

CHAPTER IX

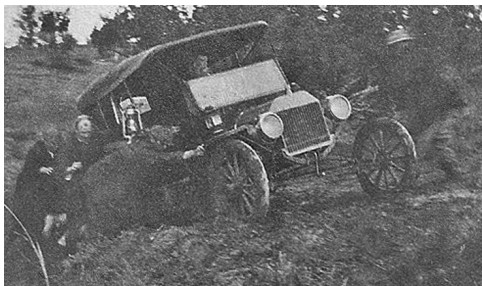
THE EXCURSION TO WALPI TO SEE THE HOPI SNAKE DANCE CEREMONY

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7

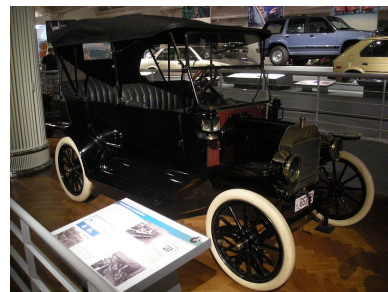
The excursion to the Hopi Snake Dance Ceremony in Walpi, Arizona was not mentioned in the doctor's memoir but Al and Edna saved eighteen pictures from that day. The doctor most probably was behind the camera – or maybe Edna.

The pictures are not dated but they were probably taken at the Snake Dance of 1915 or 1917 and not earlier. Close inspection of the picture of the automobile being pushed out of the mud in picture 18 shows it is a Ford Model T, 1914 vintage. Thus, since the Snake Ceremony was held only in odd numbered years, the pictures must have been taken in 1915 or later.

Both vehicles below have the same six sided radiator with its cylindrical cap/ornament, the same position of the headlights and the lanterns, the same crankshaft crank handle, the same dropdown windscreen, the same white wheels, the same convertible top and the same rectangular rear window.



**Image from the Wigglesworth
Family Collection**



1914 Ford Model T ¹

The notes written directly on the pictures appear to have been written with a ball point pen, dating the notes to after about 1950, when ball point pens came into popular use, and before Edna's or Al's death, about 1963 at the latest.

The Hopi Snake Dance (for rain) is held every two years on the odd year. The Library of Congress has posted on the web motion picture footage of the 1913 dance. That year Theodore Roosevelt and his sons Archie (19 years) and Kermit (15) and a cousin, Nicholas (20), attended. Doc and Edna did not attend. Their youngest child, Jack, had been born just four months before the 1913 dance. The pictures shown here correspond closely with what is shown in the 1913 motion picture, which you can view here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfmPGcyV7IM>

Here is a still shot from the motion picture showing TR and two of the three young men with him. The one on the left was smoking a cigar in this scene. The annotation prepared by the Library of Congress is quoted on the right below.

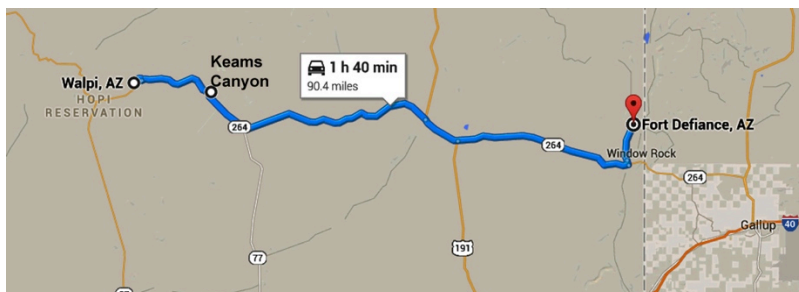


“On August 20, 1913, TR observed . . . the ritual Hopi snake-dance at Walpi on the Hopi Reservation. TR was on a journey through the Southwest with his sons Archie and Quentin, and a young cousin, Nicholas Roosevelt . . . The snake-dance takes place around a rough column of rock, with Hopis . . . carrying snakes in their hands and mouths, circling the rock. . .”²

Below are Russ Wigglesworth's comments prompted by the Wigglesworth Snake Dance pictures:

I recognized Walpi because it simply hasn't changed. It's a Hopi village atop First Mesa on the Hopi reservation. Established around 900 CE, Walpi is one of the oldest continually inhabited villages in the United States. Traditionally the Snake Dance is held there in late August or early September. There are several villages nearby on three separate mesas, which are named, in English, First Mesa, Second Mesa, etc. Third Mesa is the site of the village of Old Oraibi, another very old continually inhabited village, going back to around 1100 CE.

Keams Canyon is a small town, more a village, thirteen miles east of Walpi on First Mesa. I had to look up the road – Arizona 264. The sole restaurant's featured item is lamb and barley soup – one needs to acquire a taste for it. In Doc's day there would not have been more than a two-track across the desert, and when it rains in that country, if you're off the pavement, you don't move until it dries out. I don't remember when the road was paved but I think the first time I was on it, in 1946, it was still gravel. I would imagine that only the trading post and a few buildings would have been there back in Doc's day.



This Google Map gives the driving time as 100 minutes but because the road was not paved or improved, it possibly took twice as long or longer for Al. This suggests that the trip may have been split into two days to insure a timely arrival. Perhaps Keams Canyon, only 13 miles from Walpi, was where the party spent the night before the day of the ceremony. (DFJ)

Memory tells me there are 12 Hopi villages. I haven't been back on the Res since 2009. My brother and I attended a Bean Dance several years ago – an all-night, several-kiva affair. At that time we were able to drive my car to Walpi. I don't think that's allowed now. And as I said no image taking is allowed.

The Hopi are a proud people and poorer than church mice. Their reservation is surrounded by the more numerous Navajo reservations and the two nations were traditional enemies. Their legends indicate they migrated from the north after coming up from the bowels of the earth through the Sipapu (a hole in the ground.) Ethnologists and anthropologists believe the present-day Puebloan cultures, Hopi and Navajo, are direct descendants of those northern hunter-gatherers.

The Hopi, like the Navajo, have a tremendous sense of humor, dry and wry and often puzzling to the White tourists. One of the things they'll do is tell you what they think you want to hear. For example, we asked several people which mesa and what day and what time the Bean Dance was to be held and never got the same answer twice. We solved that by finally finding the village elder of Shongopovi, (Second Mesa) who invited us in to his home. He and his wife fed us fresh cookies and hot tea and we had a wonderful time. I like them very much. I am no expert – what I know of them I got first hand, but over very limited occasions.

I was privileged to meet “Doc” (as I knew him) in Washington and we had a great chat sitting on the couch at Jack's home. I was on my way out of the country and had been invited to spend a couple of days with them while I arranged for my visa, etc. We chatted about Durango and the Four Corners area. His memory was astounding. He recalled places clearly and would say, for example, “There is a large outcrop of rock that looks like a coyote...” and I'd know exactly where he meant...or “Two rocks that look like the legs of an elephant...” which is a place well-known now to people driving south to Kayenta. I wish I had paid

more attention and had gotten him to talk more about his experiences. A wonderful human being.

It is my understanding that the Snake Dance is now closed to non-tribal members. I suspect that they got tired of the disrespect whites showed during the dance.

It's a sacred ceremony designed to bring rain. The Hopi believe that the first Hopis came up from below ground through the Sipapu as I mentioned, and believe that the snake, living underground, helps bridge the spiritual gap and helps to bring rain.



Photo taken at Long House, Mesa Verde National Park. ³

The sipapu is the small round hole in the floor of the kiva. The larger round hole in the floor is a fire pit. Observe that the air intake (little rectangular door in the wall), the stones that block air from the air intake, the fire pit and the sipapu are all in a line; this aspect of the design was intentional. ³

I was told while visiting Mishongovi (Second Mesa) a number of years ago that many years ago they used rattlesnakes but now use bull snakes, often misidentified by tourists as rattlers.

Perhaps now that the dance is closed to non-members they're using rattlers again!

There are 13 species of rattlesnake in Arizona, inhabiting different sections of the state. Below is the bull snake. Its average length is 6 feet but it can grow to as much as 8 feet 4 inches. Next is the prairie rattler, which, according to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, is the snake used by the Hopi in the dance. It usually grows to 3 feet 3 inches in length but can be larger. (DFJ) ⁴



Bull Snake ⁵



Prairie Rattlesnake ⁶

THE SNAKE DANCE PICTURES



Pic. 1. These men are standing on the cliff at the edge of the mesa emptying their stomachs to cleanse themselves before the ceremony.



Pic. 2. More emptying stomach.



Pic. 3. Ritual cleansing continues. Note “duster” with sleeve hanging down draped over a person’s left arm on the right. At the turn of the twentieth century, people wore dusters to protect their clothes when riding in open cars or on horseback on the dirt roads of the day. ⁷



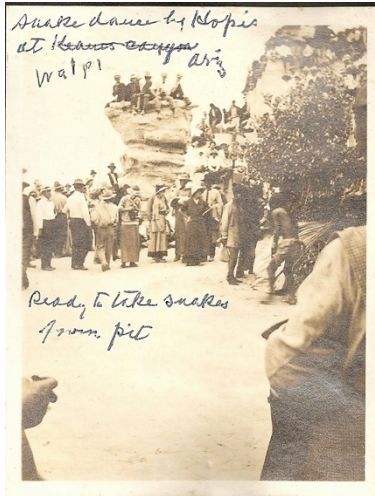
Pic. 3a. Detail from picture 3 showing spectators’ expressions.



Pic. 4. At the edge of the mesa dressing for the ceremony. Note the two young “free range” chickens at bottom of picture.



Pic. 4a. Celebrant adjusts a bracelet.



Pic. 5

Dancer's Rock, 1879, Walpi, Arizona,⁸



Pic. 5a Detail showing spectators. Snakes are kept in a pit under the tarp on right.



Pic 6. Picking snakes from the pit.



Pic. 7



Pic. 8



Pic. 9a. Detail. The snake is stroked with a feather which causes it to relax and not draw itself into a position from which it might strike.



Pic. 9



Pic. 10



Pic. 10a Detail.



Pic. 11



Pic. 12



Pic. 12a Detail.



Pic. 13. It is my understanding that the Snake Dance is now closed to non-tribal members. I suspect that they got tired of the disrespect Whites showed during the dance. It's a sacred ceremony designed to bring rain. The Hopi believe that their people came up from below ground thru the Sipapu as I mentioned, and believe that the snake, living underground, helps bridge the spiritual gap and helps to bring rain. I was told while visiting Mishongovi a number of years ago that many years ago they used rattlesnakes but now use bull-snakes. The latter are often mis-identified by tourists as rattlers. Perhaps now that the dance is closed to non members they're using rattlers again!



Pic. 14. Note the pile of long handled hoes and picks. The chickens would be for eggs or food or for the chicken pull. As I remember at least one trip to Walpi there were chickens all around; Old Oraibi had quite a few. In Doc's day he'd probably have seen a lot of turkeys, as well. At bottom center is part of a sheep's pelt – the rear legs. The forelegs can be seen on the ground behind the bottom of the camera. Part of a costume?... or left over from a recent dressing of a slaughtered sheep? In both Hopi and Navajo life, sheep play a large part – for wool for blankets and clothing, and for food. You'll see usually women, kids, and dogs today herding sheep on both reservations.

The camera in the left foreground appears to be a Kodak No.1A Folding Pocket Camera. It took 2.5" x 4.25" photos on 116mm roll film. It was manufactured in models A to D from 1905 to 1915 . It cost \$12, (\$295.73 in 2011 dollars) which was a goodly price then. ⁹



Pic. 15

THE CHICKEN PULL

The Chicken Pull is exactly that, although I don't think it's been done the past several years. A friend and I missed one by several days, we were told. I believe that was in 1969. A chicken is buried in the dirt with only the head showing. Young men would ride bareback rapidly and reach down and attempt to pull the head off the chicken as they rode by. I'd say it's akin to young kids showing off on their skate boards on a full pipe, etc.

**You can imagine why it's probably no longer done, I would guess because of complaints by white women. I suspect that's not politically correct to say, but the intervention of the Whites and their propensity to enforce White ethics is among the many reasons image taking is no longer allowed, among other things.
(RW)**



Pic. 16



Pic. 17. In this picture one can see the bottom of a rider's footwear above the horse's back as he inverts his body in reaching down to the ground. The audience watches with keen interest. (DFJ)

(Meanwhile, bullfighting remains a popular tradition in many parts of the world despite staunch opposition from those who say it is inhumane. Ritual slaughter? Beautiful spectacle? Does moral or cultural relativism apply to the chicken pull? . . . to the bullfight? You decide. DFJ) ¹⁰



There is also an annual foot race, which I've missed twice, and basically anyone can enter. With two bionic knees I don't think I'll try it now. I don't believe there was any special time for the chicken pull – just whenever the young men felt like it, perhaps. Again guessing, I'd think it would happen any time there was a gathering for any reason, such as the Snake Dance, the Bean Dance, etc., just as we might go outside to toss the football after Thanksgiving Dinner. (RW)



Pic. 18. 1914 Model T Ford. Note the muddy rut in the foreground.

I would guess the car getting stuck was coming back from the Snake Dance. Late August and early September tend to be the rainy season. I have no idea about the priest or the others in the photo. (RW)

NOTES

1. Image taken on 11/26/2014 from the website: File: Henry Ford Museum August 2012 89 (1914 Ford Model T).jpg. **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.: Henry_Ford_Museum_August_2012_89_(1914_Ford_Model_T).jpg**

2. Taken on 11/30/2014 from the YouTube website: Hopi Indians Dance for Theodore Roosevelt at [Walpi, Ariz.] 1913. From the Theodore Roosevelt Association Collection (Library of Congress) Published by The Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfmPGcyV7IM>

3. Wikipedia contributors. "Sipapu." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 16 Aug. 2012. Web. 10 Jan. 2013.

4. Taken on 12/2/2014 from the website Arizona Game and Fish Department: Managing Today for Wildlife Tomorrow. Arizona Rattlesnakes. http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/arizona-rattlesnakes.shtml

5. Wikipedia contributors. "Bullsnake." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 18 Oct. 2014. Web. 3 Dec. 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullsnake>

6. Wikipedia contributors. "Crotalus viridis." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 3 Dec. 2014.

7. Wikipedia contributors. "Duster (clothing)." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 28 Nov. 2014. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

8. Photo of Dancer's Rock in 1879 by John K. Hillers. Wikipedia contributors. "Hopi." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 23 Nov. 2014. Web. 27 Nov. 2014.

9. Taken on 12/5/2014 from the website: Historic Camera, History Librarium. "No. 1A Folding Pocket Kodak, Model D" http://www.historiccamera.com/cgi-bin/librarium2/pm.cgi?action=app_display&app=datasheet&app_id=681

10. Wikipedia contributors. "Cultural relativism." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 4 Jan 2013. Web. 14 Jan 2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_relativism#Comparison_to_moral_relativism

The old Hopi villages, Walpi, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Mesa,_Arizona

Mishongovi,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Mesa,_Arizona

Hotvela-Paaqavi http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotevilla-Bacavi,_Arizona

Third mesa

Shongopovi, second mesa, etc. etc. are built on three mesas: First Mesa, Second Mesa, Third Mesa.

8/20/13

Nicholas Roosevelt (June 12, 1893 – February 1982) 20

Archie Roosevelt (April 10, 1894 – October 13, 1979) 19

Quentin Roosevelt (November 19, 1897 – **July 14, 1918**) 15

Parenthetically, my brother and I were once “arrested” by the Kikmongwi or chief of Old Oraibi, a gentleman named Stanley Bahnimptewa. (Stress on second syllable.) A long story.