



## COCHITI POTTERY

Cochiti is the closest Keresan-speaking pueblo to Santa Fe. As a result, it has experienced the closest contact with both the Spanish and the Euro-Americans. More than any other pueblo, Cochiti artisans have had fun with their pottery. From the time of early Spanish colonization, Cochiti potters have employed figurative pottery to make fun of the colonizers and themselves. These figurines quickly became popular with tourists after 1880. Production of these whimsical figures declined after 1900 in favor of more conventional shapes and styles.

Traditional Cochiti pottery has been a gray-to-cream-to-white slipped polychrome with black-and-red decoration. Cochiti motifs are isolated decorations, often with little relation to one another. A typical Cochiti feature is the habit of embellishing encircling framing lines with pendant figures, usually simple arcs or triangles, but sometimes with enigmatic, complicated adaptations of older feather motifs appear.

Around 1960, Helen Cordero created “storyteller” figurines. Based on her grandfather’s practice of gathering children around him and telling stories, these figurines became an “overnight success,” especially with tourists. Potters from all over the Rio Grand Valley began making them. The storyteller craze lasted approximately twenty years and then faded. Some potters still create storytellers, but the style no longer dominates Cochiti figurine pottery. Serafina and Guadalupe Ortiz and their descendents, and Damacia Cordero and her daughter are the principal, contemporary Cochiti potters.