

# The Navajo Diaspora

Copyright (c) 2008 by Frank W. Hardy, Ph.D.

## Introduction

We think of Navajos as rural people, and on or near the reservation they are. But there are Navajos living in every state of the union except for Alaska, Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the District of Columbia. Every other state has at least some Navajos. Once these individuals move away from the reservation, they are largely urban. Below we review where the 2000 census says Navajos live, in their various states and counties.

## Major Populations

Arizona and New Mexico are the only two states with Navajos in five figures. The Navajo reservation occupies parts of three states (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah). Colorado is immediately adjacent to both San Juan County New Mexico and San Juan County Utah, but there aren't many Navajos in Colorado compared to the reservation states, because across the line into Colorado from both south and west is Ute territory.

Table 1  
States With Large Navajo Population

State	Navajos
Arizona	89950
New Mexico	68790
Utah	9375
Colorado	2510

### On a reservation

Within those states which have the largest concentrations of Navajos, six counties entirely contain the main reservation – three in Arizona, two in New Mexico, and one in Utah.

Table 2  
The Main Reservation

State	County	City/Town	Navajos
Arizona	Apache County		36775
	Navajo County		22005
	Coconino County	Tuba City	19900
New Mexico	McKinley County	Gallup (nearby)	30900
	San Juan County	Shiprock	24530
Utah	San Juan County		5570

In addition to the six counties which contain the main Navajo reservation, there are another six counties that among them contain four smaller reservation-like entities involving Navajos. See table 3.

Table 3  
Off-Reservation Reservations

State	County	City	Navajos
Arizona	La Paz County	Colorado River Indian Reservation	110
California	Riverside County		135
	San Bernardino County		275
New Mexico	Bernalillo County	Tohajiilee Chapter; Albuquerque	5380
	Cibola County	Ramah Chapter; Grants	2200
	Socorro County	Alamo Chapter	1320

A Navajo reservation in California? Well, in a manner of speaking, yes. The Colorado River Indian Reservation (CRIR) is partly in California (two counties), partly in Arizona (one county). This small, outlying reservation lies 195 miles west of Phoenix on highway 95. Some Navajos live there, and have for generations. CRIR is anomalous for more than one reason. It straddles the Colorado River, for one thing, and brings together Native Americans from four different tribes (Chemehuevi, Hopi, Mojave, Navajo). It is home to a total of 9201 people, 3389 of whom are registered members of their respective tribes. The Navajos who live at CRIR stay in touch with the rest of the tribe farther east, driving long distances in order to do so.<sup>1</sup> As one can see from Table 2, only 520 of the 3389 individuals (15.3%) who make up the Colorado River Indian Tribes are Navajo.

The remaining three counties listed in table 3 represent the Tohajiilee, Ramah, and Alamo chapters. Tohajiilee Chapter (formerly known as Cañoncito Chapter)<sup>2</sup> is located in Bernalillo County. Of the 5380 Navajos living in Bernalillo County, 1649 live on this small reservation. Presumably the remaining 3731 live mostly in Albuquerque. The population of Ramah Chapter is 1676, so Navajos living elsewhere in Cibola County (2200 - 1676 = 524) are probably concentrated in or near Grants. The total population of the Alamo Chapter is 2000, but only 1320 Navajos live there, so one would infer that there are 680 non-Navajos living on that reservation as well.

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado\\_River\\_Indian\\_Reservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_River_Indian_Reservation).

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tohajiilee\\_Indian\\_Reservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tohajiilee_Indian_Reservation).

## Off the reservation

*Arizona.* Every county in Arizona, except two (Greenlee, Santa Cruz), has at least some Navajos. And every county in Arizona which has Navajos, except two (Gila, Graham), has them in at least three figures. See table 4 below.

Table 4  
Other Arizona Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	City	Navajos
Maricopa County	Phoenix	8880
Pinal County		315
Pima County	Tucson	955
Yavapai County	Prescott	375
Cochise County	Sierra Vista (?)	250
Mohave County	Kingman	180
Yuma County	Yuma	105

Counties omitted from table 4 include Apache, Navajo, and Coconino, which together take in the Arizona portion of the main Navajo reservation and La Paz County, which contains the Arizona portion of the Colorado River Indian Reservation. These were discussed earlier.

It would appear from table 4 that many of those Arizona Navajos who do not live on reservations live in cities. Maricopa County and Pinal County contain Greater Phoenix, Pima County contains Tucson, Yavapai County contains Prescott, Mohave County contains Kingman, and Yuma County contains Yuma. The only town that could be called an urban center in Cochise County is Sierra Vista.

*New Mexico.* In table 5 (below) it would appear that many of those New Mexico Navajos who live off reservation live in cities (Santa Fe, Las Cruces, Las Vegas). Otero County remains a mystery to me. The 160 Navajos living there are either in the town of Alamogordo or on the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation nearby.

Table 5  
Other New Mexico Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	City	Navajos
Sandoval County	(Rural, NW)	2870
Santa Fe County	Santa Fe	290
Doña Ana County	Las Cruces	270
Rio Arriba County	(Rural, W)	215
Valencia County	Los Lunas	185
San Miguel County	Las Vegas	160
Otero County	Alamogordo?	160

*Utah.* As in Arizona and New Mexico, most Utah counties have at least some Navajos and the counties that do, seem to cluster around urban centers. Salt Lake County, Davis County, and Tooele County all contain parts of Greater Salt Lake City. Washington County contains Saint George, Utah County contains Provo, Weber County contains Ogdon, Grand County contains Moab – although some Navajo residents of this county might well be living rurally, Iron County contains Cedar City, and Sevier County contains Richfield, although Richfield is a pretty small place. The point to notice is there is not a continuous belt of Navajo residents extending from the reservation to any of these places, with the possible exception of Moab. Instead the population numbers cluster around areas which contain urban centers.

Table 6  
Other Utah Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	City	Navajos
San Juan County	(Rural)	5570
Salt Lake County	Salt Lake City	1835
Davis County		210
Tooele County		100
Washington County		Saint George
Utah County	Provo	245
Weber County	Ogdon	195
Grand County	Moab, (rural)	195
Iron County	Cedar City	170
Sevier County	Richfield (?)	130

*Colorado.* Colorado has a number of counties with Navajo populations, but these are not anywhere near as numerous as those in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Notice that Denver County, Arapahoe County, Jefferson County, and Adams County all contribute to Greater Denver. In addition there are Navajo enclaves or scattered families in Cortez and surrounding areas, Colorado Springs, and Durango. Colorado has no Navajos living on reservation lands. Southern Colorado is basically Ute territory.

Table 7  
Colorado Counties With Navajo Populations  
Great Than 100

County	City	Navajos
El Paso County	Colorado Springs	140
Montezuma County	Cortez, (rural)	835
Denver County	Denver	190
Arapahoe County		165
Jefferson County		150
Adams County		105
La Plata County	Durango	390

## Minor Populations

*California.* Once we leave the four corners area, California has the largest Navajo population, due in part to the fact that some Navajos live on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, which occupies a corner of both Riverside County and San Bernardino County. But this is not the end of the story as regards California. There are also small Navajo populations in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco. See table 8 below.

Table 8  
California Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	City	Navajos
Los Angeles County	Los Angeles	335
Orange County		100
San Diego County	San Diego	410
Alameda County	San Francisco	110
San Francisco County		100

*Other states.* So far we have discussed Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and California. Beyond this, 18 other states have Navajo populations in three figures. See table 9 below.

Table 9  
Other States With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	Navajos
Texas	595
Nevada	555
Washington	445
Oklahoma	435
Idaho	265
Ohio	240
Kansas	240
Oregon	230
North Carolina	220
Wyoming	180
Georgia	175
Missouri	155
Montana	140
Virginia	135
Kentucky	130
Illinois	125
Nebraska	120
Louisiana	100

Of the states listed in table 8, six have individual counties with Navajo populations equal to or greater than 100. See tables 10 and 11 below.

Nevada has two such counties (Clark and Washoe) and Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington state all have one each. Notice that all of these counties contain a major urban center. Thus, Las Vegas and Reno are in the counties which contain the largest numbers of Navajos in Nevada; and similar observations can be made for Columbus, Ohio; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dallas, Texas; and Olympia, Washington.

Table 10  
Nevada Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

County	City	Navajos
Clark County	Las Vegas	390
Washoe County	Reno	110

Table 11  
Other States Having Counties With Navajo Populations  
Equal to or Greater Than 100

State	County	City	Navajos
Ohio	Franklin County	Columbus	110
Oklahoma	Tulsa County	Tulsa	105
Texas	Dallas County	Dallas	130
Washington	Thurston County	Olympia	110

## Conclusion

With a handful of exceptions, such as Tuba City, Shiprock, and Window Rock, Navajos on the reservation live rurally. Once they move off the reservation, however, this rule is reversed. When they go elsewhere, Navajos tend to be urban. See appendix.

## Appendix 1

### Cities Where Navajos Live

Below we summarize our city data by state, by city, and by the number of Navajos possibly living in the respective cities or towns.

Table 12  
Cities With 100 or More Navajos Arranged  
by State With Broadly Approximate  
Population Figures

State	City	Navajos
Arizona	Kingman	180
Arizona	Phoenix*	9195
Arizona	Prescott	375
Arizona	Sierra Vista	250
Arizona	Tucson	955
Arizona	Yuma	105
California	Los Angeles*	435
California	San Diego	410
California	San Francisco*	210
Colorado	Colorado Springs	140
Colorado	Cortez, (rural)	835
Colorado	Denver*	610
Colorado	Durango	390
Nevada	Las Vegas	390
Nevada	Reno	110
New Mexico	Alamogordo?	160
New Mexico	Albuquerque*	3731
New Mexico	Las Cruces	270
New Mexico	Las Vegas	160
New Mexico	Los Lunas	185
New Mexico	Santa Fe	290
Ohio	Columbus	110
Oklahoma	Tulsa	105
Texas	Dallas	130
Utah	Cedar City	170
Utah	Moab, (rural)	195
Utah	Ogdon	195
Utah	Provo	245
Utah	Richfield?	130
Utah	Saint George	320
Utah	Salt Lake City*	2145
Washington	Olympia	110

In table 12, city names marked with an asterisk contain data from either more or from less than one county. Thus, Greater Phoenix includes all or part of both Maricopa and Pinal counties; the population figure for Albuquerque includes data from Bernalillo County apart from Tohajiilee Chapter, just outside of town; Greater Salt Lake City includes all or part of Salt Lake, Davis, and Tooele counties; Greater Denver includes all or part of Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson counties; Greater Los Angeles includes all or part of Los Angeles and Orange counties; and Greater San Francisco includes all or part of Alameda and San Francisco counties.

Table 13  
 Cities With 100 or More Navajos Arranged  
 by City With Broadly Approximate  
 Population Figures

State	City	Navajos
New Mexico	Alamogordo?	160
New Mexico	Albuquerque*	3731
Utah	Cedar City	170
Colorado	Colorado Springs	140
Ohio	Columbus	110
Colorado	Cortez, (rural)	835
Texas	Dallas	130
Colorado	Denver*	610
Colorado	Durango	390
Arizona	Kingman	180
New Mexico	Las Cruces	270
New Mexico	Las Vegas	160
Nevada	Las Vegas	390
California	Los Angeles*	435
New Mexico	Los Lunas	185
Utah	Moab, (rural)	195
Utah	Ogdon	195
Washington	Olympia	110
Arizona	Phoenix*	9195
Arizona	Prescott	375
Utah	Provo	245
Nevada	Reno	110
Utah	Richfield?	130
Utah	Saint George	320
Utah	Salt Lake City*	2145
California	San Diego	410
California	San Francisco*	210
New Mexico	Santa Fe	290
Arizona	Sierra Vista	250
Arizona	Tucson	955
Oklahoma	Tulsa	105
Arizona	Yuma	105



Table 14  
 Cities With 100 or More Navajos Arranged  
 by Broadly Approximate  
 Population Figures

State	City	Navajos
Arizona	Phoenix*	9195
New Mexico	Albuquerque*	3731
Utah	Salt Lake City*	2145
Arizona	Tucson	955
Colorado	Cortez, (rural)	835
Colorado	Denver*	610
California	Los Angeles*	435
California	San Diego	410
Colorado	Durango	390
Nevada	Las Vegas	390
Arizona	Prescott	375
Utah	Saint George	320
New Mexico	Santa Fe	290
New Mexico	Las Cruces	270
Arizona	Sierra Vista	250
Utah	Provo	245
California	San Francisco*	210
Utah	Moab, (rural)	195
Utah	Ogdon	195
New Mexico	Los Lunas	185
Arizona	Kingman	180
Utah	Cedar City	170
New Mexico	Alamogordo?	160
New Mexico	Las Vegas	160
Colorado	Colorado Springs	140
Texas	Dallas	130
Utah	Richfield?	130
Nevada	Reno	110
Ohio	Columbus	110
Washington	Olympia	110
Arizona	Yuma	105
Oklahoma	Tulsa	105

## Appendix 2

### Other Places Where Navajos Live

Table 15  
Counties Where at Least Some but  
Less Than 100 Navajos Live  
Arranged by State

State	County	Navajos
Arizona	Gila County	70
Arizona	Graham County	30
California	Imperial County	15
California	Kern County	60
California	Sacramento County	30
California	Ventura County	50
Colorado	Alamosa County	25
Colorado	Boulder County	95
Colorado	Dolores County	30
Colorado	Fremont County	40
Colorado	Larimer County	45
Colorado	Mesa County	40
Colorado	Montrose County	20
Colorado	Pueblo County	55
Colorado	Rio Grande County	25
Colorado	Saguache County	15
Colorado	San Miguel County	25
Georgia	Chattahoochee County	30
Hawaii	Honolulu County	60
Idaho	Bannock County	20
Idaho	Bingham County	70
Idaho	Fremont County	10
Idaho	Kootenai County	15
Idaho	Twin Falls County	20
Illinois	Cook County	60
Illinois	Lake County	20
Iowa	Lucas County	10
Kansas	Douglas County	95
Kentucky	Knott County	20
Maryland	Montgomery County	40
Minnesota	Hennepin County	15
Missouri	Jackson County	25
Missouri	Jasper County	20
Missouri	Jefferson County	15
Montana	Big Horn County	25
Montana	Lake County	60
Nebraska	Lancaster County	50
Nevada	Carson City	10
Nevada	Churchill County	4
Nevada	Elko County	20
New Mexico	Catron County	40

New Mexico	Chaves County	20
New Mexico	Colfax County	4
New Mexico	Grant County	50
New Mexico	Mora County	20
New Mexico	Quay County	4
New Mexico	Taos County	30
New Mexico	Torrance County	15
New York	Tioga County	15
North Carolina	Cumberland County	55
North Carolina	Onslow County	60
Ohio	Richland County	30
Ohio	Warren County	35
Oklahoma	Cherokee County	45
Oklahoma	Comanche County	30
Oklahoma	Kay County	25
Oklahoma	Lincoln County	10
Oklahoma	Oklahoma County	50
Oklahoma	Osage County	20
Oklahoma	Pawnee County	15
Oklahoma	Pottawatomie County	45
Oregon	Jefferson County	10
Oregon	Marion County	20
Oregon	Multnomah County	80
Oregon	Wasco County	15
South Dakota	Roberts County	4
Texas	Bell County	55
Texas	Bexar County	40
Texas	Denton County	15
Texas	El Paso County	30
Texas	Harris County	95
Texas	Tarrant County	50
Texas	Williamson County	30
Utah	Beaver County	50
Utah	Box Elder County	45
Utah	Cache County	45
Utah	Carbon County	35
Utah	Duchesne County	15
Utah	Garfield County	35
Utah	Juab County	15
Utah	Kane County	40
Utah	Sanpete County	20
Utah	Uintah County	35
Utah	Wasatch County	40
Virginia	Norfolk city	15
Washington	Benton County	40
Washington	King County	80
Washington	Kitsap County	35
Washington	Okanogan County	10
Washington	Pierce County	95
Washington	Snohomish County	25
Wyoming	Albany County	25
Wyoming	Fremont County	20

Table 16  
 Counties Where at Least Some but  
 Less Than 100 Navajos Live  
 Arranged by County

State	County	Navajos
Colorado	Alamosa County	25
Wyoming	Albany County	25
Idaho	Bannock County	20
Utah	Beaver County	50
Texas	Bell County	55
Washington	Benton County	40
Texas	Bexar County	40
Montana	Big Horn County	25
Idaho	Bingham County	70
Colorado	Boulder County	95
Utah	Box Elder County	45
Utah	Cache County	45
Utah	Carbon County	35
Nevada	Carson City	10
New Mexico	Catron County	40
Georgia	Chattahoochee County	30
New Mexico	Chaves County	20
Oklahoma	Cherokee County	45
Nevada	Churchill County	4
New Mexico	Colfax County	4
Oklahoma	Comanche County	30
Illinois	Cook County	60
North Carolina	Cumberland County	55
Texas	Denton County	15
Colorado	Dolores County	30
Kansas	Douglas County	95
Utah	Duchesne County	15
Texas	El Paso County	30
Nevada	Elko County	20
Colorado	Fremont County	40
Idaho	Fremont County	10
Wyoming	Fremont County	20
Utah	Garfield County	35
Arizona	Gila County	70
Arizona	Graham County	30
New Mexico	Grant County	50
Texas	Harris County	95
Minnesota	Hennepin County	15
Hawaii	Honolulu County	60
California	Imperial County	15
Missouri	Jackson County	25
Missouri	Jasper County	20
Missouri	Jefferson County	15
Oregon	Jefferson County	10
Utah	Juab County	15
Utah	Kane County	40
Oklahoma	Kay County	25

California	Kern County	60
Washington	King County	80
Washington	Kitsap County	35
Kentucky	Knott County	20
Idaho	Kootenai County	15
Illinois	Lake County	20
Montana	Lake County	60
Nebraska	Lancaster County	50
Colorado	Larimer County	45
Oklahoma	Lincoln County	10
Iowa	Lucas County	10
Oregon	Marion County	20
Colorado	Mesa County	40
Maryland	Montgomery County	40
Colorado	Montrose County	20
New Mexico	Mora County	20
Oregon	Multnomah County	80
Virginia	Norfolk city	15
Washington	Okanogan County	10
Oklahoma	Oklahoma County	50
North Carolina	Onslow County	60
Oklahoma	Osage County	20
Oklahoma	Pawnee County	15
Washington	Pierce County	95
Oklahoma	Pottawatomie County	45
Colorado	Pueblo County	55
New Mexico	Quay County	4
Ohio	Richland County	30
Colorado	Rio Grande County	25
South Dakota	Roberts County	4
California	Sacramento County	30
Colorado	Saguache County	15
Colorado	San Miguel County	25
Utah	Sanpete County	20
Washington	Snohomish County	25
New Mexico	Taos County	30
Texas	Tarrant County	50
New York	Tioga County	15
New Mexico	Torrance County	15
Idaho	Twin Falls County	20
Utah	Uintah County	35
California	Ventura County	50
Ohio	Warren County	35
Utah	Wasatch County	40
Oregon	Wasco County	15
Texas	Williamson County	30

Table 17  
 Counties Where at Least Some but  
 Less Than 100 Navajos Live  
 Arranged by Population

State	County	Navajos
Colorado	Boulder County	95
Kansas	Douglas County	95
Texas	Harris County	95
Washington	Pierce County	95
Oregon	Multnomah County	80
Washington	King County	80
Arizona	Gila County	70
Idaho	Bingham County	70
California	Kern County	60
Hawaii	Honolulu County	60
Illinois	Cook County	60
Montana	Lake County	60
North Carolina	Onslow County	60
Colorado	Pueblo County	55
North Carolina	Cumberland County	55
Texas	Bell County	55
California	Ventura County	50
Nebraska	Lancaster County	50
New Mexico	Grant County	50
Oklahoma	Oklahoma County	50
Texas	Tarrant County	50
Utah	Beaver County	50
Colorado	Larimer County	45
Oklahoma	Cherokee County	45
Oklahoma	Pottawatomie County	45
Utah	Box Elder County	45
Utah	Cache County	45
Colorado	Fremont County	40
Colorado	Mesa County	40
Maryland	Montgomery County	40
New Mexico	Catron County	40
Texas	Bexar County	40
Utah	Kane County	40
Utah	Wasatch County	40
Washington	Benton County	40
Ohio	Warren County	35
Utah	Carbon County	35
Utah	Garfield County	35
Utah	Uintah County	35
Washington	Kitsap County	35
Arizona	Graham County	30
California	Sacramento County	30
Colorado	Dolores County	30
Georgia	Chattahoochee County	30
New Mexico	Taos County	30
Ohio	Richland County	30
Oklahoma	Comanche County	30

Texas	El Paso County	30
Texas	Williamson County	30
Colorado	Alamosa County	25
Colorado	Rio Grande County	25
Colorado	San Miguel County	25
Missouri	Jackson County	25
Montana	Big Horn County	25
Oklahoma	Kay County	25
Washington	Snohomish County	25
Wyoming	Albany County	25
Colorado	Montrose County	20
Idaho	Bannock County	20
Idaho	Twin Falls County	20
Illinois	Lake County	20
Kentucky	Knott County	20
Missouri	Jasper County	20
Nevada	Elko County	20
New Mexico	Chaves County	20
New Mexico	Mora County	20
Oklahoma	Osage County	20
Oregon	Marion County	20
Utah	Sanpete County	20
Wyoming	Fremont County	20
California	Imperial County	15
Colorado	Saguache County	15
Idaho	Kootenai County	15
Minnesota	Hennepin County	15
Missouri	Jefferson County	15
New Mexico	Torrance County	15
New York	Tioga County	15
Oklahoma	Pawnee County	15
Oregon	Wasco County	15
Texas	Denton County	15
Utah	Duchesne County	15
Utah	Juab County	15
Virginia	Norfolk city	15
Idaho	Fremont County	10
Iowa	Lucas County	10
Nevada	Carson City	10
Oklahoma	Lincoln County	10
Oregon	Jefferson County	10
Washington	Okanogan County	10
Nevada	Churchill County	4
New Mexico	Colfax County	4
New Mexico	Quay County	4
South Dakota	Roberts County	4