

Between Four Sacred Mountains:
The Dine' and the Land in Contemporary America

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America is an interactive Master's thesis in the form of a multimedia Web site at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/Navajo/front.html>. The thesis examines four mountains which mark the physical boundaries of the 25, 000 square mile Dine'¹ reservation spanning Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. Moreover, the mountains--Blanca Peak, Mount Taylor, San Francisco Peaks, and Hesperus Peaks--have even greater importance as spiritual boundaries which are vital to Dine' culture.

The thesis progresses from a consideration of the physical landscape to an exploration of the sacred mountains in different versions of the Dine' oral Creation Story. Then the Dine' ritual system is briefly discussed with more intense examinations of the sacred mountains' associations with the sacred Medicine Bundle and the Blessingway ceremony, often considered "the main stalk" of Dine' ceremonials. The next section deals with the sacred mountains' relationship to the hogan, the traditional Dine' home and site of religious ceremonies. The final part of the thesis is a thorough investigation into the history, politics, and effects of the Navajo-Hopi "land dispute."

The site's text is complemented with images, audio clips, and a guestbook where viewers are invited to "sign in" and contribute their opinions and suggestions about the site's design and content.

¹ Dine', a term meaning "The People," is preferred to the term "Navajo."