

photograph on previous spread

PHOTO 30

Pueblo ceremony, Herbert Dunton standing at right, c. 1920

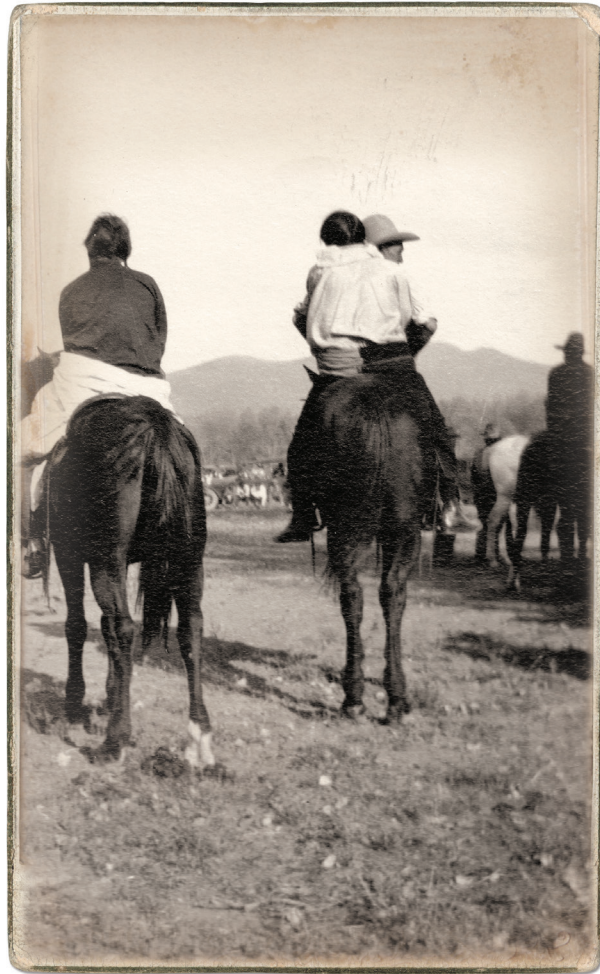


PHOTO 31

In 1920, Burt Harwood and his wife, Elizabeth, invited the Gaspards and several other friends to go camping in Navajo country. Harwood who also had studied at the Académie Julian in Paris, was a generation older than Leon. The couples traveled by horse-drawn wagons, loaded with gear, and rode out across that seemingly endless high desert flanked by the southernmost range of the Rocky Mountains, the Sangre de Cristos. Following vague trails, they found Navajo encampments. Gaspard claimed that the customs and ceremonies of the Navajo Indians offered him fair substitute for those of the Mongolians.

The Southwest suited Gaspard, and he found his way around with ease. He traveled primarily by horseback, but soon bought a Model T Ford Roadster so Evelyn could more easily accompany him as he explored Indian country. They purchased the car in Albuquerque, and it took a week to drive back to Taos on a road that was no more than a wagon trail. **KAMINSKY**

On one outing, they drove miles of rough trail in their Roadster through the heart of the Navajo Nation into Arizona. Leon sought the Hopi, who lived in peaceful mesa villages built on the edge of steep cliffs. His quest was to reach the village of Sipaulovi, where there was to be a Butterfly Dance. Gaspard understood the significance of ceremonial dances that helped a culture maintain harmony with spirit and nature. He also knew the artistry that awaited his brushes. The car could not make the last stretch of trail up the precipitous mountain to the village. Some young Navajos galloping by stopped to help. They roped the car and took off, whooping and hollering, as they pulled it up the steep incline, which had a sheer drop-off to one side. The car bounced over boulders and careened up that mountain, as Leon gripped the steering

