

THE ATTIC-HOGAN:
PRESCOTT'S "HIDDEN" TRADING POST
By Patricia Arrigoni

An authentic Native American trading post/shop still exists off the beaten path in Prescott, Arizona, the old territorial capital of the sunshine state. Todd Calhoon, the proprietor, could be mistaken for an Arizona cowboy with his lanky six foot frame and lean one-hundred and seventy-five pounds. Instead, he was born in Miami, Florida as his father, originally from Oklahoma, was stationed there during World War II attending Officer's Candidate School. After the war ended, the family moved to Miami Beach where Todd was born in 1952.

By 1964 the Calhoons had headed back west and settled in Prescott. In 1970, Todd's father, Glen, and his mother, Barbara, a nurse from Indiana who had met his father in the Marianna Islands during World War II, decided to purchase an antique business. A year later they began adding Native American items which is all the Attic-Hogan now trades and sells.

"If we had stayed in antiques, we'd be long gone," Todd says now with a soft chuckle.

"With any jewelry business," he continues, "there is repair work and I learned to do this working summers while attending high school and Yavapi College in Prescott." His father also required that he do extensive reading including the Wall Street Journal every day which, he says, completed his formal education.

When Todd decided he needed a break from school, his father said, referring to the business, "Try this, you might like it!"

Todd did and became full time in 1972. "I went to work the day after I graduated."

Todd became interested in traditional Native American items including jewelry and crafts such as Kachina dolls. "Kachinas," he explains, "are significant to the Hopi people, particularly in religious ceremonies. "He does not carry Kachina dolls made by the Navajos as they were not a tradition of that culture and are only now being manufactured for the tourist trade.

"We have a broad spectrum of the Hopi Kachina dolls in the old style on that west wall," he explains nodding to a display. "They are the rejuvenation of the earliest types with simple details."

Todd also became fascinated with other crafts such as sand painting and rug making. He attended trade shows, collected books and now has an astonishing collection of Arizona Highway magazines which contain extensive information about Indian arts and crafts. "People

send Arizona Highway magazines to me from all over the country,” he says naming several samples. Todd sells and gives some of the many duplicates away.

He also keeps files on Indian family members and those who have visited his shop, plus people he has become acquainted with on their reservations.

In 1980 Todd married Pamela Jean Hart who came to his shop looking for silver tips for a bola tie for her father. On their first date they went out to cut a Christmas tree. I was born in Iowa,” Pam says, “but grew up in the DC area. My dad, an electrical engineer, was working for the National Electrical Contractors Association. I became a clinical Registered Dietitian and later took a job with the Veterans Hospital in New Orleans. Eventually I was transferred to their facility here in Prescott. They let you transfer without having to start all over again.”

Todd and Pam have been married now for twenty-seven years and have two boys, Brett, age 24, and Devin, 19. They all work in the Attic-Hogan occasionally.

Pam, like Todd, comes from Irish ancestry though he claims his is Celtic and more pure. She disputes this with a chuckle, in fact, her outgoing personality bubbles with laughter. She says she enjoyed their early trips to the reservations before the Indians started coming into Prescott with their wares to their store.

Todd talks about some of the merchandise including the “large vessels of cylindrical shapes which were used for storing seeds. In an effort to help the Indians,” he continues, “and incidentally, less I appear disrespectful referring to them as Indians, I have never had one of the Indian people come in and refer to himself or herself as a Native American!”

The Attic-Hogan has some Santa Clara black pots and wedding vases, new style Navajo pottery, Navajo rugs and a typical selection of Navajo, Zuni, Hopi and Santo Domingo jewelry. The shop also features a superb Indian pottery collection, outstanding matted and framed sandpaintings, a wide choice of Indian baskets, fetishes, carvings and sculptures. All merchandise is handmade by American Indians.

‘We always give the artists full credit including the names of their tribes and the individuals. We also take photographs and keep extensive files,’ Todd explains.

Navajo people take rugs into the Attic-Hogan. “One man was going to bring by a couple of rugs and be here by 5:30 pm.,” Todd continues. “He called me at 5:00 pm and said he wasn’t going to make it then. I heard from him again at 7:30 pm that he was still on his way, but he was

having car trouble and he was going to call me when he got here. At 11:30 pm he called and I came down and under the security lights outside, I looked at and made a deal with him and bought two Navajo rugs!”

Todd also trades with the Foutz family of Ship Rock, New Mexico. He shows me a black and white woven rug by Mary Begay from Bitterspring, Arizona. It is beautiful, but I prefer more color and purchase a small “Storm Pattern” Navajo rug left on consignment along with several others by a man from Chicago.

Todd gives me a six page photo copy of a chapter from a book that gives the history of the “Storm Pattern” design. It was created in the Red Lake Trading Post at Tonalea on the Hopi Reservation in Arizona which was established 1881. The pattern has a basic design of a rectangular center with radiating lines to the four corners where additional squares are set. Secondary elements include zigzags, diamonds, swastikas, arrows and stepped terraces serving as fillers along the borders. I find it brilliantly alive.

Todd is generous in his discount to me as he is to all his customers.

In 2001 Todd celebrated the 30th anniversary of his store with a remodel. He had discovered there was no rebar holding up his building, so that was taken care of plus stucco was added over bricks and painted a “Hogan Brown.” Thick glass bricks were placed in the wall which added light, and a new sign identifying the Attic-Hogan was designed for outside.

In addition, Todd celebrated this anniversary with a “give away” of money and gifts. He selected three local charities and gave them 10% of his store’s gross sales from between September and December. The total amount was \$1875 to each plus valuable items which were given out in a drawing. It was his generous way of saying “Thank you!” to the community.

Six years later the Attic-Hogan is still going strong. Todd attributes his success to the fact that he has carefully focused his business on a specific market. I would add that a great deal of this success is because of the friendly and generous nature of both Todd and Pam Calhoon who welcome everyone with kindness and ready smiles.

Sidebar: The Attic-Hogan is located at 749 Miller Valley Road, Prescott, Arizona 86301; phone 928-445-6684. The hours are M-W-F: 10-5 (they take Tuesdays and Thursdays off); Saturday: Noon to 4:00 pm or by appointment.