

First Mesa

The First Mesa of the Hopi Reservation is the easternmost populated mesa jutting out from the Black Mesa core in the Hopi homeland. Antelope Mesa is part of the Black Mesa further to the east, but is not occupied. The Wepo and Polacca washes, which traditionally supplied the water used in Hopi agriculture, borders either side of First Mesa. First Mesa is best known for Hopi ceramics, which were first popularized by the artistry of Iris Nampayo in the early 1900s. Nampayo's artistry initiated a revival in ceramics on First Mesa, which today serves as one of the best illustrations of Hopi artistic prowess. Silversmithing is also a prominent art form practiced on First Mesa. Today, there are five occupied First Mesa villages.

Walpi

Walpi is one of the oldest villages in Hopi, with occupation stretching back to at least the 13th century. Before Spanish contact the First Mesa Hopi lived at Old Walpi, which was located below the current village at the geological feature called "The Gap". The Gap is literally a cleft in the mesa formation that acts a way to move up and down the mesa. After the Puebloan Revolt of 1680, Walpi was moved to its current location at the tip of First Mesa as a defensive measure. Considered the mother village of the mesa, Walpi serves as the primary village on First Mesa. It acts as the main socio-political village of the mesa, leading in religious ceremonies as well as the seat for the kikmongwi or village elder. Walpi is a very traditional village with neither running water nor electricity.

Sichomovi

Sichomovi was established in the 18th century. It is the "daughter village" of Walpi and does not have kikmongwi, or village elder. Sichomovi has traditionally turned to Walpi for political and religious guidance. Sichomovi is located next to Walpi on First Mesa and has both running water and electricity.

Hano-Tewa

Hano-Tewa was established at the end of the 17th century when a group of Tewa from the Rio Grande was invited by the Walpi elders to help against raiding parties from outside the mesas. The village of Hano-Tewa became a melting pot for both Hopi and Tewa as both cultures interacted with each other on a daily basis. Hano-Tewa is home of First Mesa ceramics and the famous potter Iris Nampayo.

Polacca

Located below First Mesa, Polacca was established in the late 19th century as the Walpi population expanded beyond its means. Historically,

Polacca centered around the springs used by First Mesa for drinking as well as a day school and trading post.

Keam's Canyon

Once a trading post, Keams Canyon became the controversial center of the American acculturative agenda at the turn of the last century, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs School. Keam's Canyon has expanded as an outlying village of First Mesa.

Hopi of the Colorado River

The Hopi began to move to the Colorado River Indian Reservation over fifty years ago, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs relocated some Hopi and Navajo families. Presently, Hopi families live next to Navajo, Mojave and Chemihuevi tribes in the reservation in a unique mixture of distinct cultural affiliations yet, a cohesive political government.

Famous Sons and Daughters of First Mesa

Iris Nampayo (1860?-1942)

Elva Nampeyo (1926-1985)

Fannie Nampeyo (1900-1987)

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