NAVAJO COUNTRY IN 1932

down so that the turquoise could be mounted.

identify an older, handmade bead. **#7** 10128/12 The ornate wirework may indicate that this was made at Zuni or Acoma Pueblo.

#8 10127/12

CASE 2

1 10182/12

The wirework might indicate a Pueblo origin.

The stones are Persian turquoise, first imported by

Lorenzo Hubbell in the late 1800s and early 1900s

when American turquoise was not yet fully available.

#3 10068/12 Klagetoh was established in the 1920s about 15 miles

south of Ganado. In 1935, Winnie Balcomb from Kinteel Trading Post shot up the Klagetoh Post with her 45s because they were selling flour for 10 cents less than she was. It wasn't true, and Balcomb apologized!

This is an excellent example of sandcasting where

sand is mixed with oil to stabilize and harden it. Then

a design is carved into it, and silver is poured in. The

high bezels and flat stones are typical of early work.

#5 10068/12

#4 10058/12

Ketoh is an English transliteration of the Navajo word for bowguard. **#6** 10301/12

This piece shows the wear of continual use by its

The bezels come up high on the sides of the turquoise, a sign of an early piece.

#5 10302/12

CASE 3

1 10207/12

former owner.

#8 10060/12

#3 10112/12

Another beautiful example of early sandcasting. CASE 4

This is an unusual casting that had several breaks

when the smith shaped the straight casting into the

bracelet form. Several original repairs are visible on the

reverse. Annealing is the process of heating the metal to

the time had only blowpipes or bellows to heat up their

fire, it is not unexpected to find these kinds of errors.

Very heavy silver formed from an ingot. When silver

or ingot, that was then worked into the bracelet.

Typically, early Pueblo silverwork often was more

have been made at Zuni Pueblo.

intricate than Navajo work at the time. This ring may

slugs were available, they were melted into a silver bar,

Mera felt this was a very early example of a *Ketoh*,

The bezel and turquoise were added later.

because the decoration was made with the edge of a file.

make it pliable for bending, but if the metal is not hot enough, breaks can occur. Considering that artists at

#4 10211/12

Very heavy silver formed from an ingot. When silver slugs were available, they were melted into a silver bar, or ingot, that was then worked into the bracelet. **#6** 10056/12

1 1 10398/12 This may be an early example of Zuni Pueblo use of drops extending below the piece of jewelry. Jewelers

CASE 5

CASE 6

1 10251/12

#8 10351/12

#7 10338/12 Garnets were found on the Navajo lands in ant hills, as the ants would dig them up when making their nests. Before turquoise became more plentiful, jewelers often set these garnets.

Turquoise was first set in silver around 1880 in a ring

made by Atsidi Chon. However, there could have been

other unknown smiths who accomplished setting

was infested with rattle snakes and Cora O'Farrell,

owner with her husband Johnny from 1918-1935, served

tourists "tuna" sandwiches that were actually made of

turquoise at the same time or earlier.

were inspired by the Spanish jewelry they were seeing.

#2 10111/12 Red Lake was two story building, the bottom was of stone, and the top of Arbuckle Coffee crates. The area

rattlesnake

#4 10223/12

silver, the horizontal lines were gouged out with a chisel, and the dots in the center were made with the point of a broken file. **#5** 10209/12 The post was at the bottom of a canyon, and the half-

mile road to get there was steep and treacherous – "the

here in a hogan on the property.

roughest d—n mile in America." Mera stayed overnight

The Gouldings traded on the property from 1921. Harry

Goulding is said to have taken photos of Monument

entice him to film in the area. Ford subsequently made

"Stagecoach (1939)" starring John Wayne. Some of the

Squash Blossom necklaces consist of several silver

squash blossoms along the beaded necklaces, with a

for crescent). The Navajo first learned of the naja

design from seeing Spanish horses with the same

motif used by the Spanish was the pomegranate,

of which they were more familiar. On this early

piece, the ornaments look more like the Spanish

which the Navajo evolved into the squash blossom,

crescent-shaped pendant called a naja (the Diné word

ornament as part of the bridle. In addition, a common

Valley to John Ford, the famed movie director, to

This piece illustrates some of the early techniques

used to craft a bracelet. It was cast of coin or ingot

actors and crew stayed at the trading post. **#8** 10175/12

#6 10304/12

pomegranate, rather than the elongated flowers of the squash blossom. **#9** 10273/12 This is a slightly later piece showing the long flowers of the squash blossom. Characteristic of many early necklaces is an almost round Naja, as seen here. **#11** 10129/12

The cluster arrangement of the turquoise is a layout

jewelry. This could be an early precursor of the design.

The turquoise in this ring is the same type as in the one

were probably made by the same unknown person.

Mera spent the night of October 10th in Kayenta.

listed above. Similar design elements mean the two rings

that became almost a trademark of Zuni Pueblo

CASE 7

#15 10072/12

14 10131/12

turquoise, is accomplished by hammering the silver from the inside, often with a die that has an exact negative that is placed on the front side of the metal.

Lorenzo Hubbell was somewhat of an innovator among

traders. When turquoise was still hard to come by in

the late 1800s and early 1900s, he imported turquoise

turquoise mines in the world existed. The stones were

their high domes. He also bought more modern tools

from Persia (now Iran) where some of the oldest

already made into cabochons, easily recognized by

Mera stayed overnight on October 14th at the Monte

#9 10135/12

Vista Hotel in Flagstaff, AZ.

CASE 8

#6 10187/12

1 10113/12 Here again we see a crack in the casting when the jeweler shaped it into the bracelet. Eventually jewelers perfected the annealing process, especially once they obtained gas torches. **#2** 10256/12 Leupp was built in 1910 and operated until 1980. **#3** 10252/12 Named for a nearby cliff dwelling, the post was started by S.I. Richardson in 1926. It became known mainly for the saddle blankets the Richardsons encouraged the local weavers to make. **#5** 10253/12 The first dies used for stamping were made from scraps of iron, such as railroad spikes or old files. **#6** 10309/12 Repoussé, the raised design we see surrounding the

#6 10336/12 Silver beads were made from two domed buttons. A hole was drilled from the inside of each half and then they were soldered together. The hole has a slight outward flange, and this characteristic can be used to

CURATOR H.P. MERA'S TRIP TO CASE 1 **#2** 10092/12 It appears that the addition of the turquoise was an afterthought. One of the small squares was tooled

for the artists that he dealt with in his surrounding area, resulting in their more refined work at an earlier time than in other areas of the reservation.

This casting was quite sophisticated for the time as

#7 10063/12

there are both thick curvilinear pieces and thinner parts intended to be stamped. **#11** 10136/12

The trading post is the oldest continuously operating trading post on the Navajo reservation. It is now a

National Historic Site operated by the Park Service. CASE 9

This small bracelet was made for a child, as it was an important Navajo custom to give a child turquoise

#2 10257/12

to wear. Turquoise is protective and symbolizes luck, happiness and wealth.

#7 10057/12 One can see that in the lower corners especially, that the casting was incomplete and the artist filled it in to

10 10345/12

stabilize the bowguard.

scarce commodity.

The artist here used three turquoise beads that probably once had been part of a necklace. Re-using beads and ear bobs on jewelry was not uncommon in the late 1800s and early 1900s when turquoise was a

The concho (or concha) belt seems to have a dual

origin. The idea of the concho belt originated from the

the Spanish bridle ornaments were the scalloped edge,

German silver belts worn by some Plains Tribes that

were sometimes traded to the Navajo. Derived from

#2 10284/12

small holes at the edge and the file mark decoration.

#3 10294/12 The buckle appears to be much older than the conchos. CASE 11 **#2** 10237/12 Mera was told that the family had owned this bracelet

The name Kin Teel means "wide house" in Diné. The post began in 1902. In 1938 it was taken over by the

since the late 1880s.

use of natural dyes in their rugs.

#7 10237/12

Twisted wire began appearing in the late nineteenth century. The thick wire was forged by hand and thinner wire was made using a draw plate. **#8** 10115/12

however, Mike, Ella, and Al Perez (White Buffalo) and

Alice Smith Blackgoat think it was done by Hosteen

Harrison of Shiprock, NM. (Hosteen is a respectful

term of address in the Diné language).

This bracelet is a typical Zuni Pueblo style piece;

Lippincotts and re-named 'Wide Ruins," which became

famous for helping the weavers of the area return to the

CASE 12

#2 10231/12

Albert Arnold acquired the post in 1913, and his family ran it until the late 1940s. The building still stands. **#3** 10197/12 The trading post still exists and is in operation in a building constructed in the 1930s. Con Shillingburg

owned it from 1919 to 1946. He was known as Hosteen

Din Chu ("Mr. Yeast") because he had previously been

a baker at Hubbell Trading Post.

turquoise in this bracelet.

#5 10196/12 The silversmith made use of an ear bob for the

it was made by cutting a simple v-shaped groove in a mold, and pouring silver into it. The shape became very popular and can be seen on a variety of bracelets and made by a variety of techniques.

Beclabito (as it spelled on maps) means "water under

a ledge." The original building burned down in 1953,

The triangular shape is called "carinated." Originally

and the new location is now a gas station and a small grocery store.

unsigned. The turquoise used is Persian, identified by the high-domed cabochons. **#4** 10116/12 The turquoise in this bracelet is Persian.

Peninsula. The Spanish brought it with them to

the "New World" as a bridle ornament. The Navajo

used the symbol on their bridles and eventually on

#11 10173/12

necklaces.

a general store and an arts and crafts gallery. **#7** 10070/12 Primarily made by the smiths for their own use, tobacco canteens or flasks were made by attaching two domed stamped silver concha-shaped discs together and attaching a lidded spout. Matching the silver

discs and soldering them together was difficult with

Nearing the end of his trip, Mera stayed for several

nights at Fred Harvey's El Navajo Hotel in Gallup, NM.

The pendant is typical of those made at Isleta Pueblo at

the time. The double-barred cross is frequently referred

to as a dragonfly, an important water symbol in Pueblo iconography. The pendant was added to the Navajomade beads, probably by the bead maker.

road to Gallup. CASE 16 **# 1** 10241/12 Herbert James Hagerman was appointed governor of the New Mexico Territory by President Theodore Roosevelt. He served in that position from 1906

to 1907. From 1923 to 1931, he was the federal

commissioner to the Navajo Nation, appointed by

Secretary of the Interior, Bernard Fall. During his

purchased for the Laboratory of Anthropology.

Number 8 mine, which had just started excavation.

A former earbob is used as the turquoise setting.

The first Southwest American Indian concha belt

was attributed to Atsidi Chon (Ugly Smith). It was

decorative holes inside the scalloped edges and added

filed decoration. This style became known as the First

Phase Concha Belt and it lasted from the late 1860s to

soldering technique, have a copper loop soldered to the

back of the concho allowing the leather belt to be run

1880. Belts made later, when the smiths learned the

tenure, he collected Navajo jewelry, some of which Mera

CASE 17

#4 102147/12 The appearance of twisted wire in this bracelet is deceiving, since the effect is made by tooling.

CASE 13

1 10228/12

#6 10230/12

#3 10110/12 This sandcast bracelet is in a style often identified with the artist Juan de Dios of Zuni Pueblo. It could possibly be by him since his early pieces were

#9 10174/12 The crescent shape of the *naja* was learned by the Spanish from the Muslims living in the Iberian

from the early 1920s. It now is part of the Holiday Inn in Chinle. CASE 14 **# 1** 10263/12 Teec Nos Pos means "trees all around" in the Diné

language, and the trading post has been in the Foutz

family hands for many years. The new building is now

The trading post was owned by the Garcia family

the limited tools available at the time. The design was copied from U.S. soldiers' canteens.

CASE 15

1 10217/12

#4 10177/12

#5 10330/12 Atsidi Chon (translates as "Ugly Smith") was one of the earliest Navajo silversmiths. It is said he was a teacher of another early Navajo smith, Slender Maker of Silver. Around 1872, Atsidi Chon, who

traded frequently with the Zuni for livestock, taught

silversmithing to a Zuni blacksmith named Lanyade,

and thus began silver jewelry-making at Zuni Pueblo.

Although the Mariano Lake Trading Post closed in

1993, the building still stands on the old stagecoach

#2 10195/12 The turquoise in this bracelet appears to be from the

#4 10194/12

#5 10292/12

hammered from Mexican silver pesos in 1868 or 1869. The earliest conchas were round or oval silver with slots and a center bar where the leather belt was laced through. Artists scalloped the edges, punched round

through the loops.