



HOPI POTTERY

The Hopi live on ancestral lands located in northeastern Arizona, an area called the Three Mesas. Of all the pueblos after the *Reconquista*, the Spanish paid the least attention to the Hopi. From 1700 until well into the 19th century, the Hopi lived and developed on their own with little outside influence. During this time, they produced pottery called, "Polychrome yellow ware." Around 1850, the Hopi fell on hard times. Many moved south to live with their neighbors, the Zuni. While at Zuni, they were introduced to new clays and new methods. The pottery they produced was a Hopi/Zuni hybrid that we call, "Polacca Polychrome." It was finished with a white slip and borrowed Zuni designs for decoration.

In the 1870s, Thomas Kearns opened a trading post in what is now called "Kearns' Canyon" on the Hopi Reservation. He discovered pottery from an ancient village near the trading post. Because of the importance of the discovery, the Smithsonian Museum soon took over the excavation. In 1895, John Fewkes of the Smithsonian was placed in charge. The pottery he unearthed was known as "Sityatki Ware." The style and form is striking.

Sityatki ware is uniformly polychrome, employing vegetal and mineral paints that fire to reds, browns, yellows and blacks. Designs employ graceful, curvilinear lines, well-balanced with frequent religious symbols. Patterns are iconic representations of heads, beaks, wings and feathers of birds painted with black, red and orange pigments on a yellow-orange background.

At the same that Kearns and Fewkes were excavating the ancient site, a female Tewa potter, Nampeyo of Hano, was emerging as a talented artist at First Mesa. She visited the Smithsonian site. Impressed with the ancient pots, she began a "Sityatki Revival" among the Hopi that continues today. The Sityatki style dominates contemporary Hopi pottery, as do the descendents of Nampeyo of Hano.