

## **FANNIE NAMPEYO – (1900 – 1987)**

The youngest daughter of the legendary Nampeyo (Sand Snake, c. 1860-1942), Fannie Nampeyo is perhaps the best known of her generation. She began by decorating her mother's pots as the latter's eyesight failed, but she also made her own pots. Over the course of her long career (1920's to 1987) she produced a large number of vessels characterized by their excellent craftsmanship and exquisite designs. Fannie also raised seven children, operated a successful tamale business, pursued the religious studies and crafts of her adopted Mormon religion, and served as matriarch of the Corn Clan as had her mother before her. After her death she was honored for her body of work by the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000.

### **ARTIST'S STATEMENT – FANNIE NAMPEYO**

"We make pottery for a living and we are glad that the designs have been taken over by the family. I was the first to take the designs from my mother and then hand them down to my family."<sup>1</sup>

1. *7 Families in Pueblo Pottery*. Albuquerque, NM: Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 1974.

### **RESUME – FANNIE NAMPEYO**

1900*	Born, Popongua or Popong-Mana, Hopi First Mesa, Hano, AZ
19__	Polacca Day School
19__	Housekeeper, Hopi House
1920's	Married Vinton Polacca
1920's-1942	Worked with her mother, Nampeyo (1860-1942) painting her mother's pots
1934-1937	Bidahochi Trading Post, Navajo Nation, NM
1942-1960	Keams Canyon, NM
1960	Returned to Hano, NM
1961	Blue Ribbon, Northern Arizona Hopi Craftsman Exhibition
1987	Died, Hano, AZ

\*Exact date unknown

## ***BIOGRAPHY – FANNIE NAMPEYO***

Fannie Nampeyo was born in approximately 1900, the youngest daughter of the legendary Nampeyo (1860-1942) and Lesou. The name given her at birth was Popongua or Popong-Mana which means “picking pinons”. The name “Fannie” came later, probably given to her by either missionaries or health-care workers. Her education consisted of a few years at the Polacca Day School, the highest level completed the third grade.

During her teens Fannie worked as a housekeeper at the Hubbel Trading Post. In the early 1920's she married Vinton Polacca, son of Tom Polacca, also a Tewa like Nampeyo and well-known to the family. Vinton was educated in modern agriculture, construction, and building maintenance in addition to his formal schooling, and had learned ranching skills from his father. The couple moved to Sand Hills where Vinton had a cattle ranch, and Fannie adapted well to ranch life. While previously she had learned the pottery making tradition, she had not spent much time at it, but now she began making pottery seriously. At about the same time, her mother's eyesight was failing, and while she could continue to make the pots, she relied on her family to help with the polishing and decorating. From then until the elder Nampeyo's death in 1942, Fannie worked with her mother. Their early pots carried only the “Nampeyo” signature, but later they were signed “Nampeyo Fannie.” Fannie also made her own pots which were signed “Fannie Nampeyo” and often had a drawing of an ear of corn symbolizing her clan.

From 1934-1937 the Polacca family lived at the Bidahochi Trading Post on the nearby Navajo Reservation. However, the difficult life of a rancher and numerous injuries began to take their toll on Vinton, and by 1942 he had left ranching for less strenuous work in the government schools, moving his family to Keams Canyon. The family prospered there. All the children completed their high school education and a number of them went on for higher education. Fannie founded a tamale business to bring in some extra money and it was very popular. Vinton had been raised in the Christian faith and was active in the Mormon Church, serving as both a priest and an elder. Fannie and the children were also devout Mormons and the family was among the first to join the Mormon Church at First Mesa. Fannie devoted a good portion of her time to church affairs and enjoyed activities such as quilting and singing with the church. They lived in Keams Canyon for 18 years, until Vinton's retirement, and then moved back to Hano. Vinton died in 1965.

Fannie was matriarch of the Hopi-Tewa Corn Clan as her mother had been, which required her participation in Clan ceremonial life. After her husband's death she was not able to move into the Corn Clan house which had fallen into disrepair. She encouraged family members and other clan members to help in restoring the property, and for the next twenty years she was active in clan ceremonial and other activities.

Of Nampeyo's three daughters (Annie, Nellie, and Fannie) Fannie is probably the best known. Even while raising a family and helping with the ranch and church, Fannie was a prolific potter. She produced a large number of pots, bowls, cups, and other vessels, completing her last work a few weeks before she died. Fannie Nampeyo is noted for her use of black-on-beige and red-on-beige style, and like her mother, she used Hopi themes in her designs. Her vessels are often large, symmetrical, smooth and thin-

walled. Her son has stated that his mother was a traditional potter in every way, using local clays, firing with sheep dung in an outdoor oven, and making her own paints from native plants which were then applied with a yucca-fiber brush. Among honors she received were a first place blue ribbon in the "Hopi Show" at the Museum of Northern Arizona in 1961 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts in 2000. She passed her excellence in pottery making on to her children and several have gone on to become well-known Native American potters.

Fannie Nampeyo died in 1987 and is buried in the Polacca family graveyard at Sand Hills Ranch.

## ***SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY – FANNIE NAMPEYO***

### Books and Catalogs

Blair, Mary Ellen and Laurence R. Blair. *The Legacy of a Master Potter: Nampeyo and her Descendants*. Tucson, AZ: Treasure Chest Books, 1999.

Kramer, Barbara. *Nampeyo and her Pottery*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

*Nampeyo of Hano and Five Generations of her Descendants*. Albuquerque, NM: Adobe Gallery, 1983.

Peterson, Susan. *Pottery by American Indian Women: The Legacy of Generations*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1997.

Schaaf, Gregory, and Richard M. Howard. *Hopi-Tewa Pottery: 500 Artist Biographies*. Santa Fe, NM: Center for Indigenous Arts & Cultures, 1998.

*Seven Families in Pueblo Pottery*. Albuquerque, NM: Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 1974.

### Periodicals

Dittemore, Diane. "The Nampeyo Legacy." *Southwest Art* 31 no. 3 (August 2001): 175-180, 182-183.

Mahler, Richard. "Lifetime Achievement Awards." *Southwest Art* 30, no. 3 (August 2000): 170-172.

Peterson, Susan. "The Legacy of Generations: Pottery by American Indian Women." *Ceramics Monthly* 46 ,no. 6 (June/Auygust 1998): 62-67.

### Videos & Other Media

Snider, Bill, and Deann Snider. "With Hand and Heart: A Portrait of Southwestern Native American Artists." Glenview, IL: Crystal Productions, 2005, 1986. VHS

## ***GALLERY REPRESENTATION – FANNIE NAMPEYO***

Adobe Gallery, 221 Canyon Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Tanner Chaney, Inc, 323 Romero NW, Suite 2, 3, & 4, Albuquerque, NM 87104

## ***WEB SITES – FANNIE NAMPEYO***

<http://holmes.anthropology.museum/southwestpottery>

Biography, signature for Fannie Nampeyo

<http://www.southwestart.com/document/943>

Dittemore, Diane. "The Nampeyo Legacy." Article discusses members of the Nampeyo family.

<http://www.canyonart.com/Nampeyo.htm>

"Nampeyo, Hopi Master Potter."

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