

Basic Detail Report



Rug

Date

1910-1920

Primary Maker

Navajo

Medium

Churro wool and pigment

Description

This rug was made at JB Moore's Crystal Trading Post in New Mexico. Moore is credited with commercializing the Navajo rugs sold at his post in two mail order catalogs published in 1903 and 1911. These catalogs featured plates of the rugs and designs potential buyers could order. In total, Moore produced 31 plates. Even though the plates allowed customers to choose their designs, Moore made it clear in the catalogs that the plates were only suggestive of the type of rug and designs the customer would receive. This resulted in rugs with many different variations on the original designs published in the plates. This rug is a variation on plate XXX. In Navajo weaving the diamond often symbolizes the Navajo homeland, but the two bracketing elements likely do not originate from the Navajo, but instead from pile woven carpets made from the tribes of the Caucasus mountains. J.B. Moore was particularly well-known for introducing Oriental elements to Navajo rugs. Despite that the original plate was woven by Bi-leen Al-pai-Bi-zha-ahd who is said to never weave a pattern designed by another weaver, it is possible that plate XXX is a prime example of this. As for the swastika motif, despite its modern connotations it has been an auspicious symbol for at least thousands of years. For the Navajo, it was a figurative representation of the 'whirling logs,' a commonly depicted sand painting from the Night Chant and together with an axis with two legs—where the swastika instead has four—forms a visual pun of the Navajo mantra, "successfully attaining a ripe old age by daily spiritual renewal according to the universal beauty of the cosmos."

Dimensions

82 3/4 × 98 1/8 in. (210.2 × 249.2 cm)