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I Pot Therefore I Am: Pueblo Ceramic Revivals as Assertions of Identity

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I Pot Therefore I Am:
Pueblo Ceramic Revivals as Assertions of Identity

By

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Abstract

This study is an examination of three specific ceramic revivals, which took place in the Pueblo region of the Southwestern United States, following the introduction of a cash economy to the area in the late nineteenth century. The lives of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero comprise the case studies. Their ceramic revivals (Sikyatki ware, black-on-black ware, and the Storyteller, respectively) are commonly thought of as economic responses to the commoditization of Pueblo culture by Anglos. A discussion of the nature of ethnic identity shows that these revivals are in fact individual assertions of identity; as identity was renegotiated after contact with Anglo-American society, the material correlates of that identity shifted as well.
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Introduction

This thesis explores the effects that contact with Anglo-American society has had Pueblo ceramics, particularly the effect of contact after the introduction of a cash economy into the southwestern portion of the United States (here referring primarily to Arizona and New Mexico), which is the traditional home of Pueblo peoples. This encompasses the period just prior to the construction of the Santa Fe Railway’s line through the region in 1879, to the present day. Many changes in Pueblo ceramics, from modes of production and materials used in manufacture, to use of design and form occurred following large-scale Anglo contact in the late 1800s.

By examining these changes as well as the cultural climate of the time, alterations in ceramics are seen to speak of larger transformations in the identities of Pueblo peoples. Put another way, Pueblo ceramics as expressions of identity change in response to the introduction of a cash economy, the art market, and subsequently tourism to the Southwest. A marked contrast exists between the ways in which ceramics were produced in Pueblos (including the designs used in their decoration) before and after exposure to and involvement with the larger American culture. The nature of ethnicity as discussed by John and Jean Comaroff (1987) is used to support the argument that a renegotiation of Pueblo ethnic identity took place during the colonialist period examined in this thesis.

The lives and ceramics of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero, as some of the most famous female Southwestern Native American potters, will be the main focus of this study. The revival ceramic styles these three women initiated have previously been viewed merely as individual adaptations of a formerly utilitarian craft into a consumer product, as responses to economic changes. The conclusion reached is that while this explanation is not incorrect, it is too simplistic and ignores the personal identities of
the artists discussed here. Ceramics function as material expressions of identity in the Pueblo world, and as that identity was threatened and forced to change with the intrusion of American culture into the Southwest, ceramics related the necessary changes in the individual identities of potters. That women were primarily responsible for the production of ceramics and as a result the specific revivals discussed herein, adds much to the discussion of ceramics as bearers of identity.

The roles of women in traditional Pueblo society were such that they did not actively participate in the political aspect of tribal life. Rather, through passive instruction, such as the repetitive act of pottery making, Pueblo women imparted to their children the knowledge and ideals necessary for them to carry on in the Pueblo way. When Anglo culture threatened to eclipse the native, Pueblo women found they could retain their former role as repositories and conduits of heritage through the revitalization of ancient ceramic styles.

Previous Studies

Previous studies of recent changes in pueblo pottery have focused on the influence of tourism and the art market (Wade 1985). Though both of these are extremely important stimuli, they are not the only pressures that bear on ceramic styles. In his article, "The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest: 1880-1980", Edwin Wade traces the development of native relations with traders, scholars, and philanthropists ("humanists"), and concurrent changes in native crafts. Wade posits that these changes in craft production, including the values underlying production as well as technique and material use, are directly resultant of the economic influences of the above Anglo groups. With the introduction of the American cash economy to the Southwest, native peoples were forced to make a commodity of their
culture in order to survive not only economically but as a culturally viable unit (Wade 1985:167). It is the Anglo interlopers - the traders in native curios, the philanthropic art collectors striving to preserve their conception of "native" culture, and the scholars who studied these Native Americans and who sanctioned one or the other of the former groups - who ultimately shaped native craft development. Non-natives possessed all the power. They created and consumed the material culture of Pueblo Indians from the late nineteenth century onward.

In the case of ceramic production, traders encouraged miniaturization, the adoption of non-native forms (vases, wastebaskets, ashtrays, etc.) which were more saleable to Anglos, and any process or material that would speed up the manufacturing process. While it is true that other potters eventually emulated ceramic styles that sold well, the ceramic revivals of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero are excellent examples of popular, long-lived styles of high artistic caliber employing traditional methods of production. These women are not only remembered because they were responsible for the revitalization of discontinued pueblo ceramic styles. They also revitalized their heritage and the cultural identity of themselves and their communities through their artistry.

Biographies

Nampeyo

The primary source for biographical information on Nampeyo is Barbara Kramer's book, Nampeyo and Her Pottery (1996). Surprisingly little in the way of substantiation is presented in most works relating the particulars of Nampeyo's revitalization of Sikyatki ware, causing Kramer to assert that many such accounts are erroneous (Hough 1917; Fewkes 1919; Nequatewa 1943). This,
along with the fact that Kramer’s work is the only biography of Nampeyo of any length or detail, has made Nampeyo and Her Pottery the best source for the information contained in this thesis. The following section draws heavily from Kramer’s work.

Nampeyo was born around 1860. Her original name was Nung-beh-yong, which in Tewa means Sand Snake, but outsiders misspelled and mispronounced it until it became the modern Nampeyo. Her mother White Corn was a member of the Tewa Corn Clan. Her father Quootsva was of the Hopi Snake Clan.

Nampeyo was born into her mother’s Corn Clan, following Hopi-Tewa matrilineal custom. The family lived on First Mesa (located in northeastern Arizona), in the village of Hano (called Tewa Village by the Tewa) (Figs 1-2). Their home was the Corn Clan dwelling, a large structure which faced away from the village’s central plaza, unlike other buildings (Kramer 1996:5). The Corn Clan was one of the most important clans for the Tewa of Hano. The rooms occupied by Nampeyo and her family were the oldest of the Corn Clan structure, and housed important ceremonial objects traditionally cared for by the women of the household. Clan meetings were held in this area of the dwelling, during which the correct times for certain ceremonies were decided and disputes were mediated. In Nampeyo and Her Pottery, Barbara Kramer quotes one of Nampeyo’s descendants as saying, “The Corn Clan is important. We feed the people. Not food, but we nourish them spiritually. If they come to us, we must be nice to them” (Kramer 1996:10).

Within the larger community of Hopi-Tews on First Mesa, the isolation and privileged position of the Corn Clan caused a certain amount of jealousy (Kramer 1996:14-15). The Hopi and the Tewa people had long lived near each other, since the migration of the Tewa to First Mesa some time early in the eighteenth century, but the relationship between these two peoples was often tense. Legend says that the Hopi invited the Tewa to live with them in order that the fiercer Tewa would protect the Hopi from marauding groups such as
the Utes and Navajo. When the Tewa arrived at the Mesa, the Hopi decided not to let them live there as they had promised. Eventually, the Tewa proved themselves against a group trying to attack the Hopi and were allowed space up on the Mesa, but an attitude of mistrust and enmity had already been cultivated. (Dozier 1966:20-31)

Another Tewa legend recounts that even after the Tewa were allowed to live on the mesa, the Hopi continued to ridicule and make life difficult for Tewa people. The Tewa chiefs decided to put a curse on the Hopi for their despicable behavior.

Our [Tewa] clan chiefs dug a pit between Hano and the Hopi villages [on First Mesa] and told the Hopi clan chiefs to spit into it. When they had all spat, our clan chiefs spat above the spittle of the Hopi. The pit was refilled, and then our clan chiefs declared:

"Because you have behaved in a manner unbecoming to human beings, we have sealed knowledge of our language and our way of life from you. You and your descendants will never learn our language and our ceremonies, but we will learn yours. We will ridicule you in both your language and our own." (Dozier 1966:18)

The curse sanctioned the Tewa acquisition of some aspects of Hopi culture while ensuring that Tewa identity was not compromised (Walker 1996:61). Despite the preservation of group boundaries, the Tewa eventually became spokespeople of sorts for the Hopi. Due in part to the fact that most Anglos in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not bother to distinguish Tewa from Hopi on First Mesa, the more progressive, often multilingual Tewa acted as emissaries, translators, and diplomatic envoys on behalf of the "Hopi Tribe" (Walker 1996:65). Tewa liberalism acted as the link between outsider and Hopi on the mesa.

When Nampeyo began making beautiful pottery in earnest as a young girl, the Hopi women nicknamed her "the Old Lady". Pueblo children were taught passively, not through formal instruction. They would mimic the actions of their older relatives, receiving little or no criticism for mistakes, and in this way would gradually acquire the skills needed to become productive members of the society. Nampeyo likely picked up pottery making
from White Corn, and when the young girl showed an aptitude for ceramics, she would not have been discouraged from the activity, but allowed to pursue her talent as she wished. Later, though it was intended as derision on the Mesa, traders and tourists used Nampeyo’s childhood nickname as a term of endearment when they became enamored of her work, affectionately dubbing her “The Old Lady of Hano”.

Jealousy was a term often employed in discussions about inter-community relations and even to describe the interactions of members of the same clan living within a Pueblo (Kramer 1996:14). According to family lore,

[Nampeyo] still a girl, but then she makes pottery. She heard the Hopis calling her just like old lady, she makes the potteries. She should be grinding corn or making piki. They jealous of her. She hears it but she never say nothing and her mother, too. She felt bad but she never quit making pottery. Never mind what they say, [she] just go ahead. (unnamed descendant quoted in Kramer 1996:14)

Another example of the resentment felt by her contemporaries comes from a descendant whom Kramer spoke to:

Others were jealous. She used to leave her clay outside the house and one day she knew someone had done something to it. She tasted it and they had mixed salt in the clay. (unnamed descendant quoted in Kramer 1996:76)

Besides the jealousy Hopi women felt regarding Nampeyo’s ceramics, the Hopi resentment of the Tewa existed on an even deeper level.

Tewa people were generally less resistant to change than the Hopi. Though all native peoples were to some extent uneasy about the intrusion of imposed standards by the United States government and the encroachment onto their land by outsiders, many Tewa learned English and/or Spanish (in addition to Hopi), and a few assented to live off the mesa in more American-style houses, even sending their young children to Anglo schools. Rather than dogmatically clinging to tradition like the Hopi, the Tewa also adapted to the American cash economy. It is unsurprising that Nampeyo, a Tewa, would have been open-minded about her potteries, catering (even if subconsciously) to the tastes of this foreign market.
Early Visitors to First Mesa

At the time of Nampeyo’s birth in the mid-eighteen hundreds, visitors to Nampeyo’s mesa home were few and far between. In 1875, William Henry Jackson and a small party of reporters and assistants traveled through the Southwest photographing ruins as well as modern Pueblos and their inhabitants. It was during that trip that Jackson took the first known photographs of Nampeyo (Fig 3). She is shown without any pottery, perhaps demonstrating, as Kramer states, that Jackson was taken with the girl and not the artist (1996:22). Kramer draws attention to Nampeyo’s hairstyle in one of Jackson’s photograph’s with a tantalizing side note: according to an account from 1886, the (Tewa) women of Hano did not wear the characteristically Hopi hair whorls as adolescents. She states, “if, indeed, Nampeyo had adopted the decorative Hopi hairstyle before her young Tewa peers, she displayed an early independence in personal expression” (Kramer 1996:22).

Also in 1875, Thomas V. Keam received his license to trade nearby First Mesa and built a series of stone buildings in the years that followed, including a blacksmith shop, stables, and quarters for visitors (who were mostly government agents passing through the area on inspections or census taking trips). Both Navajos and Hopis visited Keam’s trading post, bartering for such items as iron cooking pots, calico cloth, flour, and other groceries, allowing him to gather an impressive assortment of native wares.

Keam befriended Nampeyo’s brother, Tom Polacca (whose Tewa name was Polaccaca), a bright young man who saw the necessity for communication and cooperation with Anglos and the United States government. Polacca had learned some English and soon after Keam’s arrival, built the first native house off the mesa (Kramer 1996:36). He and his family would return to the mesa for ceremonies, but the larger community of Hopi and Tewa did not readily accept his openly Anglo sympathies and choice of lifestyle. Polacca
converted to the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and while a number of others followed his example, many Pueblo Indians criticized the intrusion of proselytizing missionaries and Christianity into the area for the loss of adherence to the traditional customs.

Keam had convinced Polacca of the need for schools to verse Pueblo children in Anglo ways. As mentioned above, the push to send native children away to school was a great cause for division between Tewa and Hopi. A government school was opened in Keam’s Canyon in 1887, at the site of Keam’s original trading post (he moved nearby and built another). Immediately, there was resistance from Pueblo families.

In the years following, military detachments were sent to put down a series of native uprisings against government attempts to Anglicize the Pueblo Indians (most centered on Third Mesa where the Hopi residents divided themselves into Hostiles who rejected every aspect of Anglicization and Friendlies who were willing to bend), not the least of which was compulsory schooling for children. Conservative Hopis blamed Tom Polacca for the ever-increasing encroachment into their culture of the Anglos. He signed the charter for the nearby day school himself (later named in his honor the Polacca Day School), without the permission of the elders, who had already refused (Kramer 1996:42). He was completely shunned when he allowed his home to be turned into a Baptist missionary in the late 1890s (Kramer 1996:67). Nampeyo and her family, by association with her brother, may have been looked upon with even more mistrust and dislike by the larger Hopi community as a result of his cooperation with Anglos.

The Birth of Sikyatki Revival Ware

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a widespread belief existed that the lifeways of Native Americans would disappear completely in just a few years, and that as many examples of native culture (both modern
and ancient) should be collected as was possible. With this in mind, James Stevenson led an expedition sponsored by the National Museum (later renamed the Smithsonian) to the Southwest in 1879 to collect specimens of Native American arts and crafts. Included in the nearly two thousand items brought back to Washington by Stevenson’s expedition were numerous katsina dolls, textiles, and ceramics. At the time, he remarked that the pottery of Hopi and Zuni was practically indistinguishable, and that he felt modern potters were not imitating older designs (Kramer 1996:29).

Kramer also asserts that in the collections of pottery attributed to Nampeyo made during the early years of her marriage to Lesso of the Walpi Cedarwood Clan (1879-late 1880s), there is no evidence of the Sikyatki designs characteristic of the later Hopi pottery revival (1996:28). Apparently, no one took note of a full-blown revival of ancient pottery designs on Hopi ceramics at the time because none existed. In the year 1882 however, an article was published about the ingenuity of native potters in forging ancient designs for the consumption of zealous collectors (Kramer 1996:29). A well-documented tradition of forgeries does not exist, although the provenance of many vessels was poorly recorded, resulting in confusion as to the age, affiliation, and artist responsible for particular pieces.

One of the first people to discover Nampeyo as a ceramic artist was Alexander M. Stephen, who settled into Keam’s Canyon (which runs to the East of First Mesa and was named for trader Thomas Keam) around 1880. Stephen kept a detailed journal of his experiences with the Hopi people, including observations he made about the private lives of individual natives, among them Nampeyo and her family (Stephen was also a friend of Tom Polacca). In 1892, Stephen wrote that the Hopi women from the village of Walpi (located on the very tip of First Mesa) had the best knowledge of ceramic manufacture, and that the wares from Hano were not comparable in quality (1936:1020). When he mentioned Nampeyo to some Walpi women as an exception, they replied
that she must have learned from her paternal (Hopi) grandmother (Stephen 1936:1020).

Kramer (though she gives no reference to back up her statement) feels it unlikely that Nampeyo would have learned to make pottery from a paternal grandmother, because the young Nampeyo would not have spoken enough Hopi to communicate with her Hopi grandmother (1996:13). It makes more sense that Nampeyo learned from her maternal relatives because her maternal grandmother and mother were living. By contrast, Theodore Frisbie, in his article "The Influence of J. Walter Fewkes on Nampeyo: Fact or Fancy" (1973) relates the story of the young Nampeyo observing her paternal grandmother at Walpi making pottery and offers in addition that at that time, Hano women were not decorating pottery at all (232). He continues, saying that

with the encouragement of her [paternal] grandmother, Nampeyo began making miniature vessels, and by the time she was a young woman, she had acquired the reputation of being a fine potter, as fine as any then producing ceramics on First Mesa. Her ability [sic] to design and decorate were exceptional, and in addition to her own work, she decorated or finished all of the vessels formed by her [paternal] grandmother. (Frisbie 1973:232)

Apparently Nampeyo participated in the longstanding practice of helping another potter to decorate their formed vessels. Members of Nampeyo’s family later helped her in the same fashion, though there is ambiguity as to which relatives performed what functions.

Reports are contradictory as to what part Nampeyo’s husband Lesso played in her ceramic production. Kramer maintains that there is no verifiable evidence that Lesso ever helped with his wife’s pottery making. Frisbie again takes completely the opposite track and writes assertively (also without citation) that “Lesou assisted his wife in her ceramic work” (1973:234). Frisbie remarks that both Nampeyo and Lesso hunted for sherds with designs on them, at times visiting various ruins or excavations to copy new patterns or elements (1973). Nampeyo suffered from trachoma, a progressive disease that afflicted many Pueblo Indians in the early part of
the twentieth century. Without treatment from antibiotics, the disease gradually clouded the cornea over a period of up to twenty years, inevitably leading to the complete loss of sight. Comparing various reports of visitors to the mesa, it appears that Nampeyo was completely blind by 1920 (Kramer 1996:124). While Kramer states that Nampeyo’s daughters helped her by decorating the pots she formed, she says little of Lesso’s possible assistance, only that his “role in Nampeyo’s pottery-making has been unrealistically exaggerated” (Kramer 1996:76). Frisbie however, cites the obituary of the famous potter written by Nequatewa (a Pueblo Indian from Second Mesa who worked as interpreter, liaison to Hopi artisans, and was hired to research and write this obituary) when he maintains that Lesso painted Nampeyo’s pots from the time of her blindness to his death around 1932, and that the husband was at least as accomplished a painter of Sikyatki designs as his wife (cited in 1973:238). It is difficult to tell what role Lesso played in the Sikyatki ceramic revival, due to these conflicting declarations, as well as to the general lack of solid biographical knowledge of Nampeyo. If he and their daughters were decorating Nampeyo’s pots, they could indeed have been doing it for quite some time.

There is a famous story as to how Nampeyo began Sikyatki Revival Ware in which southwestern archaeologist Jesse Walter Fewkes plays a prominent role. Mrs. Mary Hemenway, a wealthy Bostonian socialite, asked Jesse Walter Fewkes to enter the field as replacement to Frank Hamilton Cushing, whose frail health had put an abrupt end to a previous expedition she had sponsored which was to study the Zuni. Hemenway knew of Fewkes through her son, a classmate of his at Harvard University.

Despite questions raised by contemporaries in the field regarding his competence as a researcher\(^1\), Fewkes completed the Zuni project, and Mrs. Hemenway had enough faith in his abilities to send him to the Southwest again in 1891, this time for a study of the Hopi. There, he met and collaborated
with Alexander M. Stephen, who by that time spoke not only Navajo (a common language among many southwestern native peoples), but was learning Hopi and had garnered a large amount of knowledge about native lifeways through direct observation. Stephen kept detailed notes to inform Fewkes of what went on at the Pueblos whenever he was away.

Fewkes made a number of additional visits to the Hopi villages, including one in the spring of 1892 to negotiate the sale of a large collection of both modern and ancient native items (over forty-five hundred specimens) to Mrs. Hemenway for ten thousand dollars. Thomas Keam had amassed the collection (dubbed the Thomas V. Keam Collection of Material Culture) during his tenure as trader near First Mesa. Hemenway intended the collection for a museum she planned to sponsor, but she died in 1894 while the objects were on a touring exhibition of Europe and before her museum had been begun. The Thomas V. Keam Collection went instead to the Peabody Museum at Harvard. (Kramer 1996:46-52)

With the death of Mrs. Hemenway, Fewkes' funding stopped. That same year, Alexander Stephen died at the home of Thomas Keam after a long illness, probably tuberculosis (Kramer 1996:51). Frederick Webb Hodge of the Bureau of American Ethnology (formerly the Bureau of Ethnology) secured a position for Fewkes with that agency so that he might continue his research in the southwest, this time as an archaeologist. Fewkes then excavated at a site near Hano called Sikyatki in 1895.

Hodge joined Fewkes just before excavations at the ruins of Sikyatki began. Throughout his stay, Hodge kept a journal which recorded not only the day to day undertakings at the site, but also observations he made about the natives living on nearby First Mesa (Hodge 1985). Fewkes himself wrote two official reports of the Sikyatki excavation after its completion (Fewkes 1896; 1898). The discrepancies between these reports and Hodge's journal
have led to questions about the validity of Fewkes’ insistence that he alone was responsible for the creation of Sikyatki Revival Ware.

The story as Fewkes told it was that Nampeyo’s husband Lesso was one of the native workmen hired to dig at Sikyatki. In the preliminary report, Fewkes says that

The best potter of East Mesa, an intelligent woman from Hano named Nampio, acknowledged that her productions were far superior to those of the women of Sikyatki and she begged permission to copy some of the designs for future inspiration. (Fewkes 1896:577)

In his final report written two years later, Fewkes states

The most expert modern potter at East Mesa is Nampeo, a Tanoan woman who is a thorough artist in her line of work. Finding a better market for ancient than for modern ware, she cleverly copies old decorations, and imitates the Sikyatki ware almost perfectly. (Fewkes 1898:660)

Even more openly sinister are the insinuations that “almost any Hopi who has a bowl to sell will say that it is ancient, and care must always be exercised in accepting such claims” (Fewkes 1898:660) and that “these fraudulent pieces are often cleverly made” (Fewkes 1898:632). This final report does not place Nampeyo at Sikyatki copying designs during the excavation, nor does Hodge’s journal mention anything about Nampeyo or Lesso drawing Sikyatki designs.

Even had she not observed Fewkes’ excavations, Nampeyo would certainly have been aware of prehistoric designs, and not only those of Sikyatki ware. Ancient ceramic pieces were passed down in families for generations, and the designs must have been part of the subconscious repertoire of native potters. Alexander Stephen noted the production of Revival Ware as early as 1893, when he wrote of another potter in his diary, “she does not approach Numpe’yo, the distinguished Tewa potter, in artistic skill... Like Numpe’yo she tells me she makes her designs after some she has seen on ancient ware, but knows nothing of their significance” (1936:130). Later, through an interpreter in the 1920s, Nampeyo herself told anthropologist Ruth Bunzel, “when I first began to paint, I used to go to the ancient village and pick up pieces of pottery and copy the designs. That is how I learned to paint. But now, I
just close my eyes and see designs and I paint them" (Bunzel 1929:56). Neither Stephen nor Bunzel accused Nampeyo of deceiving traders and collectors in regards to the authenticity of her wares.

In Walter Hough’s obituary of Fewkes (1931), the former does not mention the “Fewkes-Nampeyo relationship,” seemingly because there was no relationship (Frisbie 1973:239). According to Frisbie, Fewkes never actually speaks of his influence on Nampeyo’s Sikyatki revival in any of his numerous publications, save the two reports on his Sikyatki excavations (1973:239). While it is not unreasonable that Fewkes should only have written of Nampeyo in those contexts, the validity of his claim to have literally begun the Sikyatki revival in Hopi pottery can certainly be called into question. It is much more likely that his excavations and interest, as well as the interest of his companions like Hough and of those who followed fanned the flames of the revival Nampeyo had already begun.

Increasing notoriety

Though visitors to the Pueblos were rare around the time Nampeyo was born, the fame of the natives spread as adventurous tales and travelling exhibitions made their way East. The belief that native ways were fast disappearing made it all the more tantalizing for interested amateur photographers, anthropologists, linguists, collectors, and hearty tourists to travel to “Hopiland”. The numerous ceremonies of the Pueblo Indians, at least parts of which were held in the open plazas in the center of villages, drew relatively large crowds of Anglo spectators to Nampeyo’s home.

More than a few accounts of travels through “Moqui” country mention the famous potter of Hano, and many photographers stopped to record Nampeyo and her wares. One description of note came from Walter Hough, who worked for the National Museum and accompanied Fewkes on a visit to First Mesa in 1896 (Hough 1915). Hough met Nampeyo and requested that he be given a
demonstration of her at work on some ceramics. She complied, duly impressing him. Hough declared, “everyone who visits Tusayan will bring away as a souvenir some of the work of Nampeyo,” (1915:75) and collected seven of her bowls for the National Museum’s collection (Fig 4); the first of Nampeyo’s pottery to be documented as such at the time of their collection (Kramer 1996:62). Hough also wrote a detailed description of Nampeyo’s pottery making techniques (1915).

The photographer Edward S. Curtis visited Hopi on numerous occasions and recorded an unknown number of images of Nampeyo through the first two decades of the twentieth century (Kramer 1996:77-8) (Fig 5). Adam Clark Vroman photographed not only Nampeyo but her eldest daughter Annie and her mother White Corn. One image records four generations of the Corn Clan, including Annie’s youngest daughter Rachel (Fig 6). The photographs taken by these and other visitors to the mesa in the summer of 1901 document 44 unique vessels. Nampeyo likely planned ahead for the tourist season by producing more vessels during the winter months, in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for her wares (Kramer 1996:82).

An interesting paradox lies in the relationship between early Native American artists and the larger art market. Those native artists whose wares were widely known and specifically sought after by collectors and traders (such as Nampeyo ceramics) were rarely signed. The paradox is that for an art object to have value in the Western art market, its origin must be known. An unsigned ceramic vessel in the Hopi style would be worth considerably more if it were actually signed by Nampeyo rather than if it were merely reported to have been her creation. But Pueblo languages have no written form, and Nampeyo (who never learned to write another language) never signed her own pottery. Pottery was often attributed to her, sometimes signed with Nampeyo’s name by its collector. Because she and her daughter Annie often worked together to manufacture and sell (and perhaps, as has already been
mentioned, to decorate each other's) pottery, many pots bought during Annie's early life could have been attributed to Nampeyo (Kramer 1996:109). Kramer writes:

As indicated by photographs and reports by observers, [Annie and Nampeyo] worked together making pottery to sell. Typical of Hopi and Tewa custom, neither mother nor daughter sought individual recognition but set their unsigned vessels on a rug outside their home for visitors to purchase. The pottery that visitors carried away, they attributed to Nampeyo. (1996:76)

Certainly, there are numerous examples of photographs reputed to depict Nampeyo and some of her vessels in which the identification is mistaken (Kramer 1996:191-2). Many of the women shown remain nameless, and it is very possible that some of the pots shown with them, either through carelessness or purposeful deceit, have been credited to Nampeyo or her daughters.

The Railroad

The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869 when the Union and Central Pacific Railways met at Promontory Point, Utah. The Santa Fe Railway, which would later ally itself with The Fred Harvey Company, began its Southwestern Service the previous year when it broke ground in Topeka, Kansas. From there, the Santa Fe extended service through Kansas to Colorado in 1872, and into New Mexico in 1878, the same year as Fred Harvey signed a formal contract with the railway (Weigle and Babcock 1996:xii). Track was then completed to Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1879, to Albuquerque the following year, and to into Arizona in 1881 (Weigle and Babcock 1996:xii). This expansion meant not only the accessibility of areas and peoples previously unreachable by any but the heartiest of travelers (and that new markets for the sale of native goods were created for tourists hitherto unaware of their existence), but also that natives would come into contact with increasingly more and more Anglo outsiders.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the population of the United States grew quite large. Eastern cities became crowded and industrialized.
People began moving west, searching for open space and land they could claim. Paradoxically, these people brought about the closure of the West as they fenced in the prairie for grazing land. Native Americans were moved further and further to the perimeters of the nation, some onto reservations, as Anglos greatly depleted not only the supply of land but the natural resources of the region as well. The gradual loss of their traditional economy forced Native Americans to participate in the cash economy brought by these Anglo settlers (Howard and Pardue 1996:4). The influx of tourists into the region via the railroad only cemented native involvement further, as markets sprang up for goods that were less industrial and more traditional. Disgusted with the filth of urbanization, Victorians prized handmade objects. Thus, items purchased from Native Americans (aside from possibly being the memento of a trip) symbolized the era’s rejection of mass production and its love of individualistic art. (Howard and Pardue 1996:7)

Formerly utilitarian, the pottery of Southwestern Native Americans became objets d’art, exhibited in homes as well as museums. Tourists were less concerned with whether the bowl they were buying was decorated with traditional designs than if the design were pleasing to them. Forms also shifted during this period, as Native Americans realized Anglos wanted items they were used to like ashtrays or wastebaskets. Miniaturization took place as well, because smaller pieces were easier for tourists to carry home and easier to produce. It is interesting to observe how an original interest sparked by the desire to return to more traditional modes of manufacture in turn sparks changes in those modes allowing for greater ease in larger scale production.

In 1902, Thomas Keam sold his trading post in Keams Canyon to Juan Lorenzo Hubbell, who operated another trading post in nearby Ganado and had become an art collector (Kramer 1996:84-5). Hubbell compiled an inventory of Keam’s post, in which he listed “Nanpea pottery; the only pottery that
compares with the old in color, finish, and design. But one squaw living
knows the secret of making this pottery; from $0.50 to $10.00" (Hubbell
quoted in Kramer 1996:85). Hubbell also maintained a relationship with the
Fred Harvey Company. The company’s agent in charge of their Indian
Department, Herman Schweizer, bought native wares for Harvey hotels and curio
shops through Hubbell, who bought them from native crafters through his
licensed trading post in Keams Canyon. Under Schweizer, the Fred Harvey
Company began shipping boxcarloads of native items of all types back East on
the Santa Fe Railroad, thereby becoming not only the first large-scale
procurer of Native American wares, but inventing mass marketing and opening
theretofore nonexistent niches. (Kramer 1996:85)

The Fred Harvey Company began around 1876 when Frederick Henry Harvey
leased the lunchroom of the Santa Fe Railway’s Topeka station, which would
turn into America’s first chain of restaurants soon after. The company
opened a series of hotels along the rail lines, and invented the Harvey Girls
to staff them. Later, Fred Harvey’s descendants expanded his empire by
promoting travel by middleclass American tourists to their hotels in the
Greater Southwest, and trading in Native American craft items across the
United States. Nampeyo, quite well known to the Harvey Company by the time
its Indian Department was created in 1902, was one of the first Native
Americans to be individually recognized as an artisan. The Fred Harvey
Company set apart her pottery with a label that read “Made by Nampeyo, Hopi”
(Kramer 1996:86).

Hopi House was one way in which the Harvey Company made the relatively
isolated natives of the southwest more easily accessible to tourists. The
House was built on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon to accompany to El Tovar
Hotel, and opened in 1905. The El Tovar contained eighty guestrooms (all
with electric lighting) and the characteristically fine dining commonly
associated with Harvey Hotels. Hopi House had rooms for native artists and
their families, as well as space where curious tourists could watch the artisans at work, and a shop for the sale of finished items. According to correspondence between Schweizer and John F. Huckel (Fred Harvey's son in law and company executive), Schweizer was to arrange for the transportation of Nampeyo, some members of her family, and her pottery making supplies to Hopi House the same year it opened (quoted in Howard and Pardue 1996:92).

Upon arrival, Nampeyo, Lesso, Annie and her husband Willie, young daughters Nellie and Fannie, sons William, Kaloakuno, and Wesley, and Annie's child Rachel, settled into their rooms and began work (Fig 7). The two boxes of clay they brought did not last Nampeyo long, and more was sent for. Huckell had difficulties keeping Hopi House running according to plan from the start. For one thing, Nampeyo and fellow potters would only work with their native clay. Schweizer tried sending clay from Acoma to Hopi potters in desperation, which they refused to work with (Kramer 1996:90). Also, the families employed at Hopi House had responsibilities back on their mesas. During the summer months, when the majority of tourists passed by the Grand Canyon, many natives preferred to remain in their homes in order to plant and harvest their crops. The shock of living away from their traditional home was so great, many artists did not reach the end of the two to three months the Harvey Company requested they stay at Hopi House (Kramer 1996:90-1). When it was originally realized that Hopi families might be reluctant to leave the mesa for Hopi House, Huckell and Schweizer decided to persuade Nampeyo to be the first to visit and demonstrate her technique. She agreed, and was present for the opening of Hopi House in January of 1905.

Nampeyo and her family remained for three months, but fought with Huckel to be able to leave for home in time to plant corn before April (Kramer 1996:93-4). Later, when Huckel and Schweizer were considering having Nampeyo return to Hopi House for another stint, there were qualms about their inability to control her: "Nampeyo’s party was pretty independent and pretty
much spoiled ... They did not want to do anything unless they were paid for it” (Huckel to Lorenzo, quoted in Kramer 1996:101). The letter betrays the attitude of most businesspeople that dealt with natives. Indians were considered to be like wild children, easily bullied and undeserving of anything but the barest necessities. No attempt was made by the Harvey Company to acknowledge or respect Pueblo cultures, and the only artists who were given a miniscule measure of esteem were those who produced excellent wares for prices deemed reasonable by the traders. Financial gain was of paramount importance, and natives were requisite décor for Hopi House. While they added an air of believability to the tourists’ surroundings, native artists whose work was of recognizably high quality, like Nampeyo, received increased visibility. Her fame spread along with the Harvey Company brochures advertising her as an attraction in herself.

Despite the great inconvenience to people who lived off and with the land, World’s Fairs and various other exhibitions of Native Americana drew artists like Nampeyo further away from their reservation homes and into the view of the interested public. In 1910, the Chicago Tribune newspaper and the greater business community of Chicago sponsored a second United States Land and Irrigation Exposition. The Tribune had sponsored a similar show the previous year, in an attempt to demonstrate the potential for intensive farming of lands in the South and West of the United States (Kramer 1996:104). For the 1910 show, breakthroughs in modern machinery were to be contrasted with the still-primitive native cultures of the region. The Santa Fe Railway Company invited Nampeyo and members of her family to make pottery (which could not be fired inside the Chicago Coliseum, but for which they would be paid nonetheless) to advertise travel to the Southwest. Schweizer, working on behalf of the Harvey Company and planning the particulars of native participation in the show, dictated not only the number of family members of each sex and age to make up the party, but also the clothing they
would wear and their hairstyles (Kramer 1996:105). The Harvey Company had its own ideas about what it meant to be Indian, and as they marketed the Southwest and Pueblo Indians like Nampeyo to potential tourists, they gave these concepts a certain reality.

Though visitors to the Chicago Exposition of 1905 thought they were seeing Nampeyo and her family in a recreation of their natural environment, what they really saw was a translation of a culture as unintelligible to Harvey executives as it would have been to the guests themselves. Every core belief of Pueblo peoples was in marked contrast to those of the Anglos who came to gawk at them. Nampeyo’s unprecedented personal recognition and the mythic quality with which she and her people were endowed by the Harvey Company was in marked contrast to the traditional mindset of Pueblo Indians. In a pathetic display, the Indians and their culture were transformed into commodities, sold to eager tourists by the Fred Harvey Company, exploited at every opportunity. Despite the financial gain achieved by the groups of natives who were employed in some capacity by the Harvey Company, their profits paled in comparison to those achieved by the company. And, although it was never an Indian goal to be wealthy by Anglo standards, even the money made by an artist of Nampeyo’s caliber and fame could not stave off the epidemics and famines that periodically visited the Pueblos.

Decline of Hano

During the First World War, few tourists visited First Mesa. Sales of pottery decreased dramatically as money was poured into the war effort. The Roaring Twenties however, brought a new kind of tourist, one who owned their own motor car. Highway 66 ran through Northern Arizona, and wagon trails that led directly to Keams Canyon gave easy access to the mesas by car (Kramer 1996:129-30). The Fred Harvey Company provided a more luxurious version of the motoring tour in its Harvey cars. By the middle of the
decade, the Harvey Company was taking passengers into the Hopi reservation for overnight excursions during the Snake Dance ceremonial. Visitors could witness the performance and wander around the mesa, purchasing souvenirs from residents. (Kramer 1996:131-2)

Many motorists were not as wealthy as travelers from two decades earlier, but these new visitors also wanted souvenirs of their journey. Because demands had changed, so too did the products. Potters consistently produced smaller ceramics that were lighter and easier to carry back by car, and also less expensive. There is some evidence that during the twenties Nampeyo’s eyesight deteriorated to where she was nearly blind (Kramer 1996). During this period, she produced work that was markedly different from her earlier pieces, marked by what Kramer calls a marked preference for tactile decoration (Kramer 1996:123). With the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic depression, The Harvey Company resigned itself to selling and stocking only small, inexpensive pieces of tourist ceramics. The art market collapsed, and the money brought in by the sale of pottery vessels to traders and tourists stopped flowing by the mid-thirties.

When the United States Government tried to Anglicize the Pueblo Indians by forcing and then by enticing them to live off the mesa in American style houses below, the Pueblos began deteriorating. With fewer and fewer members of the traditional clans left to perform ceremonies, many rites were lost. Children were sent to boarding school, epidemics took the lives of many clan elders, and Nampeyo’s generation became the last to live solely on the mesa. Many of her contemporaries, especially when Highway 66 opened up the area to motoring vacationers, chose to live closer to travel routes where they could display their wares in higher traffic areas. When Lesso died of pneumonia in 1930, Nampeyo remained in the Corn Clan dwellings alone. Though she was the oldest woman of her clan and responsible for not only the care of her extended family but for the upkeep of traditions, there was no one left to
teach how to make pottery. Girls all went away for schooling through high school, and since the demand for traditional ceramics had dried up and was no longer a lucrative occupation, young women were not interested in learning the ancient techniques. Pueblo pottery making was a dying art. (Kramer 1996:129-33)

Philanthropists

Comparing tourists with ethnographers leads to the obvious point (already mentioned) that the former was unconcerned with the authenticity of the object they were purchasing, as long as it was produced by native hands. Ethnographic collectors were primarily interested in preserving objects as representations of vanishing Native American culture.

Mary Colton, who had founded the Museum of northern Arizona with her husband, Dr. Harold Colton in 1928, determined that in order to arrest the deterioration of native crafts in the Southwest, she would sponsor a craft exhibition in 1930. The Hopi Craftsman Exhibition took place on July 4, 1930, during what was hoped would be a busy tourist season. Unlike other fairs where the wares exhibited were for sale to the general public, the entries in this display were controlled by specific rules devised by Mrs. Colton. She was aghast at the general decline in the quality of native wares caused by the tourist trade, and determined that an exhibition such as the one she had planned would not only encourage higher quality but renew pride in native crafts. Toward encouraging participation, cash prizes would be awarded to pieces judged of highest quality in their category, and Colton encouraged participants to identify their pieces with a signature or other personal mark in order that they might attain recognition. Though Nampeyo herself never wrote in English or developed a mark, members of her family wrote the name for her. The only pieces of pottery ever “signed” with the
name Nampeyo (rather than later labeling of a piece by its collector) resulted from these exhibitions. (Kramer 1996:133-34)

Mary Colton’s recognition of the marked decline in native crafts and her attempt to preserve traditional techniques in the face of Anglo encroachment through craft exhibitions was the first of its kind. In later years, the rules governing submissions to the annual Hopi Craftsmen Exhibition became more stringent. Critics have cited these restrictions as stagnating to artistic development among natives. It is difficult to say when the acknowledged need for preservation of dying traditional arts gives way to the fetishization and commercialization of one culture by another, though it is equally difficult to deny that Mary Colton’s vision did much to preserve techniques which would possibly have been completely lost in the wave of modernization to hit the Hopi Pueblos in the early twentieth century.

Nampeyo’s Pottery

Before railroads opened up the southwest, Pueblo peoples lived in relative isolation from the influences of the larger Anglo society. As of the late 1800s however, travel to the region brought about changes in many aspects of native lifeways, including ceramic production. Museum collectors and traders, and later tourists and philanthropists, expressed the most interest not just in the everyday utilitarian wares produced by the potters of Hano and other Pueblo villages, but in more elaborately decorated pieces. Styles were therefore invented that catered to this taste, and that incorporated then modern vessel shapes and designs along with ancient elements.

The ceramic style most widely associated with Nampeyo and Hopi pottery during this period (late 1800s through 1940) is commonly called Sikyatki Revival ware. Though this style borrowed heavily from previous native forms and was influenced profoundly by contact with interested Anglos, Sikyatki
Revival ceramics remain a unique development (Wyckoff 1983:67). What makes this style a revival is its use of design elements previously employed by native potters in Sikyatki Polychrome (ca 1375 AD to ca 1625). Nampeyo not only reproduced these designs, she duplicated the earlier Sikyatki ceramics so well, down to the luster, colors, width of line (for which she modified the typical yucca brush in uoc during her early lifetime to a much smaller form), Fewkes' fears about the uninitiated mistaking her pots for ancient wares may have been somewhat justified (Wyckoff 1983:74).

That Nampeyo, author of the Sikyatki Revival, was a Tewa is not surprising given their liberal attitudes toward adoption of aspects of foreign cultures. Tewa people were not interested in wholly assimilating themselves into American culture however, and they were able to separate manufacturing pottery for sale from living as Tewa quite well. This is in keeping with the Tewa practice of keeping some aspects of themselves hidden from non-Tewa. Anglos ignored Nampeyo's Tewa heritage, causing her pottery and the Sikyatki Revival style to become associated with the Hopi. In fact, during her lifetime, all of Nampeyo's pottery was referred to as either Sikyatki or Hopi Revival (Kramer 1996:160), though a more detailed analysis of her vessels demonstrates that she incorporated many designs from many different genres.

In Nampeyo and Her Pottery, Kramer divides Nampeyo's ceramic development chronologically into five periods (1996:167-76). Period one includes pottery created prior to 1900. Though very few vessels can be positively identified as dating from this period, those that are known (either through records or dated photographs) demonstrate that Nampeyo was producing wares of various styles. She and other potters were still creating utilitarian wares for household use in what is known as Polacca Polychrome at the same time they experimented with other styles for sale to early collectors and traders.
Period two includes pottery made between 1900 and 1910. During these years, Nampeyo’s style seems to have crystallized more, and she produced a number of vessels later considered to be her “signature” form (Fig 8). These are large jars (18-20 inches in diameter) whose shapes were unmistakably Sikyatki, and were understandably quite popular with collectors. Kramer notes that because this type of jar has such dramatically sloped shoulders, the coiling of such a vessel must have required great skill (1996:169). Part of Nampeyo’s recognition among collectors of this period was probably due to the unwillingness or inability of other potters to create such a form. Though it was during this period that Nampeyo traveled twice to Hopi House (1905 and 1907) and once to the Chicago Exposition (1910), her work during its latter half is largely undocumented.

Work produced between the years 1910 and 1917 fall within Period three. By this time Nampeyo had firmly established her reputation with collectors, and they solicited her specifically (Kramer 1996:171). Annie matured as an artist during this period. It was also at this time that Nampeyo stopped making the large Sikyatki jars mentioned above. Instead, many of her vessels were large and round. The first documented “bat-wing” design (Fig 9), one of Nampeyo’s unique developments, was collected by Samuel Barrett in 1911 (Kramer 1996:172), and designs in a circular pattern (Fig 10) were only utilized for a short time during Period three.

The transition from Period three to Period four (1917-1930) is marked by United States’ involvement in World War One. Few visited First Mesa during the war years. During this quiet time, Nampeyo’s trachoma returned. The first evidence of experimentation with more tactile design elements comes from a photograph taken by the artist Emry Kopta around 1920 (Fig 11). After the war and into the 1920s, tourists flocked to the Southwest via rail. They wanted inexpensive souvenirs that were easy to carry home, so many potters began making ashtrays, effigies, and miniature versions of vessels. For a
short time Nampeyo also produced a few figures (Fig 12), some not unlike the popular rain gods made at Tesuque Pueblo. In the mid-twenties however, she was back to producing "dignified pieces in the best traditional style" (Bunzel 1929:68).

This and other descriptions by Bunzel in The Pueblo Potter may shed some light on how Nampeyo dealt with her diminishing sight during the 1920s. Bunzel said at the time that Nampeyo's "designs are executed with greater delicacy and precision and her line work is superior to that of her fellow workers. ... At times her patterns are almost impressionistic in their economy" (1929:68). Other designs were described as "much cruder" (Bunzel 1929:42). Though these statements seem contradictory, the discrepancies can be explained when we realize that more than one hand could have painted the vessels to which Bunzel refers. A descendant of Nampeyo identified one such pot as having been made by Nampeyo but decorated by Lena Charlie, another resident of Hano and niece of Nampeyo (Kramer 1996:175). Lena's designs are often less complex than Nampeyo's and are sometimes limited to a single element on a vast background. Kramer also points out that a number of pieces credited to Nampeyo have such static designs, uncharacteristic of Nampeyo, that many may have been painted by others for her when her eyesight became too poor for her to continue (1996:175).

Nampeyo's husband Lesso died in 1930, the beginning of Period five, which lasts until the potters own death in 1942. She was unable to paint the vessels she created, so she exclusively relied on others. In the early part of this period, Nampeyo entered some vessels into the Hopi Craftsman Exhibition. The large Sikyatki jars which had been so popular and had earned Nampeyo her reputation among Anglo collectors at the turn of the century were once again produced by the potter in the mid 1930s.

The methods by which Nampeyo created her pottery were similar to those used by other native potters before and after her. Dry clay was collected
and ground to a powder. Water was added to the powder as it was kneaded with the feet until the proper consistency and proportions were reached. Sand, produced by rubbing two pieces of sandstone together was added to the paste as temper. The clay was transferred to a flat stone and kneaded more. Then, a portion of this clay was formed into a pancake shape and placed inside a puki. This is a supporting mold, generally a piece of another broken pot, that helps to holc the bottom portion of a vessel steady while the walls are being formed.

Walls are built up by the addition of coils of clay (Fig 13). Rolling the clay would make a coil of the correct thickness and length for the vessel. It was added to the pot and smoothed. Different shapes were achieved by pushing out from within the pot either with a piece of gourd or with the potter’s hands. If a pot was in danger of collapsing under the weight of the added coils, it was allowed to dry. More coils were added later, the process being repeated as many times as was necessary to achieve the desired size vessel. Then, when the vessel was completely formed, the outside was scraped with another piece of gourd. A clay slip was then applied and allowed to dry. An even smoother finish was obtained by waiting for the slip to dry completely and then burnishing the surface with a smooth stone.

Designs are painted after this polishing. Brushes of varying thickness are made by chewing on pieces of the yucca plant and trimming the frayed ends. Nampeyo began working with finer brushes as her revival designs became more complicated. Nampeyo, as other native potters, did not draw out her designs before she applied them. This is one area in which the Old Lady excelled. Using a different brush for each color, Nampeyo worked quickly to cover her vessels with designs (Kramer 1996:73).

Firing is another arduous task. Nampeyo built a small out of dung onto which she laid rocks or a grate and then the pottery to be fired. These are
then covered with broken sherds and the entire pile is covered with flammable material, either dung or coal. The entire bonfire is eventually lit from the smaller fire at its base, and is allowed to burn out. In many photographs of Nampeyo firing pottery, she is shown wearing her hair in a peculiar know above her head (Fig. 14). This was explained to Barbara Kramer by a descendant of Nampeyo’s:

When she is firing, she usually wash her hair because she is perspiring hot. She used to just put her head in the water, squeeze [her hair], and roll it up like that. (unnamed descendant quoted in Kramer 1996:73)

Whether pots crack during firing depends on whether any imperfections such as air bubbles are present. Firing was done just outside Nampeyo’s home for much of the potter’s life. Later, she would fire with Annie at her home off the mesa.

Although she was probably not aware of her influence during her lifetime, and despite the fact that she did not actively instruct others on the mesa in the manufacture of Sikyatki Revival wares, many other native potters followed Nampeyo’s example. As Native Americans came into increasing contact with Anglo culture, they participated further in the cash economy of the United States. Spurred on by zealous museum collectors trying to preserve the heritage of a supposedly dying culture, native ceramic styles developed and changed very quickly. Tourism opened new markets in the Southwest, and potters met the demands of tourists for smaller, cheaper items. In response to what some thought was the degradation of this art form though the influence of such a market, expositions of native crafts like those sponsored by the Museum of Northern Arizona were created. The hope was that by offering incentives to the artisans for authenticity the transformation of Pueblo pottery from expression of cultural heritage to expression of economic dependence could be thwarted.
Maria Martinez

The majority of the biographical information contained within this section comes from Susan Peterson’s book, *The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez* (1977). Peterson was personally acquainted with the Martinez family and thus obtained numerous interviews with Maria and others. The details contained in Peterson’s book are therefore considered reliable.

There is no record of the birth of Maria Martinez. Her baptism took place in 1887, but she said she could recall the event and therefore must have been a small child. Maria lived all her life at the Pueblo San Ildefonso, located in New Mexico on the upper Rio Grande River (Figs 1,15). It is a Tewa community that has been spared much of the decline and depopulation of villages like Hano in part because of but also despite of its proximity to employment opportunities in Los Alamos. Members of the community were able to find employment close enough to the Pueblo that they did not have to relocate and could be present for ceremonials (Peterson 1977:76,86). Paradoxically, daily commitments off the pueblo threatened to break family units up and cause members to give up some of their responsibilities like tending to the upkeep of buildings, performing in ceremonials, or handling matters of intra- and extra-community politics. It was the commercial success of the Pueblo’s pottery since the early part of the twentieth century that has also allowed many San Ildefonso families to stay together, despite the encroachment of non-native ways into their lives.

The loss of the Tewa language is one such development (Peterson 1977:84). Most of the older residents of San Ildefonso lament that most of the young children do not learn Tewa. Earlier this century, schooling only reached to fourth or fifth grade and many children did not go further, choosing instead to stay at home and help their families. In this way, they were exposed to Tewa often and from a young age. Subtle, passive learning
had the time and repetition needed to take effect. Today however, many children leave the Pueblo to go to high school and college. They are away from their families for long periods of time until they are adults. Tewa is an extremely complicated language, and it is not feasible to teach it in schools. Therefore only children brought up in families like Maria’s, where a conscious effort is made to ensure the survival of the traditional language, are able to speak it.

Maria, like Nampeyo, showed an aptitude for pottery making at an early age. By age thirteen, Maria was recognized locally as an adept potter (Peterson 1997:62). She married Julian Martinez in 1904 (Fig 16). Julian was an artist as well, painting on hides as well as murals (Fig 17). The couple traveled to St. Louis for the World’s Fair (the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition) to demonstrate pottery on their honeymoon there that same year.

Maria and Julian brought about a well-known development in the pottery of their home: black-on-black ware. In 1908 and 1909, Dr. Edgar Lee Hewett, Director of the Museum of New Mexico and professor of archaeology, excavated on the Pajarito Plateau and in Frijoles Canyon near San Ildefonso. At the site of Puye in 1908, he found pottery sherds unlike any others previously discovered in the Southwest. It was not known at the time how to produce similar jet or charcoal black pottery. When he wanted someone to reproduce the color, Hewett was referred to Maria. It was Julian who recovered the unique process of firing that produces a lustrous black, and he and Maria who later mastered and elaborated the style (Peterson 1977:90). The first black pots, made soon after Hewett’s excavations, were undecorated and were only made as an answer to Hewett’s question about how a black color could have been achieved.

Though residents of nearby Santa Clara Pueblo had produced black pottery for years, it was not the same metallic, jet black Maria and Julian would eventually create. These Santa Clara pots traditionally had carved or
pressed patterns instead of painted designs. It is said that when Maria’s fame reached a certain point, Santa Clara potters stopped making black ware for a number of years out of deference. (Peterson 1977:93)

Maria was wary of the few early black pots she and Julian created for Hewett. She felt they were not true San Ildefonso ware and hid them from visitors in a back room or under the bed. When some people from the Museum of New Mexico noticed the pots in her home however, Dr. Hewett insisted Mariza show them the black ware. The scholars took an immediate interest. Soon after, around 1918, Maria made the first black-on-black vessels to be decorated by Julian (Fig 10). Because it was so difficult to polish only the design and leave the rest of the pot matte, the process was eventually reversed into the style that is famous today where the entire pot is polished to a high sheen and the matte design is painted on later. (Peterson 1977:90-1)

On those first vessels, Julian used an avanyu as decoration. The avanyu, now a popular design in the Southwest, is the horned water serpent, which Julian used as the spirit of the first water to rush through an arroyo after a storm (Peterson 1977:91). Julian adapted designs from many different locations, but on the advice of Hewett, he and Maria kept mainly to traditional Tewa style (Peterson 1977:94). When Maria’s pottery became the economic lifeblood of the family and more and more time was needed for ceramics, Julian gave up his painting, except that which he did on his wife’s pottery. His artistic skill aided him in coming up with designs for pottery. He kept notebooks with him wherever he traveled so that he could copy down design elements (Peterson 1977:117).

As Maria’s pottery brought she and Julian greater recognition, other members of their family began to help with its production. Maria worried that the fame and financial success of the family was driving a wedge between them and the rest of San Ildefonso. She determined to share what until the
1920s was the secret of the Martinez family and began teaching other San Ildefonso potters how to make black-on-black ware (Peterson 1977:92). She also tried to help them sell their ceramics through her connections. Popovi Da, one of Maria’s sons, ran a store in the pueblo where he stocked several shelves full of the pottery of other potters at San Ildefonso, keeping Maria’s vessels in a back storeroom (Peterson 1977:76). At the time Susan Peterson’s book The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez was written, the money made from selling pottery made by members of the Martinez family went to help not only Maria’s thirty two great-grandchildren, but also to help the entire pueblo.

Maria became a matriarch of San Ildefonso, and somewhat of a symbol of native traditions and continuity. As the creator of some of the best known Native American pottery ever, Maria became personally famous. She and Nampeyo were two of the first native artists to be recognized by name. Unlike Nampeyo however, Maria was fluent in English and Spanish as well as her native Tewa. She traveled all over the United States, demonstrating pottery making at every World’s Fair until the Second World War. Maria laid the cornerstone of the Rockefeller Center, received honorary doctorates from the University of Colorado, Boulder and Columbia University, and was posthumously awarded the first Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southwestern Association on Indian Affairs. She trekked to Santa Fe and to the Albuquerque railroad station to sell her wares. Despite all this exposure to Anglo and despite her participation in their cash economy, Maria Martinez remained one of the staunchest supporters of the “native way”.

Maria’s early vessels were left unsigned. In her youth, individual native artists were not yet identifying their wares. Most of these pots were for use within the pueblo community, and there was no need for a signature to designate whose pot belonged to whom. Even though large numbers of vessels were set in close proximity when food was donated for ceremonials,
individuals could tell their property apart from others by the individualistic designs on each bowl or jar. At that time, and probably still today, artists did not copy the designs of another, out of respect. Collectors began to ask for signatures in the early part of the twentieth century, and in the mid 1920s, it was suggested to Maria that she should sign her pots (Peterson 1977:98). This was a sign that Maria and Julian's pottery was becoming highly valued, for a signature increases the value of a piece by giving it authenticity.

Maria first signed her pots "Marie", supposedly because it had a more familiar sound to Anglo ears (Peterson 1977:98). These early signatures are less common. By the middle of the century however, she began using "Maria". In all, she used a number of different versions of her name, and a number of combinations of her name followed by the name of the person who decorated the vessel: Marie (or Maria) Poveka (or Povèka); Marie/Julian; Maria/Santana; Maria/Popovi Da, etc. So many earlier pots were left unsigned that it is sometimes difficult to identify certainly whether one was made by Maria or not. Hands of painters who decorated her vessels can be identified by experts (Peterson 1977:99). Maria, who often signed pots that may or may not have been made by her when asked, was much less concerned with the authenticity of her signature. As Peterson suggests, "Maria wish[e(d] to help all Indian pottery along" (1977:100). The veracity of the claim that one or another vessel was the product of her artistry was less important to her than that a piece inspire its viewer to associate its beauty with the traditional pottery of San Ildefonso and with Native American artists.

The communal aspect of a folk art tradition such as pueblo pottery is jeopardized when signatures threaten to separate some artists from the larger group. Because pueblo ceramics were traditionally for use in ceremonial and utilitarian aspects of native life, those who signed their names, who produced vessels that were in demand (and non-utilitarian) for tourists and
collectors, were in danger of moving further in Anglo, consumer culture. The Martinez family, particularly Maria, kept in touch with pueblo heritage and culture, and through the exercise of their artistic vision rather than despite it, remained true to themselves and to that heritage. The transition from craftsperson to artist was smoothed by the comfort of Maria’s traditional life. She worked hard to include her family and her entire pueblo in her art so that none would be alienated by the shifting market.

Maria lived in San Ildefonso all her life. The state historical marker that points the way to San Ildefonso from the New Mexico highway states that the pueblo is the home of Mara Martinez, “perhaps the best-known of Indian potters” (Peterson 1977:84). Her generosity endeared to her to her neighbors as well as to outsiders.

I used to have a little grocery store to feed the people. The Spanish people say I was good to them. They owe me money or something, I just forget it. I say I gave it to God. (Maria Martinez quoted in Peterson 1977:85)

Members of Maria’s family who did not live at San Ildefonso came together a few times a year for the most important ceremonials and to visit with Maria. As an elder, Maria tried to pass on as much of her knowledge and wisdom as she could, for it is considered truly sad when some one dies who has not passed on their knowledge, because that knowledge is then lost (Peterson 1977:86). Maria said she may have been “born for people”: “I like people. I don’t hide” (quoted in Peterson 1977:86).

Pottery making, though an economic endeavor as well as artistic expression, helps to keep the family unit tight. Members of the Martinez family work at whatever they were good at; Maria’s sister Clara, for instance, polished with great patience and was often asked by other members of the family to burnish their vessels prior to firing (Peterson 1977:174). Five generations of potters have descended from Maria and Julian Martinez, each brought up within their system of values. The most recent are Maria’s great-granddaughter Barbara Gonzales and her sons Cavan and Aaron. Barbara
attended college off the pueblo, but chose to return to San Ildefonso to raise her sons and to continue in the tradition of her great grandmother (Peterson 1977:181)

In 1973, the National Endowment for the Arts gave a grant to help a pottery workshop at the University of Southern California's Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts (Peterson 1977:91-2). That summer session held by the University was the first time Maria (then about ninety years old) and a group of her family members were to demonstrate ceramic techniques in a non-native environment. Even at the World's Fairs and other exhibitions, the Martinez family had always been surrounded by other Native Americans and the public kept at a safe distance. At Idyllwild, it was expected that Maria would show students her potting techniques in a much smaller setting, almost formal instruction. This was a great change from the passive learning that traditionally takes place at San Ildefonso and in other Pueblo Indian communities. Maria herself learned pottery making primarily by watching her aunt, Nicolasa.

Nobody teaches. But in 1932 much later, someone took me to the government Indian school in Santa Fe and told me to teach. I said no, I come and work, and they can watch. (Maria Martinez quoted in Peterson 1977:83)

This process of learning through observation and repetition is how Maria and Julian taught others the method for creating black-on-black ware.

Maria's Pottery

Though famed for the black-on-clack ware she and husband Julian developed, Maria Martinez did not only make black pottery. Before the rediscovery of the firing methods that allowed for the production of black ware, Maria and her sisters made polychrome pottery, popular at San Ildefonso from the time of her birth through the first decade of the twentieth century. She made traditional polychrome pottery again in the 1950s (decorated by her son Popovi Da and daughter-in-law Santana), and once she had mastered the
technique of burnishing a pot's background and painting matte designs on the vessel for black-on-black ware, she applied this approach to produce red-on-red ware.

After Maria was convinced that there was a market for black-on-black ware, and that the style was acceptably "traditional" San Ildefonso, she and Julian produced it for tourist consumption only; it was not used at the pueblo for ceremonies or for chores (Peterson 1977:97). Though the Martinez family never went so far as to make ashtrays for tourist consumption, nontraditional forms like vases (Fig 19) were produced. As mentioned above, Dr. Hewett suggested to Maria and Julian that they use only traditional Tewa designs on their pottery. From this base, much embellishment was added, in form as well as decoration.

Some of Julian's motifs came from other pueblos and some are interpreted as renditions of mythical subjects (like the avanyu) or symbolic of natural phenomena (rain, mountains, clouds, etc.). This brings up an important point: the names scholars give particular design elements cannot be thought of as the actual meaning imbued to them by their maker. Ruth Bunzel gives us fine examples of the types of seemingly harmless but nonetheless leading questions formerly (and in some cases still) asked of native artists about their designs (1929). In some cases designs surely represent ideas or even concrete items, but naming these designs, assigning discrete significance to each, is not the native way. Their art is put under the heading "folk art" precisely because it does not involve the creation of an entirely unique article each time. Rather, each piece of pueblo pottery builds on the tradition of the pieces that have come before it, incorporating some components while abandoning others, which are in turn replaced by new innovations by that artist. Potters like Maria Martinez are folk art geniuses. She infused her own skill and that of her husband into a branch of traditional pueblo pottery she herself created.
The traditional method of pottery manufacture in the Southwest is time consuming, and adherence to it in itself a sign of strong commitment to native ways. It can take weeks to produce a single piece. The process begins with the collection of materials. At San Ildefonso, the Martinez family has found a source that they return to year after year to collect their clay (Peterson 1977:163). Apparently, only clay obtained from this one place has the correct properties of thermal resistance that allow it to be fired in the traditional manner (near an open bonfire) while also possessing enough plasticity to be fashioned when wet (Peterson 1997:166). Volcanic ash is also necessary as temper. Most types of ash work well, but Adam and Santana Martinez (Maria’s son and daughter-in-law) buy the ash they use from other areas. The red clay slip used to cover the pot before polishing as well as the clays used for painting decorations are also bought from others. (Peterson 1977:164-5)

The process of making a pot employed by the Martinez family is similar to Nampeyo’s method as described above. Clay is collected from two sources, each type of clay possessing a different composition which adds to the overall quality of the clay (Peterson 1977:165-6). It is screened to make a fine powder. When it is brought back to the pueblo, water is added to the powder and ash is mixed in for temper as it is kneaded. The base of the vessel is formed in a puki, then the walls are built up with coils of clay, interspersed with periods of rest which allow the clay to dry a little. The vessel is shaped by pushing outwards on the walls with pieces of gourd.

When the pot is fully formed, it is allowed to dry thoroughly, up to two weeks. The outside is then scraped with another gourd or tin can until the surface is smooth. A clay slip is painted on and allowed to dry somewhat before burnishing to a high sheen with a round stone (Fig 20). These slips are what give the pottery its color. Barbara Gonzales, Maria’s great-granddaughter, has experimented with clay slips of varying mineral content to
produce a large palette of colors such as pure white, light and dark red, salmon, coral, bluish pink, bluish red, yellow and orange-red (Peterson 1996:175). It is the high iron content of the reddish slip that the Martinez family uses that produces the deepest, most lustrous black. Pigment for decoration (for the black-on-black ware) is also made from a clay. Julian discovered that guaco (the boiled pulp of the Rocky Mountain bee plant), which was originally used to paint the black outlines on polychrome vessels, did not hold up under the newly developed firing conditions necessary for making black pottery. He then mixed guaco with clay and later began using clay alone for black pigment. (Peterson 1977:96)

Firing is done in a shed built to shield the activity from wind. A small pile of twigs is built under a grate onto which the pots are placed. The process of placement is important; none must be touching. Then pots are covered with old license plates and sherds, and the entire pile with dung. As in Nampeyo’s firing process, this is all lit eventually by the small fire below. In order that the fire springs up evenly and quickly when it is lit, kerosene is sprinkled on the lower twigs. When the fire has died down, the entire pile is smothered with manure followed by ash. By smothering the fire, the firing atmosphere is changed into one of oxygen reduction. This is what carbonizes the slip from red to black. Pots are lifted out of the ash and dusted off while still hot after all the manure has burned away. (Peterson 1977:215-25) (Figs 21-24)

Helen Cordero

The source for most of the biographical information on Helen Cordero presented in this section is The Pueblo Storyteller, written by Barbara Babcock and Guy and Doris Monthan (1986). Their research not only includes
the work of Helen Cordero, but that of other potters as well. Babcock et al.'s discussion of the ancient tradition of figurative ceramics in the Pueblo area is another reason this thesis draws from The Pueblo Storyteller.

Helen Cordero was born on the seventeenth day of June, 1915, at Cochiti, a Keres pueblo in North central New Mexico, near Albuquerque on the Rio Grande (Fig 1). By this time, the traditions of Cochiti pottery making had all but died out. From the turn of the century onwards into the 1960s, Cochiti pottery forms decreased in both size and number (Babcock et al 1986:18). Cochiti potters produced miniaturized, hurried versions of bowls as well as their numerous animal and human figures, succumbing to the artistic decline that was taking place in so many pueblos of the era, resultant of the burgeoning tourist market.

Along with her husband's cousin Juanita Arquero, Helen Cordero participated in the tourist economy by producing trinkets of bead and leatherwork. Her husband's aunt suggested the pair try pottery, since clay was abundant and free, rather than continually sinking any profits they made from their crafts into buying more materials. Juanita showed Helen how to pot, but as Helen said, her vessels, "never looked right. They just kept coming out all crooked" (quoted in Babcock et al 1986:21). Juanita then got the frustrated Helen, who was by this time "ready to quit," to try her hand at figurative pottery. (Babcock et al 1986:21)

There is a long tradition of figurative pottery in the Southwest, as well as at Cochiti. Prehistoric cultures in the pueblo region made human and animal figurines (both fired and unfired) and vessels such as pitchers shaped like birds and other animals, where the mouth became the opening or spout. More recently, Spanish missionaries destroyed figurines as symbols of native idolatry. There is (with some exceptions) a gap not only in the archaeological and ethnographic records of pueblo figurative ceramics, but
from European contact through to the late nineteenth century, there is also a gap in the stylistic development of these forms. (Babcock et al 1986:3-20)

Babcock et al make some generalizations about the great significance clay figures hold for pueblo peoples (1986:9). They cite ethnographic reports collected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to argue that figures (of any material), which were present along with clay vessels at every recorded ceremony, embodied prayers. Clay, through association with Mother Earth, is inextricably linked to the creation and maintenance of pueblo life. This is why figure sculpture did not completely die out, but rather the practice went underground until the emergence of the tourist art market around the turn of the twentieth century.

Before the railroad introduced tourism to the region, the production of figurines and effigy vessels continued at Cochiti. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Smithsonian Institution's Colonel James Stevenson and a Presbyterian missionary, Reverend Sheldon Jackson, collected figurines and vessels shaped like humans, animals, and birds at the pueblo. Imagery such as clouds, rain, lightning, flowers and plants, pregnant animals as well as animals being hunted was present on these pieces. These depictions of fertility, and the reproduction and maintenance of life support the claim that figurines (and effigy vessels) made of clay were associated with the underlying pueblo metaphor of life's balance; that clay comes from Mother Earth and can therefore be fashioned into representations of life, themselves symbolic prayers. (Babcock et al 1986:15-17)

A particular female figurine was collected by Jackson in the late 1870s (Fig 25). This is the earliest known example of what has become known as a "Singing Mother" (Babcock et al 1986:16). Here, the symbolism is more overt than in other forms of ceremonial figurative pottery. She is obviously a maternal figure, cradling a child in her arms; corn plant designs decorate her dress; and her mouth is open in song, another generative act. Babcock et
al note that while this figure and others like it may not have been used for ceremonial purposes, their symbolism certainly stems from the traditional practice of using figurines in ceremonies and depictions of life/reproduction as prayer (1986:16-17).

Though tourists bought large numbers of small figurines from native potters, the style of the majority of such pieces was not crystallized. They were akin to the various ashtrays and sombrero or cowboy hats produced at that time exclusively for sale to visitors to the pueblos: easily and hastily produced, small in size, poor in construction. The roots of this figurative tradition however, appear to have been wholly overlooked by scholars of the day. Pueblo figurines were seen only as yet another degenerate response of potters to the demands of Anglo tourists. Because scholars and collectors considered any figures to be the product of non-native influence, unworthy of study or recognition as legitimate ceramic traditions, a decline in both production and quality came about.

Soon after Jackson collected the Singing Mother, tourism came to Cochiti. The railroad allowed not only the newly emergent middle class to travel to the southwest, it also paved the way for traveling circuses and fairs. Native Americans were quickly introduced to types of Anglos they had never before encountered. Their chagrin at these new visitors was expressed through the manufacture of monos ("monkey, silly fool, mimic, mere doll" in Spanish), which are grotesque caricatures of either Anglo professionals or circus sideshow participants (Babcock et al 1986:15). Monos were not produced past the turn of the century, as the novelty of Anglo foreignness wore off, and as the demand for smaller, more souvenir-like ceramics grew.

Innumerable ceramic figures were produced at various pueblos during this time, though very few are preserved today due to their valueless status. Zuni potters made small owls, potters from Santa Clara produced diminutive blackware animal figures, and in the first part of the century Rain Gods were
made at Tesuque Pueblo. Though only a few potters were producing them, Singing Mothers (also sometimes called Madonnas) were the most popular human figurines produced at Cochiti from the 1920s until the 1960s. (Babcock et al 1986:18-20)

Some of Helen Cordero’s first clay figurines were purchased by the collector Alexander Girard while they were on display during the feast day of Santo Domingo. Girard then requested more figures, as well as larger ones, a 250 piece Nativity set, and eventually a seated figure with children (Babcock et al 1986:21). Helen modeled this figure after her grandfather, Santiago Quintana, “a really good storyteller ... there were always lots of us grandchildrens around him” (quoted in Babcock et al 1986:21-2) (Fig 26). This was the first Storyteller (Fig 27). It differed from the traditional Singing Mother in that the figure was male instead of female, and there were more than a possible number of children attached to him (in this case five).

The demand for her Storytellers has caused Helen Cordero to refine her production methods. She developed a technique for finer sanding of the surface, resulting in the ability to put finer, more detailed designs on her figures. A few years after she began making Storytellers, she discovered that fewer children would fall off during firing if she made them separately from the large figure and added them with slip. The central figure itself changed, becoming better proportioned as Helen gained experience. His face developed its distinctive features: “His eyes are closed because he’s thinking; his mouth is open because he’s singing” (Helen Cordero quoted in Babcock et al 1986:24). Helen also began signing her work with guaco prior to firing, whereas her earliest Storytellers were unsigned or signed in pen or pencil after firing. (Babcock et al 1986:24)

The Storyteller form evolved into a number of other types of figures, which Helen developed during the 1970s and 1980s. Each is based on some one from Helen’s life experience, and many are portraits of loved ones. Helen’s
husband, Fred, is portrayed in her Drummer. Fred, in addition to being an accomplished drum maker, was also the leading singer and drummer for Cochiti’s Pumpkin Kiva. After seeing a standing Cochiti figure in Santa Fe’s Fenn Galleries, Helen decided to make her own version, calling it the Nightcrier. Even though the original inspiration for the Nightcrier was an abandoned form of Cochiti figure, Helen occasionally personalized her interpretation with a Governor’s cane of office like the one carried by her grandfather, Santiago. She has also produced human figures called Water Carriers and Hopi Maidens, as well as animal figures of owls and turtles. (Babcock et al 1986:24-5)

Besides different figures, Helen Cordero’s original Storyteller genre has branched out into three other forms. During the mid-1970s, Helen created her first Praying Storyteller. Here, the Storyteller is kneeling as opposed to sitting, and the children climb on his legs behind him. This particular form was sparked by the desperate request of a collector, who begged Helen for a Storyteller on his knees. “Right after that I made him one, and he got his Storyteller all right – on his knees” (Helen Cordero quoted in Babcock et al 1986:25). About this same time, pieces called the Children’s Hour were first made. Here, Helen removed the children from the central figure and made them separate pieces to be set around the actual Storyteller. She described them as “older kids listening to [the Storyteller]. My Grandpa used to say, ‘Come children, it’s time,’ and I remember us all around him out at the ranch in the summer” (Helen Cordero quoted in Babcock et al 1986:25). A decade later, Helen began making Storytellers wearing aprons that extended around the base of the figure, which she called Navajo Storytellers.

The Figurative Revival
These variations and the myriad versions of Storytellers produced by Helen Cordero sparked the revival of pueblo figurative ceramics. Not only is there immense diversity between the figures of different potters based on artistic style, but the larger ceramic traditions of each pueblo where Storytellers are now produced lead to a great deal of variance in decoration and form. The designs on Storytellers and other figures are often derived from pottery motifs. Because these figures are made of clay themselves, there is a natural link to pottery forms and decoration. Helen sometimes paints the shirts of her Storytellers with traditional Cochiti pottery designs (Babcock et al 1986:27). Others, such as Ethel Shields of Acoma Pueblo, have made the link between pottery vessel and clay Storytellers more explicit by forming the body of the figure as a pot (Fig 28).

The popularity of the Storyteller with collectors as well as with tourists caused their production to spread from Cochiti to other pueblos. Less than a decade after Helen Cordero made her first Storyteller, at least half a dozen other Cochiti potters were producing their own Storyteller figures. Ten years after that, at least fifty potters in Helen’s home pueblo made Storytellers. The diffusion of this genre through Helen’s extended family is paralleled in other native families. Mothers and other female relatives are often responsible for children learning to make pottery. Dorothy Loretto, for instance, was born at Jemez Pueblo. She married into the Trujillo family of Cochiti and moved there in the 1950s. Originally taught by her mother (a native of Laguna Pueblo) and her Jemez grandmother, Dorothy retained aspects of her ceramic upbringing. The style of her figures as well as the colors she employs are slightly different from those of her Cochiti-born counterparts. (Babcock et al 1986:28-81)

Many more recent forms of Storytellers are significant deviations from Helen Cordero’s original figure. Some figures are female. Some are smoking cigarettes, representing how during the telling of sacred stories, the teller
ceremonially smokes (Fig 29). Using the idea of employing personal experience to find inspiration for Storytellers, some native artists have fashioned Koshare or Mudhead Storytellers (Figs 30-31). Potters have also made many kinds of Storyteller animals. Traditional pueblo animals like the turtle and the owl are often made, but so have less traditional forms, such as elephants and kangaroo (Fig 32).

The use of non-traditional forms in the figurative revival has caused less concern to some than the use of non-traditional methods of pottery production. Many potters employ traditional clays and paints, methods and types of decoration, and firing methods. Babcock et al state that most potters use two methods to manufacture their figures (1986:46-8). The preparation of the clay is similar to that of all pueblo potters. Raw clay is pulverized, sifted to remove impurities, mixed with temper and water, and then kneaded. Children or other small figures are shaped from a single piece of clay. The larger central figures are coiled like pots. After drying, the pieces are polished, slipped with white clay (the step when children are attached), and decorated with other clays or guaco. Firing is accomplished in the same method as described above for Nampeyo and Maria Martinez.

Helen Cordero directly attributes her success to her adherence to "the old way, the right way" when making potteries (quoted in Babcock et al 1986:46). However, even she has made exceptions. She uses sandpaper instead of the traditional polishing stone to smooth her figures, because the intricacy of the Storyteller form, with all its attached children, makes smoothing with a stone nearly impossible. She also uses manufactured brushes of camel's hair rather than homemade ones of yucca. (Babcock et al 1986:46) Some other contemporary potters use acrylic paints after firing, and thereby achieve extremely bright colors, much more intense than is possible with the traditional natural palate (Babcock et al 1986:45).
The use of foreign elements in any aspect of the Storyteller speaks of the commercialization of the genre. Helen Cordero was directly responding to market pressures when she created the style. Its success (marketability and continuously increasing popularity) caused other pueblo potters to make Storytellers themselves. Newly invented forms, such as Martha Arquero’s kangaroo Storyteller survive in the emergent Storyteller tradition not because of latent symbolism (the kangaroo is, after all, not even found on the North American continent), but because of a favorable response by buyers. In other words, if no one buys a particular incarnation of the Storyteller, it is unlikely its creator will continue to produce it.

Even though Storytellers were initially created to be commercial, they also underwent changes to make them more available for tourists. With the success of Helen’s Storytellers, their prices grew. Soon, average tourists visiting Cochiti Pueblo could not afford to buy their own Storyteller as a souvenir. In 1978, Mary Frances Herrera produced the first miniature Storytellers, opening up yet another avenue for financial gain. Typical Storytellers ranged from six inches and up. These new miniatures were from three inches to three-quarters of an inch tall, and most were much less expensive than their larger progenitors. The popularity of these smaller Storytellers with tourists has only increased the notoriety and prevalence of the genre. (Babcock et al 1986:45)

Innumerable variations on Helen Cordero’s original Storyteller have come about, due to the immense popularity of the form. Many of these however, are not what Helen would consider to be true Storytellers. “They call them Storytellers, but they don’t know what it means. They don’t know it’s after my Grandfather” (quoted in Babcock et al 1986:48). It seems obvious that Helen feels the most important characteristic of her Storytellers is that they are related to her Grandfather, while other potters have taken more of a conceptual rather than a literal association with the
prototype to be most important. Part of the appeal of the Storyteller form must be that the artist can render a portrait of any relative who once told stories to them. Storytellers are in this way extremely personal forms of artistic (ceramic) expression, and capable of infinite variations.

The Storyteller and its variations are active figures. Their mouths open either in song or in storytelling, the represent not merely the ancient tradition of telling and retelling tales, but the regenerative properties of that storytelling as well. Storyteller figures link generations: children and elders involved in the maintenance of Pueblo society through the telling of stories and the passive learning of listening. The clay of their construction links the figures with Mother Earth, from which Pueblo themselves people came, and to which they will eventually return.

As an expression of identity, the Storyteller functions on the personal as well as the community level. Artists make statements about their own family histories and experiences in the fashioning of the Storyteller's physical likeness. They also proclaim their cultural heritage: on the large scale within the ancient tradition of pueblo pottery making, and on the smaller scale within the ceramic traditions of each individual pueblo community. Every pueblo has unique design elements as well as their own clay sources, which produce a wide and easily distinguishable palette of colors. Pottery exchange (again on both the personal and community levels) has long been a way of establishing one’s identity. Though traditionally most ceramic vessels were either utilitarian and meant for use only within one’s own household or ceremonial (also only for community use), the beauty of certain unfamiliar ceramic styles led to their trade between pueblos (Babcock et al 1986:86). With the advent of the Anglo art market, this expression of identity transformed into an assertion of an artist’s Native American, Pueblo heritage as well.
The subject matter of the Storyteller—regeneration, expressing and affirming identity, and maintaining cultural unity—became of paramount importance as Anglo cultural values were introduced into the pueblo world. The encroachment of a cash economy was perhaps most disruptive to native lifeways in the Southwest. Traditional agrarian subsistence was supplanted by the need for members of a family to leave the pueblo and seek employment elsewhere. Children were no longer versed day in and day out in the native way. Customs were lost, ceremonies forgotten, and ancient art forms mutated into miniaturized, hastily produced tourist art. The success of the Storyteller has as much to do with the creativity of Helen Cordero as it does with the native effort to retain their cultural identity and reclaim their heritage.

Interpretations and Conclusions

It has been stated earlier that previous studies, which consider developments in Pueblo ceramics only as responses to the introduction of a cash economy into the Southwest, fail to present a full picture of the reasons belying changes in ceramics. These changes, including the revivals of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero, are reactions to the threat of Anglo cultural intrusion into traditional Pueblo lifeways as well as consequences of economic shifts. Here it is argued that each of the ceramic revivals examined in this thesis were personal expressions of ethnic identity on the part of their initiators; that in facing the possible loss of their cultural heritage, these women attempted to preserve Pueblo ways and ideals through a medium acceptable to both native and Western standards.

Edwin Wade's analysis (which does not examine Helen Cordero’s work or the Storyteller tradition) assumes that because Anglos requested the first modern reproduction of Sikyatki and (San Ildefonso) blackware, Nampeyo and
Maria Martinez were somehow not personally involved in the successes of the resultant revival styles (1985). It is incidental to Wade that these women (Helen Cordero included) continued to produce their potteries in the traditional manner, even when their contemporaries profited from less time-consuming methods. This conscious effort to retain their native heritage is monumentally important to understanding the success of these revivals within the native community as well as in the larger Anglo art market.

According to Wade, "a true revival requires extensive knowledge about traditional techniques and the repertoire of design elements, as well as the function the art tradition fulfilled in its society" (1985:185). The ceramic styles of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero are then not "true" revivals. Forgoing strict adherence to a textbook definition, it can be argued that the above stylistic revivals were actually more true (i.e. more in keeping with traditional native ideals) than what amounts to pure artistic imitation. Nampeyo used Sikyatki designs and forms along with her incredible skill to decorate some of the most beautiful and desirable pieces of her era, thereby gaining the renown necessary to enable her to demonstrate Pueblo ingenuity and ability to a biased public. Maria and Julian Martinez transformed an archaeological experiment into the economic base for their community, providing security enough to ensure the continuation of San Ildefonso’s traditional lifeways. Helen Cordero revived a figurative tradition that was nearly lost, and in turn created images of remembrance and renewal.

Modern Native American artists of all backgrounds are moving their work into the realm of fine rather than ethnic art, leaving out their cultural identity. This is not to say that they have necessarily abandoned their heritage as Native Americans, but that they wish to be allowed the artistic freedom enjoyed by other American ethnicities. Historically, much of the draw to native arts has been their affiliation with a rich ethnic heritage.
The paradox of attempts by philanthropists at 'preserving native culture' is of course that this leads to artistic stagnation. To remove the protective association with primitive roots is to open up the forum for criticism. Modern Native American artists who choose to enter the world of fine art bring their personal creativity to the fore, transcending the sanctions imposed by the ethnic art market. What women like Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero did was to mediate the demand for saleable craft items, their own needs to stay true to their native heritage, and their desire to create objects of beauty. To do this successfully in a period when Native American creativity was consigned to the realm of ethnic art and when the threat of the extinction of many traditions loomed large, is truly to perform a revival.

Studies like Wade's, that focus on economic pressure when citing causes for ceramic change in the Pueblo Southwest, are incomplete. It is certainly correct to conclude that the influences of the art market and tourism were (and still are) important to the development of ceramic styles in the region. But these studies ignore the element of individual choice in cases such as revivals, and fall victim to the trap of loosing agency and individualism while examining them in the context of one particular cultural phenomenon.

In the course of their discussion on the nature of ethnicity, John and Jean Comaroff propose that "ethnicity always has its genesis in specific historical forces" (1987). It is thusly important to conceive of ethnicity as one of many factors shaping the everyday actions of human agents. The Comaroffs also write that "identity ... is a relation inscribed in culture" (1987). Pueblo peoples classified other groups they interacted with on the basis of similarities and differences (as all human groups do). Anglo groups too, grouped Native Americans according to certain characteristics, though these groupings were in most cases not the same as those used by the indigenous peoples themselves. In the case of Nampeyo's Sikyatki Revival style, the
label "Hopi" was attached to describe the cultural group who made that kind of ceramics.

Anglos may not have bothered to distinguish between Nampeyo’s Hopi-Tewa heritage and that of her Hopi neighbors, but Nampeyo and others in her community certainly recognized that difference. This ignorance on the part of early collectors and traders has colored present interpretations; not in the sense that modern scholars are patently unaware of the minutiae of Pueblo cultural affiliations, but in that descriptions of the Sikyatki Revival Nampeyo brought about now focus not on her identity and perceptions, but on the perceptions of her though the eyes of outsiders.

Ethnic identity, because it "exists above all else as a set of relations", arises when dissimilar groups become parts of the same political economy (Comaroffs 1987). Contact situations introduce disparate social entities to one another, but colonialism thrusts them into political and economic relations, as one group is subsumed into a position subordinate to the other. To quote the Comaroffs again:

The emergence of ethnic groups and the awakening of ethnic consciousness are ... the social and cultural correlates of a specific mode of articulation between groupings, in which one extends its dominance over another by some form of coercion, violent or otherwise; situates the latter as a bounded unit in a dependant and unique position within an inclusive division of labor; and, by removing from it final control over the means of production and/or reproduction, regulates the terms upon which value may be extracted from it. (1987: )

This explains the ascription of Hopi identity onto Nampeyo’s Tewa pottery: the dominant (Anglo-American) group simply assigned affiliation based on criteria other than those used by Native Americans. Interactions between cultures often bring about modifications in the identities of both parties as they mediate their differences and relationships, but externally bestowed identities do not often concur with a group’s self-identification.

The colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century forced Pueblo people to reestablish their identities in relation to Anglos. Though Native American culture was not absolutely vanishing as was suspected at the
time, it was drastically changing. In order to accommodate the new American regime, Pueblo people responded in a variety of ways, each designed specifically to meet the immediate challenges of living in this newly Anglicized world. Economic pressure led to the commodification of culture, and many native people reacted by producing material objects suitable for sale to westerners. Miniaturization and the adoption of non-native forms, methods, and materials do indeed signal the shift from utilitarian craft production to production for the Anglo consumer. But beyond these market shifts, the ceramic revivals of Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero also signify continuity.

So imbedded in the fabric of Pueblo culture is the concept of regeneration and rebirth, that ceramics are themselves a passive representation of these concepts. Clay is of the Earth. It is the substance from which many Pueblo myths say humans were first produced. Making ceramics is one of innumerable acts that Pueblo children traditionally learn through the process of repetition: passive acquisition by example and mimicry. The designs on many ceramics have been interpreted as dealing with water, clouds, storms, and mythical rain-bearing beings (such as Julian Martinez’s awanyu design), which are all representations of birth and rebirth. In the desert of the American Southwest, native peoples relied on water and rain for their very existence, so these are powerful images. The revival of ancient forms or designs demonstrates the continuity of thought and livelihood of the Pueblo people: to recreate a thing is to bring to life that thing once more. In the case of the Storyteller, the subject of the revival style is overtly one of regeneration.

Traditionally considered the domain of women, pottery making constitutes an essential part of Pueblo life. Historically, ceramics were necessary tools used every day in menial as well as ceremonial tasks, and as material expressions of tribal identity and continuity. Modern ceramics have
lost much of their daily functionality, instead serving as sources of income for many potters. But ceramics continue to perpetuate Pueblo culture, with revivals signaling potters' acknowledgement of and desire to preserve their heritage. Creating and participating in the discourse of cultural survival and revival are female potters, at once representing fertility and creation themselves and through their art. Pueblo women were forced to renegotiate their personal roles within native society upon the introduction of a cash economy. In so doing, they found that they could maintain their traditional position as mediums of Pueblo culture, transmitting cultural knowledge and ideals through passive instruction and example. Ceramics, as expressions of ethnicity and identity, were therefore modified into more overt declarations of Pueblo women's desire to aid in the continuation of their cultural heritage.

Final Thoughts

The position that revivals in Pueblo ceramics occurred in response to the introduction of a cash economy in the Southwest is too simplistic to fully explain the phenomena as described above. Ceramics are complex expressions of ethnicity, not merely by virtue of their form or design belonging to the repertoire of a particular ethnic group, but as articulations of personal identity. Nampeyo, Maria Martinez, and Helen Cordero each modified the ceramic style in use at the time they were living so that they might participate in the passing on of their heritage to another generation. They renegotiated their roles as women in their communities through ceramics.

The conclusions presented in this thesis are not only of interest to scholars studying the historic period in the Southwest. Material culture undoubtedly expresses ethnic and personal identity in a variety of contexts,
even extending well into prehistory. Questions about the extent of contact between different groups are often addressed via examination of unique aspects of material culture and changes therein. For example, the adoption of a motif prevalent in one society by another society is said to indicate contact and interaction. The subtleties of mediating ethnic identity after contact, during that time in which inter-societal relations are in flux, result in transformations not only in conceptions of ethnicity, but also in the expressions of those conceptions. Researchers armed with knowledge about the shifting nature of ethnicity and its material correlates could make great contributions to the field of archaeology, even going so far as to uncover certain aspects of "individual" identity through archaeological remains.
Endnotes

1 In Nampeyo and Her Pottery, Barbara Kramer portrays Fewkes as a deceptive man, so utterly incapable of conducting acceptable research he plagiarizes others, including Alexander Stephen. The scope of this thesis does not permit a discussion of Fewkes' character in this thesis, but the attention of interested parties should be directed to pages 44 through 52 of Kramer's book.

2 The name "Polacca Polychrome" follows the system of designating ceramic genres designed by Harold Colton. It describes a pottery type first by listing its geographic location (in this case Polacca, the small town in Keam's Canyon named after Nampeyo's brother), and then describes some other distinguishing feature of the pottery, such as its use of many colors. Sikyatki Revival ware does not employ this system and is slightly confusing for that reason. Kramer therefore prefers the designation Hano Polychrome. This thesis retains the earlier name for clarity's sake.
References


Fig 1. Map showing locations discussed in this thesis, including the Hopi Indian Reservation, Pueblo San Ildefonso, and Cochiti Pueblo. (from Peterson 1997)

Fig 2. Aerial photograph of First Mesa. The village of Hano is in the foreground. (from Dozier 1967)
Fig 4. Non-Sikyatki Revival style canteen made by Nampeyo before 1900 and given to Dr. Joshua Miller for treating her trachoma. Arizona State Museum. (from Kramer 1996)

Fig 5. "Nampeyo decorating pottery," by William S. Curtis, 1900. Smithsonian Institution. (from Kramer 1996)
Fig 6. "Nampeyo and Family," by Adam Clark Vroman, 1901. From right to left are Nampeyo, her mother White Corn, and her daughter Annie (Healing), holding granddaughter Rachel. The Southwest Museum, Los Angeles. (from Kramer 1996)

Fig 8. Polychrome jar by Nampeyo, ca. 1900. 7.5 x 15 inches in diameter. The collection of Dennis and Janis Lyon. (from Peterson 1997)

Fig 10. Jar by Nanpeyo, 1915. 7 x 12.75 inches in diameter. School of American Research, Santa Fe. (from Kramer 1996)


Fig 15. Pueblo San Ildefonso in 1897. (from Peterson 1977)
Fig 16. Julian (left) and Maria Martinez, Santa Fe, 1910-15. (from Peterson 1977).

Fig 18. Jars, Maria and Julian Martinez, 1918. These are said to be from the first firing of decorated black-on-black ware. Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe. (from Peterson 1977)

Fig 19. Vase, Maria and Julian Martinez, ca. 1922. Penn Galleries, Santa Fe. (from Peterson 1977)
Fig 20. Maria Martinex burnishing, n.d. (from Peterson 1977)

Fig 21. Stacking pots to be fired, ca. 1977. (from Peterson 1977)
Fig 22. Adam Martinez (left) and wife Santana stack cow dung around the pots, ca 1977. (from Peterson 1977)

Fig 23. Barbara Gonzales smothers the fire to begin oxidation, ca 1977. (from Peterson 1977)
Fig 24. Santana and Adam lift finished pots from the fire, ca. 1977. (from Peterson 1977)

Fig 25. Cochiti Singing Mother, ca.1875. 7 inches high. Museum of Natural History, Princeton University. (from Babcock et al 1986)

Fig 27. The first Storyteller, by Helen Cordero, 1964. 8 inches high. Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe. (from Babcock et al 1986)
