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**Historic Pottery of Zuni Pueblo**  
August 2008



# Historic Pottery of Zuni Pueblo

*An exhibition of Zuni Pueblo pottery  
from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s,  
held at Adobe Gallery Santa Fe in August 2008*



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# Preface

Those of you who have known me during the thirty plus years that I have been at the helm of the gallery know that I have a special feeling for historic pueblo pottery. It may be difficult to explain such a feeling to someone who has not yet grasped the appeal but there is a special magnetism that draws my attention to pottery.

To me, the appeal of pottery lies in understanding the traditions from whence it developed, the care by which it was made from raw earth to a work of art, the smell of the wet clay of a jar full of water, the sensuous feel of holding it in ones hands, and the care taken by the maker to produce a true work of art that was intended to serve a utilitarian purpose for the family.

Historic pottery must be associated with the family traditions and pueblo traditions from which it developed. The vessel shapes and designs dictated by the pueblo of origin are strong; yet, each potter is free to express something of her own artistic talent within that tradition.

A brand new contemporary piece of pottery may dazzle us with its beauty but leave us without a feeling of history. A historic pot, however, with its scratches, rim chips, perhaps tilting slightly, or having evident repairs exhibiting its continued use, speaks of love of family for the vessel and love of history for the collector.

My left brain dictated a career as a Nuclear Engineer for the first third of my adult life, but then my right brain led me to the field of art. I was quite content as an engineer until I arrived in New Mexico in 1957. It was then that I saw for the first time the beautiful art created by the pueblo people and gained an appreciation for their lifestyle.

I do not consider myself an academic scholar of pueblo pottery. My connection to that world is in an appreciation for the beauty of the pieces produced without use of any modern materials or techniques.

The care and precision with which a potter creates a work is testimony to her love of what she does. The painted designs she so carefully places on the vessel is the end result of a long and tedious job of creating that vessel. It is that final step that makes the vessel a work of art and it is that which captures my attention.

Please take a moment to let your senses absorb the beauty of pueblo pottery.

Smell the clay, feel the shape of the vessel, take in the beauty of the design, and lastly, overlook the scratches and chips of decades of life of the piece. It has earned those blemishes while serving a family's needs.

Secondly, do not consider that restoration and conservation are detrimental.

It is our custodial responsibility to rescue that piece that has been mistreated or suffered for lack of attention for decades. What would the Sistine Chapel be were it not for conservation? What would famous 16th century art masterpieces be were it not for conservation? Collectors of fine art understand that conservation is a part of preservation.

Conservation of pueblo pottery should be the same and not considered to be negative. It is a positive attempt to save and restore to its previous beauty a work of art of an era that has now passed. Conservation, carried out properly, is a totally reversible process should a future owner wish to do so.

We hope you enjoy this year's exhibit of historic Zuni Pueblo pottery.



Alexander E. Anthony, Jr.  
August 2008



Zuni Pueblo is the most remote pueblo in New Mexico. It is located somewhat near to Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, but quite a distance from the Rio Grande pueblos. Additional to its isolation on the western edge of the state, Zuni also speaks a language different from all the other pueblos. Its language is unique to the Zuni.

The Zuni Village named Hawikuh is what we know today as Zuni Pueblo. It was established in 1705, when the other six villages that comprised the pueblo were consolidated into the one village. Coronado had first visited the village of Hawikuh in 1540 searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola.

Early Zuni pottery is called Ashiwi Polychrome (1700-1760) and Kiapkwa Polychrome (1760-1850), but this exhibit concentrates on the latter category of Zuni Polychrome, which evolved around circa 1850.

A Zuni Polychrome jar has a concave base that permits it to be easily carried on one's head. The formation of the jar begins by pressing clay into a *puki*, which generally was the bottom of a previously broken jar. Baskets and small bowls were also used as *puki*. The damp clay used to form the base of the new jar would expand over the sides of the *puki* form thus making a line of demarcation at the point where the lower body began. This makes the lower body rather inconspicuous when the inflated middle body overhangs it considerably.

The middle body is generally globular in shape and the greatest diameter is above the mid-body. The top of the body curves inward to a concave flexure that defines the neck of the vessel. The upper body is almost straight or just slightly showing a concave shape and a sharp outward flare.

The underbody of Zuni vessels has been painted a very dark brown since around 1800. Before that time, the underbody was red. The underbody is separated generally at the *puki* line from the middle body by framing lines, sometimes single and sometimes double. If double framing lines are used, they are connected at the break point by two vertical lines.

The rim of Zuni Polychrome jars is painted the same dark brown as the underbody. This is a change from the Ashiwi Polychrome jars, which have a red rim. The body design is generally executed in dark brown and red on a cream slip.

Zuni Polychrome jars differ from the earlier styles in that the greatest width of the vessel is somewhat above mid-body. The design motifs are generally executed with elegance and precision.



## Introduction to Zuni Exhibit





Zuni potters made an enormous amount of pottery, much more than they needed for daily uses. Perhaps that was fortuitous because in 1879, Alexander Stevenson and Frank Hamilton Cushing collected more than 1000 pieces of pottery for the Smithsonian Institution. Two years later, Stevenson returned and collected another 1800 pieces. Again, three years later, he returned and collected another 2250 pieces. His wife, Matilda Coxe Stevenson collected rare early pieces in 1904. Other museums collected at Zuni as well. As a result of these collections, Zuni pottery from the 19th century and earlier is well documented and illustrated in the Smithsonian's collection and the collections of other museums.

By 1900, Zuni pottery production had declined significantly. What the few potters who were productive were making was of poor quality. It was hastily made, carelessly shaped, and poorly fired, to the extent that it would deteriorate with water inside. By this time, Zuni potters were making garish tourist items of poor quality. By 1920, except for a single potter, nothing of quality was being made. That potter, Tsayutitsa, has been described as the best potter ever at Zuni Pueblo and perhaps the best of all 20th Century potters.

It is with great pleasure that we present this sampling of outstanding Zuni ceramics from the late 1800s. We hope you enjoy the exhibit and find this catalog to be a useful addition to your library.

Alexander E. Anthony, Jr.  
Adobe Gallery Santa Fe  
August 2008

#### Bibliography


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Frank, Larry and, Francis H. Harlow. Historic Pottery of the Pueblo Indians 1600-1880. 1974. New York Graphic Society, Boston.

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This is a refreshing look at a traditional Zuni jar of the 1890s period. It exhibits all of the traits of a jar of this period. It has a brown rim around the opening and a distinctive puki impression on the underbody, which is brown.

Zuni Polychrome designation starts with the period from about 1850 to the present. The last fine vessels were made by the early 1900s. During this time span, there are several things that differ from earlier vessels. One is that there was a tendency to place the greatest width of jars above mid-height. A second is the change in the underbody paint from red to dark brown. Third, the use of red in the design was held to a minimum.

This jar has a presence all its own. The globular shape, high shoulder and narrow neck provided the potter with the largest area in which to place her designs. Notice the small triangular areas of red interspersed throughout the vessel design and how minimal their existence.

Generally, Zuni vessels exhibit a rather coarse and grainy texture. This jar has a surface as smooth as seen at Acoma and Laguna Pueblos. The potter obviously worked the clay to its maximum fineness before starting vessel construction, and sanded and smoothed the vessel wall upon completion of construction. This jar was made by a truly expert artisan who not only was above average in technique but also was well above average in pride of workmanship.

The artisan, who painted the jar, whether it was the potter or a male acquaintance, was also a master craftsman. There is perfection in painting throughout the entire vessel. The black fine lines are as parallel as one could achieve, and the dark red paint is as consistent in thickness as could be achieved. The design, too, is refreshing and a pleasant change from the standard "heartline deer" design so prevalent in the late 1800s and continuing to today.

Notice the similarity of the design on this jar to the one in the Gallegos Collection.

I cannot recall ever having a finer quality Zuni vessel in the gallery.

Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 9-1/2" tall x 12" diameter  
Item # 24907

## Extraordinary Polychrome Olla



# Small Jar, circa 1865-1875



Medium: Native Clay, Slip and Mineral Paints  
Size: 3-3/8" tall x 5-1/2" diameter  
Item # 21276

This is an extraordinary small Zuni jar with a base that evidences a puki foundation, a bulging mid body, and a graceful neck ending in a slightly flared rim. The decoration is monochromatic in brown paint and features elaborate volute designs.

This jar shows evidence of Ashiwi-like elements. The very small base was formed in a puki and has a concave bottom—as adopted from the Rio Grande Pueblos sometime in the mid 18th century. Its very exaggerated mid-body section is a direct influence of the Ashiwi period of the mid 1700s.

The red underbody of Ashiwi pottery has given way to black in this jar—a change that occurred in the mid 18th century.

Volute designs and crosshatching associated with the Rainbird elements frequently appear on Kiapkwa Polychrome examples of the early 1800s. This jar clearly imitates these elements. The incurving neck too is a prime feature of the Kiapkwa period (1750-1850).

With the body of an Ashiwi Polychrome, and neck and designs of a Kiapkwa Polychrome, we must date this small jewel sometime around the mid 1800s.

Provenance:  
—ex. col. Alexander E. Anthony, Jr. who purchased it in 1995 from an individual who lived in a village located in the mountains just east of Albuquerque, New Mexico.



# Polychrome Child's Water Jar



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 6-1/4" tall x 8" diameter  
Item # C2695.22

This fine vessel seems to date to the last quarter of the 19th century or early 20th century. It is of the size that we have, in the past, referred to as a child's water jar.

It is undeniably Zuni in form, design, materials and character, and is an intriguing and atypical example of late Zuni artistry. The paste is typically Zuni, gray in color with a chunky texture, the temper being ground pottery shards. The underbody and neck interior are black-slipped, with white stone-polished slip on the exterior body.

The design is suggestive of early historic Zuni pieces, particularly Ashiwi Polychrome (1700-1750) in the banded division of the design plane. The overall image of the jar gives the impression of some antiquity. It has excellent patination and wonderful crazing to the white slip. The surface finish is consistent with earlier vessel construction techniques that exhibit a somewhat rough texture, not smooth as in later ones.

The condition of the vessel is excellent. The very slightest chip is evident on the rim but is of minor consequence.

# Polychrome Dough Bowl



inside of bowl

The majority of Zuni dough bowls seem to be 14 inches or less in diameter. Rarely do we see ones larger. That seems to be the standard for most of the ones from Zuni Pueblo. This one, however, is 16 inches in diameter.

It dates to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The paste materials are typically Zuni; white and chunky in texture with the centuries old temper material of ground pottery shards. The use of old shards for temper evidences the regard of the pueblo peoples for the old works made by their predecessors. To add these remnants to the new work is a sign of respect.

The rim of the bowl is slightly indented from the exterior and has a distinctive inward curve on the interior, imparting a graceful shape to the bowl. The flexure of the interior of the rim is a feature that seems to be standard on Zuni bowls.

The bowl is slipped in traditional fashion with cream-colored clay, over which is painted the design in mineral and vegetal paints. The underbody is slipped in black, a tradition starting in the mid-1860s and continued to today. The exterior is decorated with traditional Zuni volutes that are an early portrayal of the Rainbird.

The interior decoration begins with a brown rim below which is a wave-like element encircling the bowl that is painted red and outlined in brown. Below this are two wide parallel framing lines each with a ceremonial break. Traditional Zuni volute design Rainbird elements fill the interior of the bowl down to the bottom, which then has a red element that appears as a four-pointed star.

During a burglary of the Anthony residence in the 1990s, this bowl was taken along with everything else. When the entire collection was recovered a week later, a section of this bowl had been broken out. Fortunately it was recovered as well. The broken piece was professionally replaced.

#### Provenance:

Edna Norton, who used to work in the pottery room of The Covered Wagon in Albuquerque's Old Town called me on the evening of June 23, 1983 and said a man was at her house with some pottery and she thought I should come over and take a look at it. When I got there, it was all Historic pottery and I had never purchased any before. I had no idea what to offer for the 12 or so pieces. I made an offer and it was accepted. This purchase is what launched me into collecting—and later specializing in—historic pottery. I have retained the bowl in my collection since that time.

Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 8" deep x 16" diameter  
Item # C2750A





# White-on-red Olla, circa 1880



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 7-1/2" tall x 11" diameter  
Item # 22173A

**A**t Zuni Pueblo there was a rare style of pottery, Zuni White-on-red, that perhaps survived as a holdover from Prehistoric days, in which the entire surface of the vessel was slipped in reddish color and decorated with motifs in white paint. Surviving examples seem to extend from about 1800 to perhaps as late as 1900." (Frank and Harlow p.144).

"One type, White-on-red, apparently evolved after the Smithsonian made its collections in 1884-1885. The largest group of this scarce type was collected around 1900." (Batkin, p.164).

This jar is an excellent example of those described above. It has a concave bottom, and the main body of the vessel flares out to the mid body then rolls in and upward to a short neck. The decoration is confined to the upper part of the vessel. Between double framing lines at the neck and mid-body are curvilinear and stepped design

elements. Below the mid-body pair of framing lines are dual curving lines representing clouds.

There is some abrasion to the red slip, confined mostly to the mid body bulge and to the area nearest the base. Additionally, there are a couple of rim chips; otherwise the vessel is in extraordinary condition considering its age.

#### References:

Frank, Larry and Francis H. Harlow. *Historic Pottery of the Pueblo Indians 1600-1880*. Boston 1974, New York Graphic Society.

Batkin, Jonathan. *Pottery of the Pueblos of New Mexico 1700-1940*. The Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. 1987.

# Polychrome Heartline Deer Jar



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 6-1/2" tall x 9" diameter  
Item # 24715

This is an exceptional early twentieth century Zuni Pueblo olla that has possibly seen some use at the pueblo. As is typical of Zuni polychrome wares after 1850, the vessel shape is somewhat squat, resulting in a slight enlargement of the mid-body.

On the neck the decoration is quite elaborate. Note the stylized bird with its arrowhead body squeezed into a brown triangle. Adjacent to the bird element, within the rectangular block are brown outlines containing red parallel lines. The red parallel lines represent rain. Pueblo beliefs are that water jars are linked to rain. Invariably a potter will put some rain elements in the decoration.

The main body of the vessel has a single row of heartline deer above a row of brown outline triangles and brown volute elements, below which is the brown bottom with a concave indentation. The vessel exhibits some wear around its rim, which consists only of some of the brown paint being worn off. There has been some repair at one point of the rim.

Provenance:  
ex. Cody, Wyoming collection

# Double-Chamber Rectangular Pottery Vessel



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 8-7/8" long x 4-1/4" wide x 3-1/4" tall  
Item # 24571

side view



This double-chamber pottery vessel most probably pre-dates the advent of Zuni Polychrome in the mid 1850s. It is entirely black on cream, devoid of any red in the decoration. The simplicity of design would further substantiate this dating.

The exquisite brown birds on the vessel body, with their long and graceful tails, were practically created with a single stroke of the paintbrush—head, tail and wing flow as if one. The out-curving rim of each chamber is painted with brown paint. A single flower appears on each end of the vessel.

Except for loss of slip and some painted design, the only damage to this piece is loss of rim on each chamber.

There are a number of this type vessel in the collections of the Smithsonian. James and Matilda Coxe Stevenson called them salt containers.

The Zuni men annually hike from the pueblo to a salt lake some four days away. After elaborate ceremonies at the lake, they gather salt in fabric sheets and take it back to the pueblo. Containers such as this are then used as repositories for the salt.

Provenance:  
The property of Philip Winship Davis, from the collection of his grandfather, George Parker Winship.

# Child's Water Jar



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 6" tall x 7-1/2" diameter  
Item # 24708

This fine vessel seems to date to the early twentieth century. Undeniably Zuni in form, design, materials and character, this jar is an intriguing and atypical example of late Zuni artistry. The paste is typically Zuni, gray in color with a chunky texture, the temper being ground pottery shards.

The underbody and neck interior are black-slipped, with white stone-polished slip on the exterior body. This jar's design is suggestive of early historic Zuni pieces, particularly Ashiwi Polychrome (1700-1750) in the banded divination of the design plane, in conjunction with the diagonally oriented motifs and stepped elements.

The black rim-top is adjacent to the framing line, interrupted by a ceremonial break. In the underlying design field surrounding the collar neck, paired red and black stepped motifs alternate above and below, with the black elements connected at the base to the uppermost framing line.

The design field at mid-shoulder consists of repeated stick-figure elements, each with a red element at its apex, and black stepped elements at its end point. Below the shoulder design, the artisan repeated the design used around the neck.

The main body design repeats the stick-figure elements, each enclosed within triangles comprised of three parallel lines.

Provenance:  
ex Cody Wyoming Collection



# Large Olla with Volute Rainbird Designs



This is a venerable, aged olla from the period when some Zuni potters were still using red paint for the underside of the vessel and the inside of the rim, that is, sometime around the 1870s.

This excellent piece is superb in form, execution of design, and fantastic visual history and patina. Displaying the wear of decades of use; rim wear from incessant drawing of water from the vessel's interior, semi-gloss patina from countless daily contact with the human hand, the nicks, blemishes, pits, scratches, and stains of everyday wear.

One can easily justify selecting a piece with such evidence of use because it can be associated with a time, place, a people and culture. It speaks of its time in history. This vessel is Zuni in all respects, from the paste material, construction, and design elements. The rain-bird design here depicted is ceremonial in origin, and the specific form, which was repeated by Zuni potters, dates to the nineteenth century, with antecedents some two centuries previous.

Some collectors speak of collecting "museum quality pieces," by which they mean perfect specimens. Contrary to this thought, museum quality pieces are more reflected in pieces that have some ethnographic history and evidence some wear. Rarely did the Smithsonian and other museums collect perfect examples in the late 1800s. Their intent was to collect ethnographic objects, not art objects. All museums classified their collections in terms of ethnographic use, not in terms of art perfection. The classifiers of the objects even wrote collection numbers on the surface of the designs. This would never be done on pristine fine art objects.

This magnificent Zuni jar is, to me, the perfect "museum quality piece" of ethnographic art. There is significant wear around the rim, yet there is the most precise care evident in the design execution. The small area of crosshatchings is exceptional, and the brush strokes used in laying out the volute elements could not be more precise.

This jar is a prime example of the care a potter took to build and design a jar that she was going to see daily in her home, a jar that would hold water for her and her family, but would still be something she could be proud of having made. There is no better praise that could be put on a jar than that.

Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 10" tall x 14" diameter  
Item # 25098



# Polychrome Drum Jar, circa 1930



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 12" tall x 15-1/2" diameter  
Item # 24730

It appears that Zuni Pueblo is the only pueblo that made pottery jars for use as drums. They are identified mostly by their unique rim and painting style. The rim is short and turns outward abruptly—the intent being to securely tie a skin on the top surface. According to Harlow, the drum jars are heavier in weight for strength, the paste is traditional sherd-tempered chunkiness, and the designs are associated with sacred ritual use.

The four animal figures around the body of the vessel are typical members of the Zuni pantheon of important religious figures. The line from mouth to heart is of great significance. The two plumed serpents surrounding the jar at the shoulder are significant water creatures.

other sides



top view





# Nineteenth Century Polychrome Olla



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 9-1/2" x 14-1/2" diameter  
Item # 22751

This is an outstanding Zuni Pueblo olla of the finest workmanship one could expect. It has a red underbody and distinctive puki line—both attributes of an 1865-1875 date. From the puki line, the body of the vessel flares outward and upward to a high shoulder and gracefully curving neck. The main body design is divided into halves by a double band containing a row of very artistic red birds with black feathers. Above and below are Rain Bird volutes. Three medallions of the utmost intricacy are centered on the mid body. From the shoulder to the rim are delicate arabesque designs in brown paint, within which are red fine lines, alternating with free-flowing bird designs also containing red fine lines.

The condition of the jar is reflective of its age. There is some abrasion of the paint and some minor chips to the body of the vessel. These imperfections are significantly overshadowed by the wonderful patina that has accumulated over decades of loving care and handling by its owner. This is truly a magnificent jar.

# Small Jar with Frogs in Relief



Medium: Native Clay and Paints  
Size: 3-1/4" tall x 6" diameter  
Item # 24489

Pottery has always been a useful art form at the pueblos. Some pieces were made for utilitarian uses in everyday life chores and other pieces made for ceremonial purposes. Some even served both purposes. Designs on these pots were not arbitrary but had meaning.

Cushing, Stevenson, and Bunzel conducted several major studies of the symbolism of Zuni pottery designs. Although symbolism may be questionable in some pueblos, there is universal agreement among the Zuni informants to Cushing and Stevenson in the 1880s to 1890s, and to Bunzel in the 1920s, that all designs on pottery are meaningful.

In an arid land such as New Mexico, it is understandable that efforts to control rain and secure moisture for crops was a major concern for the pueblo farmers. Therefore, water symbols and animals responsible for bringing rain were predominant symbols on pottery. Tadpoles, dragon-

flies and frogs associated with early, mid, and late summer rains are commonly found on pottery.

Bowls such as this small one were frequently made for home use as a repository for sacred corn meal that was a necessity in daily home ceremonies or prayers. Sometimes, they were made for sale, as well.

This small jar with two exquisitely formed frogs in relief shows significant wear from use. The cream slip has worn away on about 30% of the surface and the red triangular designs are somewhat abraded or missing. Interestingly, the frogs are in excellent condition, perhaps because of the extra thickness of the clay needed to make them in relief. There is no doubt that this jar was used for decades before leaving the pueblo. It is one of the finest of the small ceremonial containers we have seen.

# Nineteenth Century Polychrome Serving Bowl



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 10" diameter x 4-1/4" deep  
Item # 23765

The rim of this bowl curves inward slightly, imparting a graceful shape to what could have been an otherwise uninteresting one. The interior of the rim flexes slightly, an unnecessary added feature that enhances its shape. The bowl is slipped in traditional fashion with cream-colored clay, over which is painted the design in mineral and vegetal paints. The underbody is slipped in red, a tradition generally abandoned in the mid-1860s and completely abandoned by 1880. The exterior is decorated with the traditional prayer stick design used on every Zuni bowl made in the nineteenth century. It is thought that this was a woman's way to place her prayers since women do not make prayer sticks.

The interior decoration begins with a brown rim below which is a wave-like element encircling the bowl that is painted red and outlined in brown. Below this are two wide parallel framing lines with a very distinctive ceremonial break. What appears to have been a very elegant simple interior bowl design has been almost totally obliterated through decades of use. The cream-colored slip is all that remains.

This is one of the most extraordinary bowls we have had the pleasure to handle. There is one rim chip confined mostly to the interior of the bowl. It is easily visible in the photographs above.

Provenance:  
From a private Denver collection.

## Terrace Rim Ceremonial Bowl





There is very little published information on terrace rim bowls. They have been referred to as “ceremonial” bowls, “kiva” bowls, and “terrace rim” bowls. It has been speculated that they were made for use in private homes and in kiva ceremonies, but this has not been substantiated in publications.

It is known that all ceremonial vessels are fabricated and decorated with intentional emblematic characteristics. Both form and ornamentation are significant. In explaining how the form of this vessel is held to be symbolic, one must equate the shape of the vessel as representing the earth, from which we draw nourishment. The rim of the bowl represents the horizon, terraced with mountains above which rise the clouds.

The decorations are a trifle more complex. Generally they represent tadpoles, dragonflies, and the frog or toad. An explanation for their use is simple. As the tadpole frequents the pools of springtime, he has been adopted as the symbol of spring rains; the dragonfly hovers over pools in summer, hence typifies the rains of summer; and the frog, maturing in them later, symbolizes the rains of the later seasons. It is to the rains that we owe the existence of the pools.

This terrace-rim bowl has a flat bottom that extends upward in a graceful flaring manner to form the body of the vessel. The rim is comprised of four sections, each of which extends upward with steps that end in a flat top, these protrusions representing clouds. Between these four areas are flat rim sections representing the horizon.

The exterior decoration consists of dragonflies at each of the terraces and tadpoles at the lines of the horizon. The interior decoration is similar, except frogs are featured on each of the terraced steps.

**Provenance:**

Purchased by Alexander E. Anthony, Jr. on November 6, 1993 and has been in his personal collection ever since. This bowl was stolen during a burglary of his Albuquerque residence in the mid 1990s. The police recovered it from the burglar by reaching around him from his back to restrain him. The burglar was holding the vessel and it got damaged in the struggle. The damage has been professionally repaired.

Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 7-3/4" tall x 9-3/4" diameter  
Item # 20741



# Utilitarian Storage Vessel



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 9" tall x 11-1/2" diameter  
Item # MM98

Vessels of this size and shape were obviously for utilitarian use, but not necessarily for cooking. There is no evidence this jar was used for cooking, but it certainly was used for storage of something. There is no evidence of water or liquid residue, so it was used for dry storage.

There was never any decoration placed on the jar. It was formed, scraped, and fired. There are a couple stress cracks at the rim, and one crack on the interior that does not penetrate to the exterior.

Provenance:  
ex Cody Wyoming Collection

# Polychrome Bowl with Volute Designs



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 5" deep x 11-1/2" diameter  
Item # 23344


**A** lovely dough bowl from the early twenties. This vessel has a concave base slipped in black and unpolished, stone-polished white slip, unpolished black rim top and pink-gray paste. The walls are slightly heavier in construction, typical of Zuni ceramics after 1900. Conspicuously absent are the traditional ceremonial line breaks.

The exterior of the jar is decorated in mineral black and red paints, with a succession of diagonal lines adjacent to interconnected triangular motifs (feather tips), and pendant triangular motifs with embellished linear elements contacting the diagonal line; all elements ending with a connection to the lower framing line at rim edge.

The interior is decorated at the rim with a succession of feather tip motifs on a diagonal line, framed on the right by a red triangle motif. The interior basin of the bowl is embellished with traditional rain-bird-derivative motifs in cross-hatchure and black line borders. The central motif is a circle of black paint with an adjacent scalloped circle worked in red with black contour. Dividing the two rain-bird motifs are elaborate curvilinear elements framing a single triangular motif with inverted black and red triangles.

A fantastic piece, in excellent vessel physical condition with lovely patina and wear and abrasion of the design from usage.





This is a superb nineteenth century vessel, dating to the last quarter of the 1800s. This olla has many distinctive Zuni design elements: the heart-line deer, spiral volute with fine-line embellishments and the “sunflower” rosette. The underbody is concave, as is typical of all ollas, or water jars, dating after 1700. The base is slipped in brown, with distinctive flexure at the uppermost edge of the underbody, as well as a black-slipped, unpolished neck interior and rim top. The white slip is stone-polished with mineral-paint designs. The uppermost framing line is worked in black, overlaying the geometric/spiral volute fine-line elements worked in black and red.

The double framing line at the upper shoulder has one ceremonial break. At mid-body, the distinctive sunflower elements serve to anchor the composition. Above and below these central paired framing lines are two heart-line deer in black and red pigments, enclosed in an oval motif embellished with black and red geometric and fine-line designs. This is a wonderful olla, in fantastic condition, with absolutely superb patina, incontrovertible evidence of the generations of hands that held, appreciated, used and perhaps loved this fine jar, a utilitarian object formed and intricately embellished to create a true work of art.

Provenance:

—ex. col. Alexander E. Anthony, Jr.

This jar was purchased in the summer of 1988 from a gentleman who brought it in to the gallery when we were in Albuquerque. He said he found it at an automotive service station, sitting outside. It was corroded around the lower part as if it had acid damage. The so-called corrosion was nothing more than dirt. There was no damage to the pot.

Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 9" tall x 12" diameter  
Item # 16208

# Polychrome Olla



# Polychrome Olla with Rain Bird Designs



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 12" tall x 14" diameter  
Item # 24687

This is a venerable, aged olla from the decade following 1880. This excellent piece is superb in form, execution of design, and fantastic visual history and patina. It displays the wear of decades of use—rim wear from incessant drawing of water from the vessel's interior and spillage on the rim, semi-gloss paint from countless daily contact with the human hand, and nicks, blemishes, pits, scratches, and stains of everyday wear.

One may indeed choose to live with, or at least pursue the perfect piece; that type specimen with no evidence of human hand, but why? The visual history of these objects tells much more, of a time, place, a people and culture, and by our response, perhaps something of us.

This vessel is Zuni in all respects, from the paste material, construction, and design elements. The rain bird design here depicted is ceremonial in origin, and the specific form, which was repeated by Zuni potters, dates to the late nineteenth century, with antecedents some two centuries previous. This is a piece for the collector who appreciates history as well as beauty.

#### Provenance:

From the collection of Alexander E. Anthony, Jr. who purchased it from Mary Mira of Kansas City in 2003. She, in turn, had purchased it in 1972 from Frank Dunn, a California dealer. This is the first time it has been offered on the open market in over 35 years.

# Polychrome Olla with Heartline Deer



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 6-1/4" tall x 8" diameter  
Item # C2695.22

An extremely outstanding Zuni Polychrome olla from around 1870. The jar exhibits all the criteria of a jar of this period. It has a brown rim around the opening and a distinctive puki impression on the underbody. The heartline deer motif, an innovation of the 1860-1870 time period, is prominent on this vessel. It was previously referred to as an antelope, the meaning of which was provided by John G. Bourke in 1881:

*The line running down from the animal's mouth and terminating at its heart may be described as a "prayer." It is a pictographic invocation to the "spirit of the antelope" to incline the hearts of the antelope on earth to put themselves in the way of the Zunis that they may kill them for food. I made careful inquiries upon this point and know that I have obtained the correct explanation.*

The small red birds with hooked tails are noticeably absent on this jar, as they were an innovation in the 1880 time period. The dagger-like elements around the neck are a carry-over from the Kiapkwa period (1750s). The large rosettes on opposing sides of the jar are a unique Zuni motif, and the hooked feathers and spiral-tipped crooks outlining the covering over the heartline deer have been used since the deer were introduced.



# Small Black-on-cream Olla, circa mid-1800s



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 3-3/8" tall x 3-7/8" diameter  
Item # 24626

This fine vessel dates to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is of a size for which it is difficult to ascribe a function. Vessels of this size could have been made for repositories of sacred cornmeal, for a gift to a newborn child, or even as a training piece for a beginning potter. It is truly rare to find such an exquisite jar of this diminutive size and of such extraordinary beauty and condition.

It is undeniably Zuni in form, design, materials and character, and is an intriguing and atypical example of Zuni artistry. The paste is typically Zuni, gray in color with a chunky texture, the temper being ground pottery shards. The underbody and neck interior are black-slipped, with white stone-polished slip on the exterior body.

A single black bird graces the neck of the vessel. A pair of thick black framing lines rests on the shoulder of the jar and is penetrated by a ceremonial break line. Another pair of framing lines at the base of the jar does not have an apparent

ceremonial break, nor does the framing line at the neck of the jar. The base of the jar is concave.

The design is suggestive of early historic Zuni pieces, particularly Ashiwi Polychrome (1700-1750) in the banded division of the design plane. The overall image of the jar gives the impression of some antiquity. It has excellent patination and wonderful crazing to the white slip. The surface finish is consistent with earlier vessel construction techniques that exhibit a somewhat rough texture, not smooth as in later ones.

The condition of the vessel is excellent. This is probably one of the most rare of the Zuni Pueblo pottery items available today.

Provenance:  
The property of Philip Winship Davis, from the collection of his grandfather, George Parker Winship.

# Polychrome Terrace Rim Bowl



Native Materials  
6" diameter x 5-1/4" deep  
Item # 21855

This is truly a rare and unusual ceremonial Zuni bowl. It was formed from native Zuni clays with crushed pottery shards as the temper. It is orange-slipped and stoned-polished on the upper half and red slipped and stone polished on the lower half.

This is a vessel formed seemingly freehand with little emphasis on symmetry or perfection of form. It sits at a very slight, almost indistinguishable, tilt from horizontal.

The rim is terraced, as is standard for ceremonial bowls and jars. It is stated that the terraces represent the horizon with mountains from whence rise the clouds. The rim is painted with mineral black paint and the terraces are outlined in the same fashion.

The mid-body is encircled with nodules that protrude as if representing breasts. For a possible explanation of this, it is best to quote from a passage published in the Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, in 1882: "Is not the bowl

the emblem of the earth, our mother? For from her we draw both food and drink, as a babe draws nourishment from the breast of its mother."

The exterior designs are extremely minimal in that they consist only of two dragonflies painted in black mineral paint. Each of the nodules is also painted in mineral black.

The geographic isolation of the Zuni people led to the development of distinctive style and form for Zuni ceremonial vessels. The figures and images presented on ceremonial jars and bowls are most often associated with water; water serpents, frogs, tadpoles, and dragonflies being the most common represented (Frank and Harlow, p.138). This exquisite vessel has a distinctive patina, developed through generations of use and ritual handling. The matte paint has taken on a fine semi-gloss patina of velvety sheen.

This is an intriguing vessel of considerable presence and fantastic visual history. It probably dates to no later than 1890.

# Torso-shaped 19th Century Canteen or Ceremonial Vessel



Medium: Native Clay & Slip  
Size: 7-1/2" tall x 5-1/8" wide  
Item # 24948

This is an imposing, aged figurine from the decade of 1880 or perhaps earlier. This excellent piece is hard to analyze because its function is lost to history. Zuni is known for producing many unusual shapes of vessels—be they bowls, canteens, effigy, or whatever.

This figurine, in the shape of a human torso, is superb in form, execution of design, and fantastic patina. It displays the wear of decades of existence but little of actual use. The semi-gloss patina is evidence of countless daily contact with the human hand and stains of daily wear.

It is understandable that most collectors steer toward collecting water jars and bowls of the historic period, but these unusual objects have a place in history too. They define a time, place, people and culture even if we are unable to unravel the mystery.

This vessel is Zuni in all respects, from the paste material, construction, and design elements. The numerous cloud designs throughout the body here depicted are ceremonial in origin, and the specific form itself could be ceremonial or perhaps just a whimsical attempt by an excellent potter who was tired of making the standard vessels.

This is an excellent vessel that can keep a collector intrigued for years to come.



# Serving Bowl



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 4-3/4" deep x 11-1/4" diameter  
Item # 24704


Occasionally we acquire a piece of pottery that is a joy to hold and a visual delight. Such is this marvelous Zuni Pueblo serving bowl. Not only was it constructed by a master potter and painted by a talented artist, it was perhaps lovingly used in the pueblo for decades before someone talked the owner into parting with it. It dates to the last half of the nineteenth century. The paste materials are typically Zuni; white and chunky in texture with the centuries old temper material of ground pottery shards.

The rim of the bowl flares outward slightly, imparting a graceful shape to what could be an otherwise uninteresting one. The bowl is slipped in traditional fashion with cream-colored clay, over which is painted the design in mineral and vegetal paints. The underbody is slipped in red, a tradition generally abandoned in the mid-1860s and completely abandoned by 1880. The exterior is decorated with the traditional prayer stick design used on every Zuni bowl made in the nineteenth century. It is thought that this was a

woman's way to place her prayers since women do not make prayer sticks.

The interior decoration begins with a brown rim, below which is a wave-like element encircling the bowl that is painted deep red and outlined in brown. Below this are two wide parallel framing lines with a very distinctive ceremonial break. The main body of the interior is elaborately designed with polka-dotted floral elements and red Zuni volute elements without the addition of brown outlining. The base of the bowl features a red square, outlined in brown, which is again outlined with a wavy brown frame.

This is one of the most extraordinary bowls we have had the pleasure to handle. A two-square-inch piece of clay blew out during firing, but the potter placed it back in and "cemented" it in place so that she could still use the bowl for home use. The piece has been professionally repaired at that point of damage.



We have had Zuni Pueblo canteens in the gallery in the past—although I must say not too many—but never have we had one of such magnificence in design and painted execution. This excellent canteen is typical of the late nineteenth century with a wide girth and a large decorative surface.

Generally, Zuni ceramics of this period are chunky in texture with surfaces that appear more porous than smooth. This canteen, however, has a wonderfully smooth surface without any elements of chunkiness. The potter worked the clay to obtain the finest texture in the finished product.

The design executions at this late 19th century period are generally less crisp, light, and precise than those of twenty years earlier. In this instance, the execution of painted patterns is equal to those of the earlier period. The elements are heavier, with a visual emphasis on the geometric aspects of the works. Graphic and old are two terms most suited to this late design-period. The heavy outline of this canteen is executed in black over stone-polished white slip, with only minimal use of red.

The designs on many canteens feature a large rosette on the dome of the vessel and that is usually the focus point, but the designer of this one chose a simple understated vertical bar of deep black hooks and clouds. A potter, in 1924, described this vertical bar to Ruth Bunzel as “Grandfather standing (*nanna elay*): a prayer for long life.”

On either side of the vertical design element is a pair of heartline deer—a buck and fawn. The simplicity of the overall design is the crowning glory of the effort of the potter. The lack of fine lines and medallions is refreshing to see, as they are generally used in excess.

The bottom of the canteen is painted a deep red color and shows calcium deposits that verify its use as a container for water. The white slip on the topside has taken on a deep patina that attests to its age of over 100 years. The condition of the vessel is excellent. There is no apparent repair or restoration to any portion of the vessel or painted designs.

**Provenance:**

The owner of this canteen stated that his parents purchased it in the early 1960s and retained it until passing it on to him recently.

**Reference:**

The Pueblo Potter: A Study of Creative Imagination in Primitive Art, by Ruth L. Bunzel. 1929. Columbia University Press, New York.

Medium: Native Materials

Size: 9-7/8" wide x 10" tall x 7-5/8" deep

Item # C2785

# Polychrome Historic Canteen, circa 1880



# Newekwe Hewahewa Katsina Pottery Figure



Medium: Native Clay  
Size: 3" Tall  
Item # 24645

This Zuni pottery figurine represents Hewahewa, the Newekwe society's clown Ko'ko. The Newekwe society is the curing and clowning society at Zuni. It specializes in controlling and curing stomach ailments. As all clowns, they are known for their abilities at mimicry and burlesque. They are also known for their proclivity as gluttons—thus their demonstration that they can cure stomach ailments. The fully anatomically correct genital area of this figurine is most probably related to its burlesque roles.

This is the only pottery katsina figurine of which I am aware from Zuni. The condition of the piece is extraordinary considering its age of over 100 years. It was collected at Zuni in 1898. A little section of the hair on the left side of the head is missing. The right hand is also missing.

#### Provenance:

The property of Philip Winship Davis, from the collection of his grandfather, George Parker Winship, who collected at Zuni Pueblo in 1898.

# Well-Used Terrace Bowl



Medium: Native Materials  
Size: 5-1/4" deep x 9 1/2" diameter  
Item # 23396

Rarely have ceremonial bowls of this vintage, and demonstrated use, been available on the market. This bowl shows evidence of decades of use for its intended purpose in the kiva. The vessel walls have been worn thin, the temper is visible within the walls, the interior and exterior surfaces have lost their original slip, yet the bowl is whole and the designs are clearly visible. It is remarkable that the wear to the surfaces has been confined to the upper regions of the bowl, leaving the lower half in still marvelous condition.

The interior design was and is limited to eight tadpoles. The exterior designs feature four animals, all of which have heart lines. It is possible that they are animals of the four directions: a mountain lion (north), a gray wolf (east), a brown bear (west) and a badger (south).

The interior designs of tadpoles are typical water creature elements associated with all terrace rim ceremonial bowls. Such bowls always feature water creatures. The animal fetishes on the exterior of the bowl are more unusual for a terrace rim bowl. Designs on the exterior usually are water creatures, as well.

It is quite possible that this bowl was used by a hunting society as an initiation bowl or a ceremonial bowl related to hunting activities. This, of course, is speculation on my part. I consider this one of the more unusual terrace rim bowls I have ever seen, and the significant wear patterns certainly attest to its use for decades.

