

FIRST DRAFT

Modern traders follow in footsteps of ancestors

In the 1870s, George Franklin Burnham began trading with the Navajo of northern New Mexico and Arizona, traveling by horse and wagon. "He would start in Mancos, Colorado, and trade all the way down to Gallup, (New Mexico) across the reservation and back," his great-grandson Bruce Burnham recalled a few years ago.

Franklin would leave Mancos with a wagonload of lumber, trade for a load of sheep pelts, then perhaps trade them for Navajo rugs.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

"He wasn't selling anything to anybody for cash, I don't think," Burnham added. "He took goods, comin' both directions. So that was how he traded."

Trading is different these days for Sheri Burnham, Bruce's daughter, who heads the R.B. Burnham and Co. Trading Post in Sanders, Arizona, near Gallup. There are the internet, email and trade shows far removed from the small towns of the reservation.

But, like her great-great grandfather, Sheri still travels a lot, taking Navajo rugs to exhibits and auctions, and meeting with rug weavers. And the family still runs a store, where Native Americans can come in and purchase everything from food to weaving supplies to goods for their sheep.

"I literally grew up in the store," she recalled. "I didn't want to go into the business at first. But after I finished college I realized the importance of what we do, the need to keep the legacy alive."

Moreover, she said, it's critical for the locals who deal with them, because they "generally stay with the traders they have been working with for generations."

About the same time the first Burnham began trading with the Navajos, Seth Tanner wandered the deserts of northern Arizona by himself, riding a mule, trusting and trading with the Navajos, Hopis and other tribes he encountered. He was known as Mr. Bear — Hosteen Shush to the Navajos.

Tanner developed a trail into the Grand Canyon that is named after him. Several other geographic sites in northern Arizona also bear his name. He eventually had a homestead near Tuba City, Arizona, where he lived with his wife and children.

With his son, Joe, he established one of the earliest trading posts on the Navajo Reservation at Tuba City.

His great-great granddaughter, Emerald Tanner, recently spoke at the Metropolitan Museum of Art — the Met — in New York City. She described the styles and importance of Native jewelry in a talk for the Met's current exhibit on Native American arts.

When she is not speaking in New York or elsewhere, Emerald works as a Southwest Indian art dealer for her family's trading post in Gallup, Tanner's Indian Arts. She, like Sheri Burnham, is a fifth-generation trader working in the Four Corners region.

Both women were in Grand Junction last month as part of the 2019 Grand Junction Native American Arts Auction at the Museum of Western Colorado, which was sponsored by Patricia and William Milius of Grand Junction.

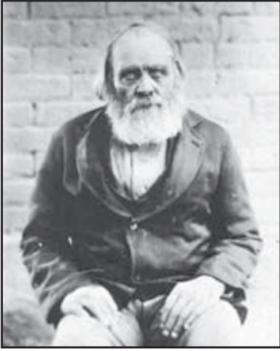
At the exhibit and auction, Burnham's company focused on fine Navajo rugs, some very old and some new. Tanner's firm emphasized jewelry, primarily turquoise and silver, made by Navajos, Hopis, Zunis and others.

Although men have dom-



Photos by BOB SILBERNAGEL/Special to the Sentinel

Sheri Burnham, of the R.B. Burnham and Co. Trading Post of Sanders, Arizona, shows off some of the Navajo rugs her company recently had for sale at the Museums of Western Colorado.



GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK HISTORIC PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Pioneer trader Seth Tanner is shown late in his life.

inated the trade with Native peoples, both women agreed there has long been a place for women in the trade, working with their husbands, cultivating relationships with the tribes and assisting them when there were problems.

"My grandmother always baked bread and provided it to the Indians when they were trading," Emerald Tanner said.

Burnham's mother, Virginia, is a Navajo, adding to the connections the Burnhams have with Native weavers. Moreover, Burnham said, "There have historically been women traders."

The patriarchs of both families were early Mormon pioneers who joined Brigham Young and other members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Salt Lake Valley soon after the Mormons arrived there.

And, following a variety of tasks and occupations, both were called by the church to move to the Native lands of the Southwest.

This was after the dark days of the mid-1860s, when thousands of Navajos were rounded up by the U.S. government and moved hundreds of miles east from their homeland to Bosque Redondo, New Mexico. Many died during the trip and their five years of captivity, but in 1868 the Navajos signed a treaty with the United States that allowed them to return to their homeland.

American traders, prospectors and others began arriving on the reservation by the early 1870s.

George Franklin Burnham and his brother were sent to what became Kirtland, New Mexico, near Farmington. They were told not only to start a Latter-day Saints church and community there, but to open commerce with local tribes.

Seth Tanner was instructed



Emerald Tanner, of Tanner's Indian Arts in Gallup, New Mexico, recently displays some of the company's Native American jewelry at the Museums of Western Colorado.

to explore along the Little Colorado River, which flows into the Grand Canyon, to look for potential settlement sites. He was instrumental in the founding of Tuba City. He continued exploring and prospected for gold and silver in the Grand Canyon.

"His son, Grandpa Joe, had trading posts around northern New Mexico and eventually made his way to Gallup," Emerald Tanner said.

Years later, "My mom would send me on trading trips with my dad when I was young," she recalled. "I grew up loving it."

But her father had a requirement before she could join the family business: She had to go to college and earn a degree. Emerald did just that, then returned to Gallup to work with the trading company, which she has been doing for the past seven years.

Sheri Burnham began working full time for her family's company 15 years ago.

In addition to more modern forms of travel and commerce, one of the biggest changes in trading from the early days involves the products made by the Native artists.

"Traders used to tell the weavers what to do," Sherry said. They would suggest col-

ors, weaving patterns or sizes of blankets, based on what they were selling.

Now, she said, "Our job is to help market the artist and to create a market for the artist."

The Native artists now are free to create what they want.

But one thing has not changed. Modern traders still work to ensure fair prices for their partners and to maintain their trust.

The Museums of Western Colorado occasionally hosts trips to trading posts of northern New Mexico and Arizona. Readers interested in learning more should check out the "Trips and Tours" function at the museum's website: <https://museumofwesternco.com/>

Sources: Sheri Burnham; Emerald Tanner; "Interview with Bruce Burnham," July 17, 1998, by Brad Cole, Northern Arizona University; "Interview with Joe Tanner Sr.," March 30, 1999, by Brad Cole, Northern Arizona University; "Burnham Trading Post," by Kathryn Burke, San Juan Silver Stage magazine; "Seth Tanner," by Richard M. Perry, AllHikers.com.

Bob Silbernagel's email is bobsilbernagel@gmail.com.

Visit GJSentinel.com to view photo galleries from Sentinel photographers Christopher Tomlinson and Chancey Bush.

The Daily Sentinel (ISSN 1445-8962) Printed editions published Wednesday thru Sunday, electronic editions published every morning at 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501. Periodical Postage paid at Grand Junction, CO. Carrier home delivery prices: 13 weeks - \$65.00, 26 weeks - \$130.00, 52 weeks - \$260.00. Weekend delivery packages: Wednesday thru Sunday - \$244.40, Friday thru Sunday - \$197.60. Saturday & Sunday - \$163.80, Sunday only - \$163.80. Weekend Delivery includes the following date in 2019: Nov. 28. Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday. Mail (USPS): \$30.00 per week, \$1,560 per year. *POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Daily Sentinel, 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.*



The Happy Family Feast

- 2 (5 oz.) Filet Mignons
- 2 (5 oz.) Top Sirloins
- 2 (4 oz.) Boneless Pork Chops
- 4 (3 oz.) Kielbasa Sausages
- 4 (4 oz.) Omaha Steaks Burgers
- 4 (3.5 oz.) Chicken Fried Steaks
- All-Beef Meatballs (12 oz. pkg.)
- 4 (2.8 oz.) Potatoes au Gratin
- 4 (4 oz.) Caramel Apple Tartlets
- Signature Seasoning Packet

48269ZJY | \$219.99* separately
COMBO PRICE **\$49.99**

SAVE 77%
GET 28 ITEMS + 4 FREE BURGERS



ORDER NOW! 1.888.653.3676 ask for 48269ZJY
www.OmahaSteaks.com/dinner20

*Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. Limit 2 Happy Family Feast packages. Your 4 free burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes (48269). Standard S&H will be added per address. Flat rate shipping and reward cards and codes cannot be used with this offer. Not valid with other offers. All product, prices and sales are subject to Omaha Steaks, Inc. Terms of Use and Pricing Policy. Visit omahasteaks.com/terms-of-use Expires 5/31/19. ©2019 OCG | Omaha Steaks, Inc. 1910114



FROM \$2,249*
\$1,999*

FREE SPECIALTY DINING PACKAGE

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CRUISE & TOUR

Oahu • Maui • Hawaii • Kauai •

12 days, departs year-round

Spend 7 nights aboard Norwegian Cruise Line's renovated *Pride of America* and enjoy freestyle cruising at its finest. Experience the lao Valley on Maui, the beauty and charm of Hilo, Kona's coffee-rich "Gold Coast," and Kauai's Na Pali coast and Waimea Canyon. Your land tour includes Pearl Harbor and Honolulu city tours, and time to relax on world-famous Waikiki Beach. Escorted on Oahu by our friendly Tour Directors—your local experts.



Promo code **N7017**
1-855-980-4322

*Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus \$299 taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Free Specialty Dining Package requires purchase of Ocean View Cabin or Balcony Cabin. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 5/31/19. Other terms and conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.

The Bow-Tie Economist is BACK!

Elliot Eisenberg, Ph.D.



Join us April 18th at Two Rivers Convention Center for dinner, laughter, and our economic forecast from none other than Dr. Elliot Eisenberg!

Event Details

When: April 18th

Where: Two Rivers Convention Center
Grand Junction, CO

Time: Cash Bar 5:30 | Dinner 6:15 | Program
Cost: \$30 Per Person

RSVP by April 12th
Email Traci@hbanwco.com - Call 970.245.0253

Often called the "Stand-Up Economist", Dr. Eisenberg's research and opinions have been featured in leading publications including Bloomberg Business Week, Forbes, and Fortune. He is an established authority on the national and global economy and its impact on various industries.

Presented By



REGISTER NOW for the most important economic forecast you will ever hear!

All contents copyright © 2019 The Daily Sentinel. All republication rights are reserved. Material in this publication may not be published, broadcast, rewritten for broadcast or publication or redistributed directly or indirectly in any medium.

How to reach us: 242-5050. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Circulation phones are open 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on weekends.

CIRCULATION Subscription and delivery questions: 242-1919 or (800) 332-5833
ADVERTISING Retail advertising: 256-4289
Classified advertising: 242-1313

Pick 3 Midday Sunday: 1-9-1 Evening Sunday: 7-3-0
Cash 5 Sunday: 5-9-10-22-30
For information, go to www.coloradolottery.com.

NEWSROOM Managing editor: 256-4252
City desk: 256-4213
Features and entertainment: 256-4224
Sports: 256-4203
Commentary: 256-4236

coloradopress ASSOCIATION



2011 • 2012 • 2013
2014 • 2015

146536