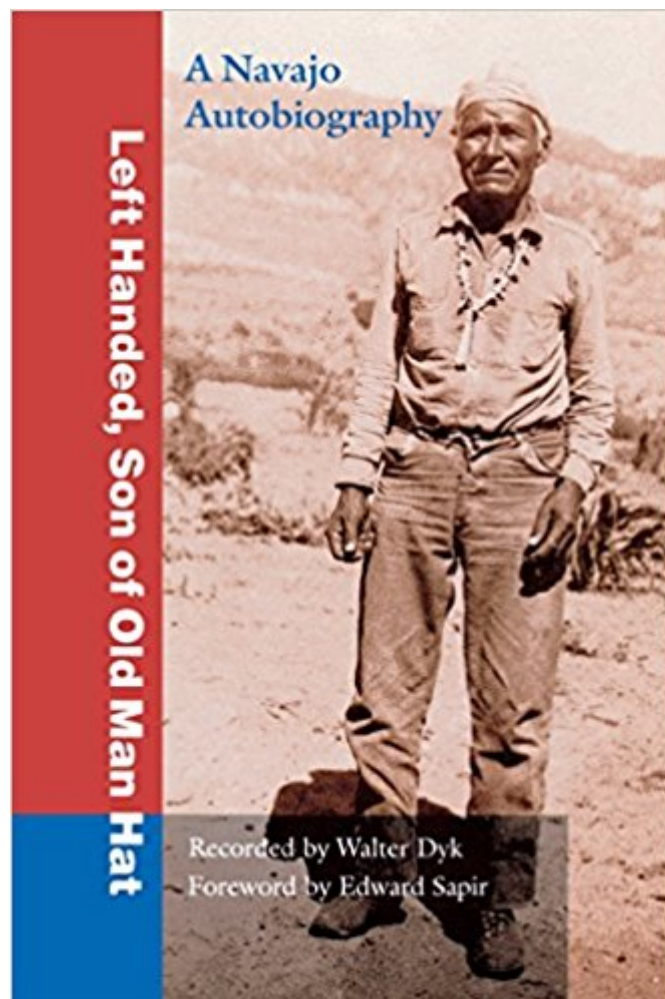




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# Left Handed, Son Of Old Man Hat: A Navaho Autobiography



## Synopsis

With a simplicity as disarming as it is frank, Left Handed tells of his birth in the spring "when the cottonwood leaves were about the size of my thumbnail," of family chores such as guarding the sheep near the hogan, and of his sexual awakening. As he grows older, his account turns to life in the open: nomadic cattle-raising, farming, trading, communal enterprises, tribal dances and ceremonies, lovemaking, and marriage. As Left Handed grows in understanding and stature, the accumulated wisdom of his people is made known to him. He learns the Navajo life founded upon principles: the necessity of honesty, foresightedness, self-discipline. The style of the narrative is almost biblical in its rhythms; but biblical, too, in many respects, is the traditional way of life it recounts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A serious anthropological study that reads like a combination of Tobacco Road with two parts of Studs Lonigan." — New Republic (New Republic)  
"An entertaining and absorbing story about Indian life." — True West (True West)  
"An extraordinarily vivid and detailed story, full of earthily realistic dialogue, told with an amazing story teller's craft." — The Roundup (The Roundup)

With a simplicity as disarming as it is frank, Left Handed tells of his birth in the spring "when the cottonwood leaves were about the size of my thumbnail", of family chores such as guarding the sheep near the hogan, and of his sexual awakening. As he grows older, his account turns to life in

the open: nomadic cattle-raising, farming, trading, communal enterprises, tribal dances and ceremonies, lovemaking, and marriage. As Left Handed develops in understanding and stature, the accumulated wisdom of his people is made known to him. He learns the Navajo life founded upon principles: the necessity of honesty, foresightedness, self-discipline. The style of the narrative is almost biblical in its rhythms; but biblical, too, in many respects, is the traditional way of life it recounts.

This book is certainly a quick read, but I found it to be quite entertaining. If you want to get some sense of the Navajo lifestyle from the time in history after the Long Walk, this book would be for you. There were similarities for me to the *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck. The instructions Left Hand's father gave him prior to his death were practical to any society. The struggles that this wealthy (by living standards of the time) family endured due to crop failures and grazing really gave me a sense of how they lived. Left Hand talks about it however in a very matter of fact way. The culture and family is not explained, but one does learn about it as you read the book. I would love to read more first hand accounts like this.

Offers readers a view of what Navaho life on the REZ used to be. Showcases the People as generous and hardworking. I found it helpful as I work in healthcare with a mostly Navajo patient base. Helps one understand their dietary choices and eating habits and the importance of family.

Hilarious, not a historical book, in that it brushes upon several significant Navajo events, but doesn't really explain them. I really enjoyed the book, it is so cool reading about day to day life and his encounters with the fairer sex. Slow at times but good read overall.

Extremely interesting first hand account of the lifestyle of the Navaho people around the 1930s, I believe. I toured around Two Grey Hills area back in the 1980s and came across people still living this way.

One of those revealing books.... a whole epocha comes into light.

Excellent oral first person Navajo record not found in history books.

Interesting account of the daily life over the years of this Navajo family.

Somewhat repetitive, but that must have been the lifestyle. A great insight into Navajo culture of the day.

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