

EPIISODE 10

Everything Creative

FRANK MAGLEBY INTERVIEWS JED FOUTZ (TRADING POST OWNER)

[MUSIC BEGINS]

PRESIDENT UCHTDORF: The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul. We each have an inherent wish to create something that did not exist before. The more you trust and rely on the spirit, the greater your capacity to create.

NANCY HANSEN: I'm Nancy Hansen and this is Everything Creative. This program explores a wide range of creative ideas and experiences through interviews and group discussions. Today artist and realist Frank Magleby interviews Trading Post owner, Jed Foutz.

[MUSIC ENDS]

FRANK MABLEBY: Welcome back to Everything Creative. I'm Frank Magleby and I'm herewith Jed Foutz. So Jed I'll introduce you, and I'd like you to maybe start this interview. Tell us a little about your family history, I know some of it, there's some that I don't know, but I do know your family has been in the trading business on the Navajo Reservation for many years. So why don't you give us a background, just a historical view. Which relatives were first called to work in the trading business and how it evolved down to you, your position now.

JED FOUTZ: My great-great grandfather was Joseph Foutz and he was sent by Brigham Young to settle some of the outer colonies, first Southern Utah and then he went on to Northern Arizona. So they basically settled and had ranches in Tuba city area, of Arizona which wasn't Reservation area then. Starting in the 1860s they were in Arizona. So they settled and it was just sort of a natural development. They were in the middle of nowhere, and there were about 10 to 12 Mormon families there to start settling and there were a lot of Native American people whether they were Navajo, Hopi, or Piute, they were kind of surrounded by three tribes.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Did they get started in the trading business to help the Navajos or the Indians? They didn't go down there with a business venture in mind did they?

JED FOUTZ: No they didn't, it was just a natural progression of co-dependence. My family was there, the native people were there, my family had certain things to offer, and the Native Americans too and it just came by nature of being

neighbors, and needing each other and having different needs and different things that each one could provide each other.

FRANK MAGLEBY: So what was the first role of the trader then, once they became an organized profession or a business, or whatever you want to call it.

JED FOUTZ: I guess the main, and how it started was our culture was encroaching on the Native culture, and my family could act as the go-betweens between the Culture that was coming and the Native American Culture. They were kind of the odd ones who understood both sides in a ways, so they could bring in goods from our culture that were very desirable to the Native American. And they could explain some of the cultural things that were so foreign to the Native Americans. It just grew to be this relationship I guess, my family played their role and the Native Americans were part of that world.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Some of the historic traders who came in there like **Hubble...**

JED FOUTZ: **Hubbles** were early families and J B **Moric Crystal** and they all came a little bit later. I think it took a certain type of person, as I've read history, you had to be bent a little different to live out where they lived and be successful. You had to not care so much about being in the city, or comforts, I think it took a certain unique character to live out there.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Now you said that they were sent by Brigham Young to settle there?

JED FOUTZ: They were. In fact, Joseph ran Lee's Ferry which was the crossing across the Colorado. He ran Lee's Ferry for a year, in between when the Church was trying to purchase the crossing, But then he went back to the ranch, in the Tuba City, it was actually called Moencopi is where they were which is the Hopi word.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Kind of traditionally across the Reservation, people like your grandparents and Hubble had quite a service to offer the Indians. I guess they were pretty poor and they didn't have many outlets for their goods and the things they created. Didn't that kind of coincide with the National interest to tourism to the West? The people who came west created a market because they came looking and seeking for the goods that the Indians created.

JED FOUTZ: It did. The trains crossing had a lot to do with the access to that part of the world as time went on. And my family had materials and access to things that the Native American's wanted, but the Native American's didn't have money, so it became "well we have this and you have this and we'll trade each other, that for that". That's how it developed over time. Then there was a national interest in Native Americans as people could see them living in their setting. The Southwest, unlike the rest of the Country, was a little

more isolated, so the transformation of the tribes or the destruction of the tribes, they were a little protected how they lived in the desert, where no one wanted to be, so they were the most intact left in the country. The Southwest

was more a rugged, last frontier. But the trains gave great access to people and there was just interest in every aspect of Native American life and that was just part of the experience coming across our country on a train.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

I know when I became acquainted with the Indian culture just their arts and crafts was one of the things that I was most excited about because it was something very unique and original to what I've experienced outside the Indian subjects and the media and the different things they worked in. The traders actually helped them develop some of those traditions didn't they?

JED FOUTZ:

They did, it was a big part of what the Native Americans had to trade with and it was out of utilitarian things that they basically made beautiful Navajo weaving, for instance, is one of the areas that I've focused on throughout my life, and I've been exposed to. First it was a blanket, it was to be slept on and worn on during the day for protection, but at the same time it was a thing a great beauty and importance. You knew somebody coming across a long distance by just the pattern of the blanket they were wearing. I don't know, the Native Americans just have this innate sense, I've been blessed to be, I was around the art department at BYU growing through college through you, and dating Holly, my wife, I've grown up around beauty and art. The Native Americans have this innate sense of beauty and design. But my family played a role in that they recognized that and were able to create a market for it, because they would bring them in as material to trade with and then my family helped create a market And give them to markets so it's kind of a very symbiotic relationship.

FRANK MAGLEBY :

Why don't you tell us a little bit about your immediate family relationship, It's mostly through Tes Nos Pos, isn't it, through that trading post?

JED FOUTZ:

It is, I'll just run through the last of the history, so they settled in Arizona in the 1860s, the ranches were made Reservation, the Reservations were expanded at the turn of the century. In 1900, they lost their land around Northern Arizona, and my family decided to move to the San Juan Basin, or Kirtland, New Mexico, Farmington, New Mexico area and they created a company called Progressing Mercantile with a group of families that had settled there also. And from there they supplied and ultimately controlled 40 Trading Posts and it was a big supply company back and forth. So the families settled there had multiple trading posts but never really left the Reservation and that was always part of their business and that's the way the family in one form or another kind of ran Trading Posts at that point. And then my grandfather, La Foutz, ran Tes Nos Pos and was sent there. And there was this Spinal Meningitis outbreak, I don't know the year, he was 30 years old, my father was 1 year at the time, and part of the role of a trader was to help bury clients, death has always been very taboo among the Navajo so the trader would sometimes help with the funeral or burial My grandfather helped with a client who died of spinal meningitis and he contracted it and died two weeks later. So he was at Tes Nos Pos running that trading Post when he passed. My father kind of grew up in and out of the business, but ended up back in the Trading business at Shiprock working for

his Uncle, Russell Foutz at Shiprock, and Russell also still out at Tes Nos Pos. I took over for my father about 25 years ago at Shiprock and that's how we all kind of stayed in the business all that time.

FRANK MAGLEBY: It's really interesting your history and how it moved from one generation to the next and this seems to be a natural interest in the family that these things pass along from one to another. I know in talking with your father he has a deep passion for the Indians and their culture. In fact I think he even spoke their language pretty well didn't he?

JED FOUTZ: He did. His Navajo is pretty good. So yes.

FRANK MAGLEBY: One time when I was visiting him down there he took us down into Canyon De Chelly and we were riding on the back of the little truck thing they take you in on, and your dad all of a sudden said something to them in Navajo and boy they did a big turnaround they were really surprised to see a , I don't know what they call them, the whites.

JED FOUTZ: **Billigani**

FRANK MAGLEBY: **Billigani**, [laughing] to them in Navajo, and they did a big double take when he talked to them. It was kind of fun to see that he had that knowledge of their language. I think that's a pretty tough language to learn.

JED FOUTZ: It is, and in his day he needed it for the Navajo people did not speak English. And since I took over enough of them spoke English so that Navajo wasn't that necessary, so I must say my Navajo isn't very good at all.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well I guess their schooling became a lot better too on the Reservation.

JED FOUTZ: Yah.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well one of the things that I would like to get a little more depth in is the relationship between the trader and the craftsman

JED FOUTZ: I think there was a kind of symbiotic relationship between the two. The craftspeople had this natural, you say innate sense of design but they didn't understand the practical application for materials. Also they didn't quite understand how to market the things they could make out there on the Reservation, way out in the back country the trader could bring them in and find a market for and focus on a certain art form to kind of bring the development along, then back to the Navajo weaving to start and we can cover other areas. Fundamentally in the beginning they only had access to certain materials and things to make their art, so the Spanish had brought sheep ,they had wool.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Did they learn the weaving process from the Spanish? Is that a transfer there?

JED FOUTZ: There are some theories one way or the other through the Spanish but whether it went first to Pueblo tribes and then to Navajos or directly Spanish to Navajo

there is some question about that. And they had a very early tradition in cotton, but we found a few samples, there are a few remnants found in caves that were cotton based but as far as a developed and what is known as the Navajo rug was directly influenced by the Spanish, and their technique.

FRANK MABLEBY: So they are the ones who taught them to make the looms and how to set up, the procedure for weaving

JED FOUTZ: But even most Spanish Looms were horizontal looms where the Navajo adapted the vertical loom, a much more labor intense loom, and very unique to their culture., I mean I think it is used in a few other places in the world, but instead of a shuttle, it's one continuous warp and instead of shuttling your weft across, each weft is individually placed through by hand with a small comb, just combed down, so it's a very tight. I think it is the most labor intense form of weaving that I've ever watched.

FRANK MAGLEBY: When they were first weaving on their own to make their utilitarian materials they were pretty much limited by natural materials, like dyes, and wool, the natural thing was right there with their own sheep. I understand that a lot of the dyes were taken from natural plants. Do you know what the story is on those?

JED FOUTZ: They were originally so, since a lot of the influence came from the Spanish, it was tied a lot to Spanish trade materials. There was the raw material the wool, but the Spanish would bring wool in finished form so in bolts of cloth and they would take **Cochineal**, which is a beetle that was exported from our country, back to Spain and they would process the **Cochineal** actually in Spain and do the dying in Spain and send it back over here in finished products so sometimes it would come as trade material dyed, and that is where some of the first natural red in Navajo weaving came from was **Cochineal**. And Indigo was not available in our country but the Spanish brought Indigo dyed material.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Indigo comes from some kind of a sea something doesn't it? Out of the ocean?

JED FOUTZ: A plant.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Oh it's a plant. There is one of the colors in Europe the royalty wore, purple. That came from a sea animal and it was very scarce.

JED FOUTZ: I don't think that was used very much in Navajo.

FRANK MAGLEBY: The Navajos never got into that.

JED FOUTZ: The **Cochineal** beetle was where they had the maroon or red in the early blankets from. And that would come over like I said in bolts and they would literally unravel the bolts of cloth and then re-spin it and use it in their weaving. And that's how they kind of had red in the beginning.

FRANK MAGLEBY: So they had to use other weaving to get their colors and then they had To reuse it.?

JED FOUTZ: That's right.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Kind of like a recycling.

JED FOUTZ; It is, it kind of started that way.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Oh and there was one other one, didn't they use the blues from Army uniforms? I think I remember something about that.

JED FOUTZ: I mean they could unravel uniforms, if they had that, and to a limited amount they had that available. When they were interned in Bosque Redondo, I'm so bad on dates, I think that would have been in the 1870s 1880s from then on they were much more exposed to our culture before that it was a very limited access. After that time they were much more involved in our culture. Our culture had kind of moved in dramatically over the 1880 to the 1900s to their land.

FRANK MAGLEBY: One of the things I'm interested about in their weaving, it seemed like each different location on the Reservation had stylistic pattern or style and you could almost identify the rug or the weaving by where they lived, what trading post they were associated with. How did those stylistic traditions come about do you know?

JED FOUTZ; So a trader where there would be a community or a village, and most of the Navajo weaving names we know today were communities and centers on a Reservation. Tes Nos Pos literally translates Ring of Trees a ring of cottonwoods which, the original Tes Nos Pos trading Post had, A ring of cottonwoods around it and that's how the area received its name, The Navajo always named or usually named an area after a geographic Navajo term after some geographic thing in the area, So Tes Nos Pos was a ring of trees, Crystal is on top of a mountain, there's two gray hills, there was wide ruins, there was Ganado, where Hubble was and there would kind of be a trading post for each area. And of course the trader or person who ran that store, and each one of them had their own certain kinds of likes and dislikes, and that's kind of what developed in each one of those areas. At Hubble it was Lorenzo Hubble and he liked red and he really liked crosses and he would literally have artists come and visit the trading post and he would have them paint little patterns that he thought were good. So they would paint patterns and he would put them on the wall and then he would ask weavers to weave those simple patterns. And Tes Nos Pos was Lo was the original trader there and , he loved oriental rugs, so he would give the weavers there old photos of oriental weaving and have them pattern their weavings off of there and Tes Nos Pos all the way through always had the most oriental type designs of all the Navajo rugs. And at Shiprock it was the Evans family, Will ran the old trading post that I took over and he was fascinated with Navajo religion and their Yei figures which were their dead figures. He said that at the end of his career that he would spend so much time

with the Medicine men learning about the different religious figures and Yeis and studying with the Medicine Men, that he kind of neglected the whole store, but he was a character, he painted Yeis on everything, every pole, every fireplace in that store, the Shiprock Hotel, washtubs, whiskey bottles, he painted everything. But he had the weavers in the Shiprock area kind of develop a Yei pattern that was on a white background, with really colorful colors and that was what Shiprock was known for for years, were those Yei rugs. So each area developed according to the taste of a trader who would kind of give feedback to his weavers, and of course if he liked it he would buy it and give them more trade, so it developed natural styles in certain areas.

FRANK MAGLEBY: It's interesting. Maybe part of it was due to the isolation of the trading Post, because they probably didn't have a lot of cultural exchange between the two trading posts.

JED FOUTZ; Most lives if you look at a 60 mile radius, and most Navajos in those areas didn't travel more than 60 miles maybe once a year at the most.

FRANK MAGLEBY: And probably in a wagon, huh?

[LAUGHTER]

JED FOUTZ: That was the world! I can remember wagons still pulling into Shiprock when I was 5 years old, but I can still remember people coming in wagons.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well I think the whole creative process that comes through the history of the Indian Culture. There are some other medias I'd like to talk about, we've talked mostly about weaving but as you get down there and get acquainted with the culture, there's the potters there's the silversmiths, there are so many different crafts people. They just seem to just naturally take something and make a craft out of it. And it seems to be almost intuitive. I don't know, no one ever came in and showed them how to, maybe in some cases they were taught, but there wasn't really a schooling process was there?

JED FOUTZ; No I mean along different parts of the history there was new ideas and new materials introduced, and in certain instances there was what was called the Indian School of Painters which Dorothy Dunn was a very influential person there, and she was based in Santé Fe.

And she started this school and she was really influential in a group which later became known as the Indian School Painters. But she kind of nurtured them along and introduced and developed a certain style, You know that still goes recognized to that time. Artists tended to be drawn to New Mexico and the Native American culture because they recognized kind of that innate sense of design and beauty in their art and in their lives I think, so all of the cultures seem to have important artists from outside their cultures kind of involved. And I'm sure there was interplay between those artists and their techniques.

And most cultures have utilitarian things that were made beautiful just

because they were used every day. But I think it's really hard to put into words what's drawn me and kept me even after all these years dealing with the material, I'm still so drawn to it and it has so much more depth to me and my sensibilities than a lot of just art maybe in some ways there is an inner sense of awareness I guess, like a Navajo weaver a lot made of the spirit line in Navajo weaving or baskets, Most Native American cultures didn't like a solid border around anything, the earliest Navajo blankets were borderless with wide-open field. When our culture demanded, instead of the open fields we wanted rugs with solid borders and more geometric patterns and that's kind of what the market demanded, and that's the way Navajo weaving became. Something about the border, it's like taking a photograph, a lot of older Navajo women, or Native American women don't like their photo taken because they believe it "takes who they are". But the weaving with a border is a lot of the same experience.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

What is the story on the Spirit line, because some of them had some very strong superstitions that they couldn't enclose the pattern and they had to leave an "escape valve" or something.

JED FOUTZ:

Right, which is kind of what I was coming to, they believe in such a sense that they are in that weaving that it literally expresses, but more than expresses, they put themselves into that weaving, and there's a lot made about the spirit line about evil spirits and that, I have never heard that from a Navajo person. It is a way to let herself back out of that rug she can do it again and be who she is. It's a break that lets her back at the end of the rug, and that's how she gets back out of the weaving.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

One of the things that's just fascinating to me is, cause I'm an artist, I don't know how, in their mind they can visualize those patterns and keep track of them while they are weaving. It's the same as the sand painters, they can start with one point and they seem to have the vision of the whole image and that seems to be a unique talent. There's something that's special.

JED FOUTZ:

I think it is. And our culture has demanded, if you look at the earliest blankets, they're so simple, and if you look at most contemporary designs, they were very basic and plain. But today's weavings they're much more elaborate and detailed and complex design and pattern. That was kind of our culture always demanding more and more. More meant more work, and finer to us. But the true sensibility of the Navajo was simplicity and straight line, But it is true, the complex patterns that are done today are so complex now that I do know that a lot of young weavers have to graft them out on graft paper and they have it behind the loom, but just by looking at it they can translate, they can just visualize from the graph paper Behind them on the wall through the loom, through the warps of a loom and translate that onto a weaving that takes 6 months and still have it come out balanced kind of from just visual putting it together. I've always said they are mathematical geniuses because I've sat by a weaver at a loom and it's been on the loom for a year and she had no paper, no

drafting, and she was able to design that as she went over a year's time and have it come out balanced.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Being an artist I have to have a visual image of the thing I'm going create, they must have a really strong image in their mind because otherwise they'd lose track where they are, it's an amazing thing that they can create that without having a real plan, you know, ahead of time, of something.

JED FOUTZ: Right

FRANK MAGLEBY: How about sculpture, really it wasn't a tradition in the early years among the Tribe was it?

JED FOUTZ: It wasn't among the Navajo, there was wood toy carving but it was kind of like a folk art that you would make for children

FRANK MAGLEBY: Kachinas too.

JED FOUTZ: No, that's more Hopi and Pueblo, and the Navajo have adopted it overtime But Navajo were more for toys and for a few religious figures, they would really be called Kachinas but it was very limited, carving was, Fetishes in stone

FRANK MAGLEBY: Oh tell me about fetishes cause fetish has a symbolic meaning, right?

JED FOUTZ: Fetishes can be and they are different for different tribes, so it was usually Either a human figure or a figure of some kind of animal and it represented strength or something, luck, but you would bless it and carry it with you and it was usually in a pouch with corn pollen and it was all very sacred but it was carrying something for your protection or for going well or for hunting. But yes, Fetishes were a big part of the culture all the way through.

FRANK MABLEBY: Tell us about the young lad who was a butcher in your trading post that discovered that he had another talent.

JED FOUTZ: Yeah, that is one of my father's favorite stories. It's a great story. The trading post that I grew up in was a full trading post, there was a meat section, full groceries, arts and crafts was a small part of the business, livestock, wool season, lamb season, and dry goods, everything it was just a big store that provided any service that the trading post could in those remote areas. Sand paintings are a very religious thing to the Navajo, it's part of their ceremonies, and usually a sand painting is done maybe part of a nine night chanter ceremony where each night a different sand painting is created. It basically creates a space that when it's done right and blessed, a patient can sit in the middle of it, it's such a sacred place that the Gods have access to that patient when he is in that sand painting. That over time developed into an art form of its own. At the end of the ceremony before sun up, the sand painting is completely destroyed after the ceremony. And these are large, these can be 6 foot round or 6 foot square, 6 foot by 6 foot pieces on dirt floor. And there is even a ceremony to take the sand painting apart. And the end of the ceremony

which has to be done in a certain way that overtime developed into an art form. Elements would be left out obviously like anything they would leave certain elements out that made it okay, but in its beginning it was really taboo. They would kind of wrap it up in towels so nobody in the community would know what they were doing, but it made this permanent sand painting.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

Was that painting a little similar to the Yeis in the weaving?

JED FOUTZ:

It is yah, and Yei figures as I said earlier were the deity figures and they were very taboo to put in a weaving, those weavers didn't want other people in the community to know that they were weaving those figures in a weaving, or doing a complete sand painting rug. Even today in some areas of the Reservation, if a weaver sees a Yei on a weaving, another Navajo Lady if she sees it what she's done, she'll say, "oh she is going to go blind, or she is going to go crazy" which they really believe in putting those in a permanent form, that it is just wrong. But sand painting developed into an art form of its own and it's a permanent form and you know like anything over time, when it was done the very first time it was very taboo among many of the people. But the sand paintings would be brought into the trading post the butcher department basically, the sand paintings were a little fragile and you couldn't just stack them face to face you had to protect them so the butcher department had a cellophane machine that they would wrap meat with, but it was also used as sand paintings became part of the market they would cellophane wrap all the sand paintings So all the sand paintings filled the butcher department. We had a boy that worked in the butcher department named Orlin Joe and it was his job to wrap the sand paintings.. He kind of looked at them and said, "I can do that". And he started sand painting, but pictures instead of religious figures. Beautiful sand paintings, he just had a knack, dad said you could tell right away.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

Now what is the process, cause they actually hold their fingers don't they?

JED FOUTZ:

Oh, I'm sorry I should go back. Literally that is just a lot of just natural stone or pigment, traditionally, and they knew which part of the Reservation had this stone, and a certain part of the Reservation had this, and they would Pulverize it and make sand out of it. So they had turquoise, or red or rust, and an ochre yellow, so there was a recipe for all of these. But each color in a sand painting has to go in a certain place traditionally, and colors represent directions and all sorts of things. So they would pulverized the sand. As it's done in a ceremony you just take the sand in your hand and literally they can drop a straight line.. You should try it sometime.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

That's what fascinates me because some of those lines are just hair width almost. I don't see how they can just keep that under complete control.

JED FOUTZ:

It is something to watch. I mean I was invited once to actually participate and usually I would go and support and take supplies for the medicine man and the people and I would pay my respects and say I hope the ceremony went well and

that would be my part but one time I did go to take the food and give everyone my best for the ceremony. This was a night way chant Shiprock has the first way. It coincides with the Shiprock Fair and it's kind of around that first night way chant and the season. And the medicine man said, Jed you are staying today, and I said, "No, I have to get back to the trading Post, but I just came to leave some food and I'm on my way, and he said, "No you are part of this today," and insisted. So I stayed for the whole rest of the day and there were eight of us that worked on the sand painting all day long until that evening, until 5 in the evening we worked straight through, and it took that long for us to create, 8 of us, we each had our quarter but the whole time the Medicine man, he was walking around, he's walking around, and of course all the people with me are Navajo people and they have all done it before and dropping that sand in a line, I was watching Joe Ben Junior was working with me, he comes from the Medicine Hat family and he's also a great sand painter. And I would watch him drop that white sand in a straight line out of his hand, he could draw, he might as well have had a pen or a pencil in his hand, that's how straight, even the line was. And I mean it just took me forever and he'd come over and help, and the medicine man would say no, that color couldn't go there that color needs to go there, take that out, put it back over. But they could drop a line, it is amazing to watch. It was quite an opportunity.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Then when you see them in the art forms the patterns and the color combinations, it's a real art form. I think that it is probably very unique to that culture. I don't know of any other culture that creates a design by that process.

JED FOUTZ: I think the only other one I know that has such a tradition, the Pueblo have a tradition and the Hopi also, but it was never developed, but it is still part of their religion, and I think they still make sand paintings in their Kivas. The **Tibetan** monks have a sand painting tradition where they do a really temporary thing, and those are the only cultures I know of. But as far as developing into an art form, where it is permanent, that developed down to watered down Elmer's Glue, diluted Elmer's glue, and particle board, And basically you would do a base, drop it on and let it dry, and then they do the next level and then they paint on the thing, drop the sand, tip it, pack it down. It's a really time consuming thing, but that's how it developed into an art form.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well it is interesting that some of the sand painters evolved almost to painting. It's almost a tradition that we would do with oils or right casing or some other color, they are actually creating a visual image a representational image with the sand. It's out of their traditional patterns and culture but they kind of adapted the Western, well I call it Western, the images that the painters have with sand, that's kind of fascinating

JED FOUTZ: Going back to Orlin that's kind of how he started and then there was Eugene Joe. He worked under **Batso Salani** was his artist sign name but there were quite a few

artists taking it beyond the religious context and actually started depicting landscapes and inside forms.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Now Orlin Joe I didn't know he started out as a sand painter, he is really more famous for his sculptures, isn't he?

JED FOUTZ: He is, well we'll come back around to that story in a roundabout way so after all of that, Orlin is in the Butcher department, is wrapping sand paintings and saying "oh I can do that". But he keeps bringing dad these carvings out of stone, saying "but this is what I'd really like to do." And he brought wood carvings and dad would go, 'that's really nice, but sand paintings, just keep doing sand paintings', because that was already an established market. And he just kept bring sculptures, saying, "no, this is what I really want to do". And I don't know all the details of the story but I know Dad eventually gave in because he kept coming in saying I want to carve. He ended up going to Italy and I think that Dad was involved in helping him get to Italy to study in Carraro with some masters. So Orlin ended up going to Italy studying Carraro in Italy and I think that was maybe over a good share of a year. And he learned all these new techniques. He was already good, he could just carve naturally, dad said about his early things, he could just carve. He came back with that new knowledge how to bring the form out, to have it emerge out of a thing.

FRANK MAGLEBY: A little Michelangelo tradition.

[LAUGHTER]

JED FOUTZ: Yeah he learned some of that. And the great thing about Orlin was that he was just a naturally talented to begin with. He is a great person. He came back and where most people would be on their way and worry about themselves, just go off and start their career which took off immediately. Orlin came back to Shiprock, which, the reservation is something that has always struggled with poverty and unemployment, it's a tough place to make it, always has been. Orlin comes back and sets up in a little tin shed and teaches two or three times a week of free class to anybody who wants to show up. I think there were 50 or 60 carvers that he brought along and it created a whole Navajo Sculpture market from that point on. And there were obviously all degrees of quality. But that's kind of where that started. That would have been somewhere in the 1980s.

FRANK MAGLEBY: So he created that, so he never really got involved with Allen Howse than did he before?

JED FOUTZ: No I don't think there was much interplay there. I think Orlin went on his own.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Cause Allen Houser was kind of a similar story I guess from the Santé Fe Area.

JED FOUTZ: He is. He has a Plains background but he ended up settling in Santé Fe.

FRANK MAGLEBY: But he is a very famous sculptor too.

JED FOUTZ: Probably one of the best known of the Native Americans. Contemporary.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well I think this has been fascinating. I would like to get a little more personal with you I know now you are kind of on a new adventure in your life with the trading business. You still have the Shiprock trading but you have moved into Santé Fe and kind of embraced that culture over there. Tell us a little about what you are doing now in the business of marketing art and still your deep interest in the traditional rugs, of the things you are marketing.

JED FOUTZ: I think jewelry and rugs would be my main two focuses and my strengths would be those two areas. Although, I deal a lot in baskets and a lot of different cultures, so things have been evolving on the Reservation, when I took over for my Father you could hear that things were changing and the Reservation was changing. The Art and the artist's approach the art was changing, which, I think there are so many factors, that that could be a study in itself for years probably. A lot of our treaties even at the base a lot of the main goals were to integrate and mainstream their culture into our culture eventually, and that was a lot of where it was headed. Where today I think that is starting to come to foolish and for many different reasons. Just by nature of a lot of the American Arts it's such a time consuming thing in a way, but I've seen acceleration in the decrease of Native art produced over my career and that trend continues. I guess to put it in a way, when I took over from my father, which was right around 1990 we still dealt with over 2500 weavers, Navajo weavers at the trading post, at least one time a year, some of them would obviously produce more than one rug a year. So there were over 2500 weavers that I dealt with. This year if we dealt with 250 to 300, that would be a lot of weavers. It's declined that dramatically in that amount of time.

FRANK MAGLEBY: So do you think those skills are declining to the point that we are going to lose them?

JED FOUTZ: I think that we will lose them as far as being the market and the availability that they have been to this point. I think that there will always be individual weavers and artists and that tradition will be carried. As it was a cultural base and part of a way of life, I think that has now changed and I don't think it will ever go back to those days. It was part of who they were.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well the Reservations have been invaded with the pop culture, haven't they?

JED FOUTZ: They have, and in many ways it's progress. It's always that double edged sword. Progress can be loss of culture. But with those progresses come things that are lost. That's just the way life is I guess.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Maybe part of that is due to the fact that they are not isolated anymore.

JED FOUTZ:

Yeah, to keep their identity so unique anymore is very difficult when you have satellite TV, and now you can travel everywhere. It's just inevitable that the cultures become much more, you know, combined and melded together. So it's hard to hold that kind of unique culture identity to the degree it was even before. But yes, and for those reasons the trading post wasn't such a functional thing anymore, and my role as a trader per say, changed dramatically. Over these 20 years when I first took over it was everything that I described earlier, we did everything. Where now really, more and more my role was mainly in the arts, there wasn't enough livestock for a livestock business anymore, and the dry goods there was no way I could compete with Wal-Mart's. So all those rules slowly faded away and really art was the main focus. For the last decade for sure that became the main focus. And then recently I've just kind of gone with the times and with the changes. You know I felt like "I have to change my role and focus. In the number of outlets around the country for where you can find real Native American Art has really decreased over the years recently. So I started looking off the Reservation and creating our own. Albuquerque was my first retail Gallery place and really Albuquerque should be such a large outlet and market for the material. Whereas wholesalers to market we really didn't have any clients left in all of Albuquerque, and I just said," this is crazy." We have all these artists we have all this art, we're in the middle of New Mexico, and we have nowhere to go in a city the size of Albuquerque, which should be the center of this as an outlet. So I opened a gallery in Albuquerque and recently in the last three years have opened one in Santé Fe.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

I know you consider yourself creative, how do you see yourself relating to the whole creative end of the arts and crafts movement?

JED FOUTZ:

You know it's funny, I've always laughed, I really don't consider myself one bit creative, though I went study abroad years ago with you. I really have a hard time drawing a straight line. I've been blessed though to have grown up and lived among beautiful things my whole life and they've always resonated with me and my eye. If I could pick my strength in what has drawn me to what I do, is that I do have a very strong sense of beauty, so I've been blessed with an eye I guess that can see beauty.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

Well I can sense that when I go into a store that you've organized and the way you display your work. There is a sense of order and an understanding of the esthetic of what makes things beautiful. You have beautiful things to show and display in your work, but you also have a way of showing them in an esthetic way.

JED FOUTZ:

I've always felt that the artist and my love for the culture and the art and how beautiful it is have made my job very easy. It's so easy for me when I look at something that one means so much to me and has so much of somebody tied up in it. I've always had a hard time looking at what I do as a job. I just feel really privileged to have grown up with the artists that I have, and they've made me see the world and life in many different ways. It's just been such a blessing to see through someone else's eyes and see what their sense of beauty is. It's taught me a lot about myself and the world, and a lot about people.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Has the Gospel influenced you in your profession?

JED FOUTZ: It has. I mean in many ways the Church is very active on the Reservation. And I've always found the Navajo very interesting. I served a mission in Japan. In Japan they believe that there are many ways to get to heaven, there's many ways to get back to where we are going. And they are very opened minded, I mean Mormonism can be one way. Buddhism can be an equally good way, and if they are all good they all lead to the same place. The Navajo are very much the same, they're not Buddhist, but they think that way very much so. But they are very spiritual whether it's connected in our religion, church, or the culture itself, especially among the older people when the culture was totally intact. There was such a beautiful connectiveness to who they were and their spirit and how they viewed life. And they have a word called **Hojo** which means harmony. In Native American cultures, it is that sense that everything should be in harmony, and it's reflected in their art, it's reflected in their approach and the way they live their life. And life isn't separated. We have a tendency to compartmentalize, our religious side and our work side. For them it evolved every moment of the day. There wasn't a moment when that wasn't who they were and what they were doing at the moment.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well it seems that your story deals a lot with family. It started out with family years back and you are still on that road. What are some of the things that have been important in your life and the family relationships and the Church and that now?

JED FOUTZ: You mean in my family?

FRANK MAGLEBY: Yeah, personal, in your own personal life.

JED FOUTZ: As a youth I grew up taking all of this for granted. Really when I left Farmington and the business, to go on my mission and go to school at BYU, I think I told my father I will never be back. And I was the only son and I said "really I'm never coming back, so whatever you do is great." And I had no intention. But really it took just a little time, but I think a big part of what drew me back in, initially, was the five generations of my family involved in my history, and I've always felt that was such a responsibility that I have in doing what I do. I think there have been many turns in my life where I could have maybe started a different business, or been more successful financially in a way. Between my love of the people, the culture and the art and what is reflected of that in the art, and on the other side my history and the role that the Church played in my family, and my family's role on the Reservation, it's all tied together in a way. And that came to mean so much to me over time. Again, it's just not work to me, it's just who and what I am. It's hard to explain.

FRANK MAGLEBY: Well I think there are several things involved in our lives, family is a big one, and the creativity that we have, the opportunity that we have to express ourselves are precious things in our lives. One question, how do other cultures respond to your

experience With the Navajo? The different art forms that come through your field of experiences.

JED FOUTZ:

I think that is what has drawn me to the art again, it's made my job not a job. It's just so easy, it seems to just resonate with people. I can point out things, explain the technical aspects, but so many times people walk it to the rug room, the hundreds of weavings around and surrounded by these beautiful things, I just don't think there are many places in the world where you can find that. It's something about the connectiveness that we've spoken to earlier, that they themselves are in that piece, that relationship that they have to their art, that they are actually in that art. It speaks without needing to be spoken in a way, and not to take away from their creative design, they are great designers, and the patterns alone have proven over time, I mean you can put them with mission furniture in the mission times and you can walk into the best home with the best mission furniture and there's Navajo weavings. You can go into a contemporary home it can fit into the most modern or contemporary art homes I've ever been in. I mean Andy Warhol had a Native American Art collection. I think it has transcended. Germany, outside of our country has one of the biggest collections and museums of Native American Art whether it be Plains, Southwest. I think there has always been a general appreciation for the art form and the beauty. It's something our Country lost in a way, but then again, the Southwest was such an isolated odd place that it was kind of able to be maintained. I think it is something that has been recognized as something lost to a lot of the world. But just as art itself it's always been translated and recognized. All great artists have recognized the simplicity in the Great design elements of American Art all the way through history.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

It's interesting, and I don't know if it is because of the Native American art or it may be the location and the pictorial quality of New Mexico, around Santa Fe. Taos and that, it's always attracted the American artists, the very famous ones like to go there and have some association with that area. And it has attracted a lot of artists to that. It's still kind of an art center in some ways. It is for many of them today.

JED FOUTZ:

It is. I think Santé Fe is the second largest art market in our country. And they were and they were drawn, they were influenced by the Americans, their approach to design, art, and life. I think it has been overlooked a lot but it is such a fundamental line that runs through so many parts of our art that nobody would even connect maybe.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

There is something visually special about that land there, it's different from anywhere else.

JED FOUTZ:

It is and I think that it does reflect in the art. You are absolutely right there is something. And I feel it. The funny thing is that I would be out in the middle of Shiprock and people would come in and people would come in and talk to me, and I could tell they were thinking, "what in the world are you doing in this God forsaken place?" That was really what they were saying in a way. But then there

was the exact opposite that would come in just after that...they were smitten. They were having an experience by just being in the area, that they never had had before in their lives. And they were like "this is the greatest place we've ever been." So it's interesting that it resonates with some and it doesn't resonate with some. But it's there it resonates in my heart, I feel it and understand it.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

Well I think the Indians contribute to that, the Indian tribes, the Spanish certainly contributed some, didn't they? What they brought in and those early influences still are there. You feel them when you go into that part of the country.

What about the survival for the artists? Things are changing so much in this rapid world and the old traditions are being lost, what's happening there? Do you see changes in the artisans and the craftspeople?

JED FOUTZ:

There has over time been an evolution approach to the art and as we said at the base it was just this utilitarian item whether it was jewelry, or a bit for their horse, or a bracelet, or something to keep water in, pottery, baskets, all those forms were basically just usable pieces that they needed to live. Then they were appreciated as art, but they still just made them. In my context I hate to keep going back to weaving, but it is my strongest connection. But where weavers would literally weave because that is what weavers did, that is what a Navajo woman did, and that's who she was. But it tied back to her creation story and it was just part of leading that harmonious life. It really had very little to do with sustenance for a long time. And then over time it had value but it was still connected to such a spiritual way of life. And I guess that is a lot of what has changed about the art. And as the culture has gone on and changed and become more mainstreamed with ours, it's much more a commodity. So the approach obviously changes. And so an artist becomes so much more aware of market and value to market, versus this is beautiful and this is what I'm making. But there was always connection between value, sustenance and the art. It's much more a market and something to be made for Market today. That spiritual connection to the art has weakened over time. I mean every artist has it, you as an artist are aware, but as a Cultural thing it has changed for the Navajo. It's become so much more a commodity and it has changed the way the art is approached and appreciated. Before it was just part of the day, what a woman's day was, get up, get the flock out, get the family taken care of, take care of this, get everything set for the day, and then it's the loom. And it was most of the family together, and it was probably three generations of a family and that is how they would visit, learn, and talk. But literally they believed that Spider Woman was part of their creation story. They believed that that was literally what they were born for, and it was a big part of who they were.

FRANK MAGLEBY:

I think that as we as artists go through our daily routine, we don't create just to sell things. We create because we have a need to express ourselves, and I think that sometimes the market gets in the wrong perspective, the marketing of it. I know that I personally feel that I do it more for me not for the purpose of selling it to market, and my reward in creating works is what comes in the process of doing it. And I'm sure there are still those artisans who still have that, even though the

market place changes and they focus on marketing. They still have that innate drive to create and to be creative. It's just part of our natural being. And it stems from our religious beliefs in many cases.

JED FOUTZ: Well it is interesting that you would say it like that, cause in my experience art that has stood the test of time usually comes from that kind of an artist and that approach to the art. Where if it is an artistic approach to market, tends to speak in the short term, but in the long term hold may be necessary so much. There is something in that approach to the art, across all cultures that makes it a more meaningful, lasting. The more meaningful lasting pieces that I know of were created from that kind of perspective.

FRANK MAGLEBY: It's kind of a spiritual experience isn't it?

[Music begins]

JED FOUTZ: If that's involved it seems to have just innately much more lasting value. I would agree.

FRANK MABLEBY: I enjoyed having this conversation today. I hope that you can continue to be creative in you work and the things you do and that your life will continue to carry on the traditions that have come though your family in all these years.

JED FOUTZ: Thank you, it's been great.

[MUSIC ENDS]