

Andrea Fisher

Fine Pottery

Nambé Pueblo



The main kiva at Nambé Pueblo

Nambé Pueblo was settled in the early 1300's when a group of Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi) made their way from what is now the Bandelier National Monument area closer to the Rio Grande in search of more reliable water sources and more arable land.

At first they settled mostly high in the mountains, coming down to the river valleys in the summer to grow crops. Eventually, they felt safe enough to stay in the valleys and the high mountain villages were slowly abandoned.

When the Spanish first arrived, they found Nambé to be a primary economic, cultural and religious center for the area. That attracted a large Spanish presence and the nature of that presence caused the Nambé people to join wholeheartedly in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and throw out the Spanish oppressors.

When the Spanish returned in 1692, their rule was significantly less harsh. However, the Spanish were responsible for bringing horses into the New World and as the Spanish population increased, so did the number of horses. That brought more and more raids from the Comanches as they came for horses and whatever else of value they could carry away. The Comanches were finally subdued by Governor Juan Bautista de Anza in the 1770's but by then, the impact of European diseases was being strongly felt. It was a smallpox epidemic in the late 1820's that virtually ended the making of pottery at Nambé.

The Nambé pottery tradition is similar to that of Taos and Picuris in their use of micaceous clay slips but Nambé potters also used to produce white on red and black on black products. When Lonnie Vigil began producing his micaceous clay masterpieces about 25 years ago, he almost single-handedly jump-started the revival of pottery making in the pueblo.

For more info:

Nambe Pueblo at Wikipedia

Pueblo of Nambe official website

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