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A Navajo Legacy: The Life and Teachings of John Holiday

John Holiday, Robert S. McPherson

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A vivid portrait of the life of a traditional twentieth-century Navajo medicine man

For more than ninety years, Navajo medicine man John Holiday has watched the sun rise over the rock formations of his home in Monument Valley. At an early age, Holiday began an apprenticeship with his grandfather to learn the Blessingway ceremony, and as a youth, he performed rainmaking ceremonies and practiced healing.

Holiday experienced the invasion of Monument Valley by whites and later participated in the early filmmaking industry, working with director John Ford and actor John Wayne. Life in the desert was rooted in the livestock industry and sometimes provided only a hand-to-mouth existence. Holiday was employed in the 1930s with the Civilian Conservation Corps, served a brief stint in the military, mined uranium on the Navajo Reservation in the 1950s, and worked on the railroad.

Robert S. McPherson interviewed Holiday extensively to record his full and fascinating life. Holiday tells his grandparents stories of the Long Walk era, discusses attitudes about the land, relates Navajo religious stories, and recounts his training as a medicine man. *A Navajo Legacy* reflects the thoughts of a traditional practitioner who has found in life both beauty and lessons for future generations.

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