the Pueblo Council will be impaired, and there will be no system of effective leadership of the people.

Maintenance of complete privacy in, and the natural ecology of, the Blue Lake area are the most important factors in preserving the ancient religion. Domination of the Blue Lake area by tourists, campers, sportsmen, and loggers will destroy both the privacy necessary for the practice of the religion and the natural ecology of the area which is an integral part of the religion in the lives of the people. On May 27, 1960, Oliver La Farge described the Indians' statement of the religious importance to them of the Blue Lake area (exhibit 3):

"They then restated the vital importance to Taos Pueblo of the Blue Lake area, the sacredness of the lake and surrounding land, the location in that general vicinity of a number of shrines of the greatest importance, and the constant threat to this sacred area posed by the admission of non-Indian pleasure seekers. They reminded me that the whole pattern of Taos life that they are maintaining depends upon their religion, and their religion, in turn, depends upon the sacred area. Their earnestness and intensity when they discuss this matter is extremely moving."

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The trust patent provided for by H.R. 3306 will resolve a controversy between Taos Pueblo and the United States which has continued over 65 years. The religious importance of the Blue Lake area to the Indians was first noted by a Government official in 1903;