

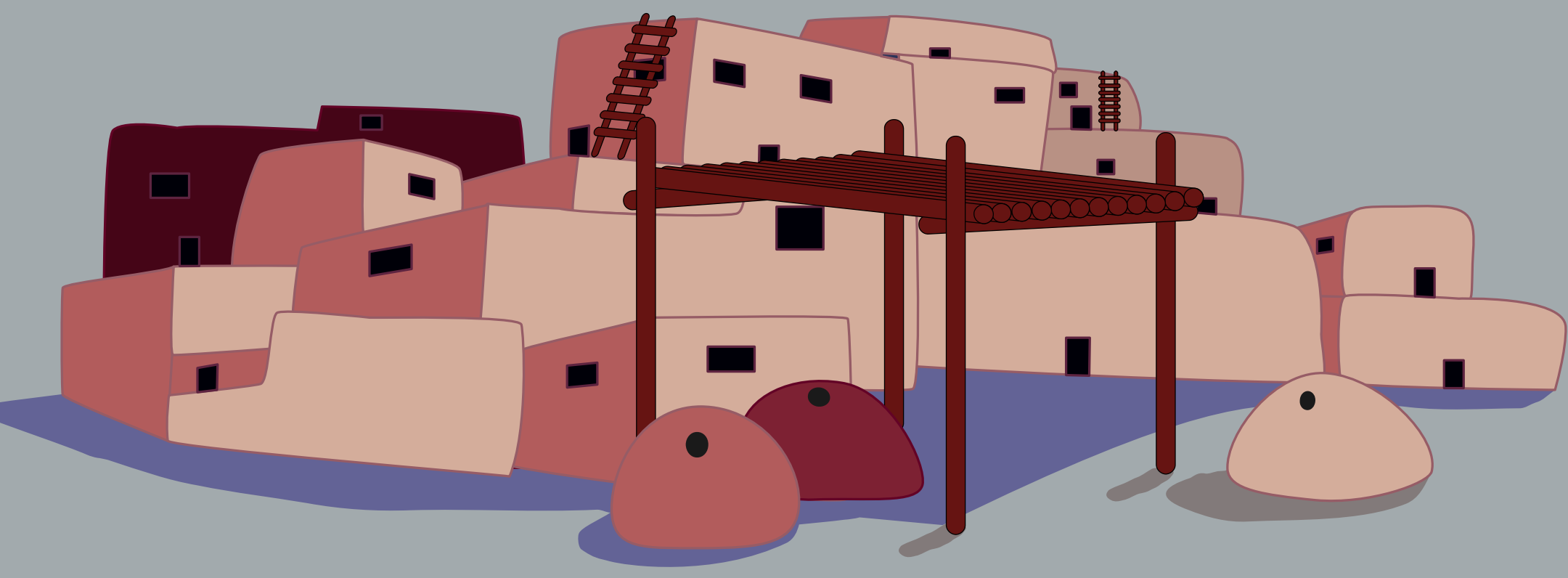
MATSON MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

PUEBLOAN INNOVATORS



Overview

People often view traditional Native American crafts as unchanging reflections of a pristine past. For instance, we often assume that pottery made in the Pueblos of the Southwest has remained the same for centuries. In fact, Pueblo artisans have altered their work for many reasons over the past 200 years. The Zuni, Hopi, Cochiti, and other Puebloan groups modified their pottery in response to the Spanish conquest of the region in the 16th century. The expansion of railroads and tourism in the late 19th to early 20th century fueled other modifications. Some were accommodations to a growing market fueled by tourists and museums. However, increased contact with Euro-Americans, as well as other Pueblo groups, inspired potters to explore new artistic directions and eventually led to a revitalization of this ancient art form.



Ancient Precursors

The manufacture of pottery in the southwestern United States extends back about 2,000 years. At the museum, are two black-on-white prehistoric vessels made by Ancestral Puebloans, also known as the Anasazi. Along with people of the Hohokam and Mogollon cultures, Ancestral Puebloans produced a diverse array of forms, including jars, bowls, rattles, and canteens. Scholars believe that traditional geometric and figural designs on these pieces were aesthetic choices as well as prayers concerning rain, music, and the natural world.



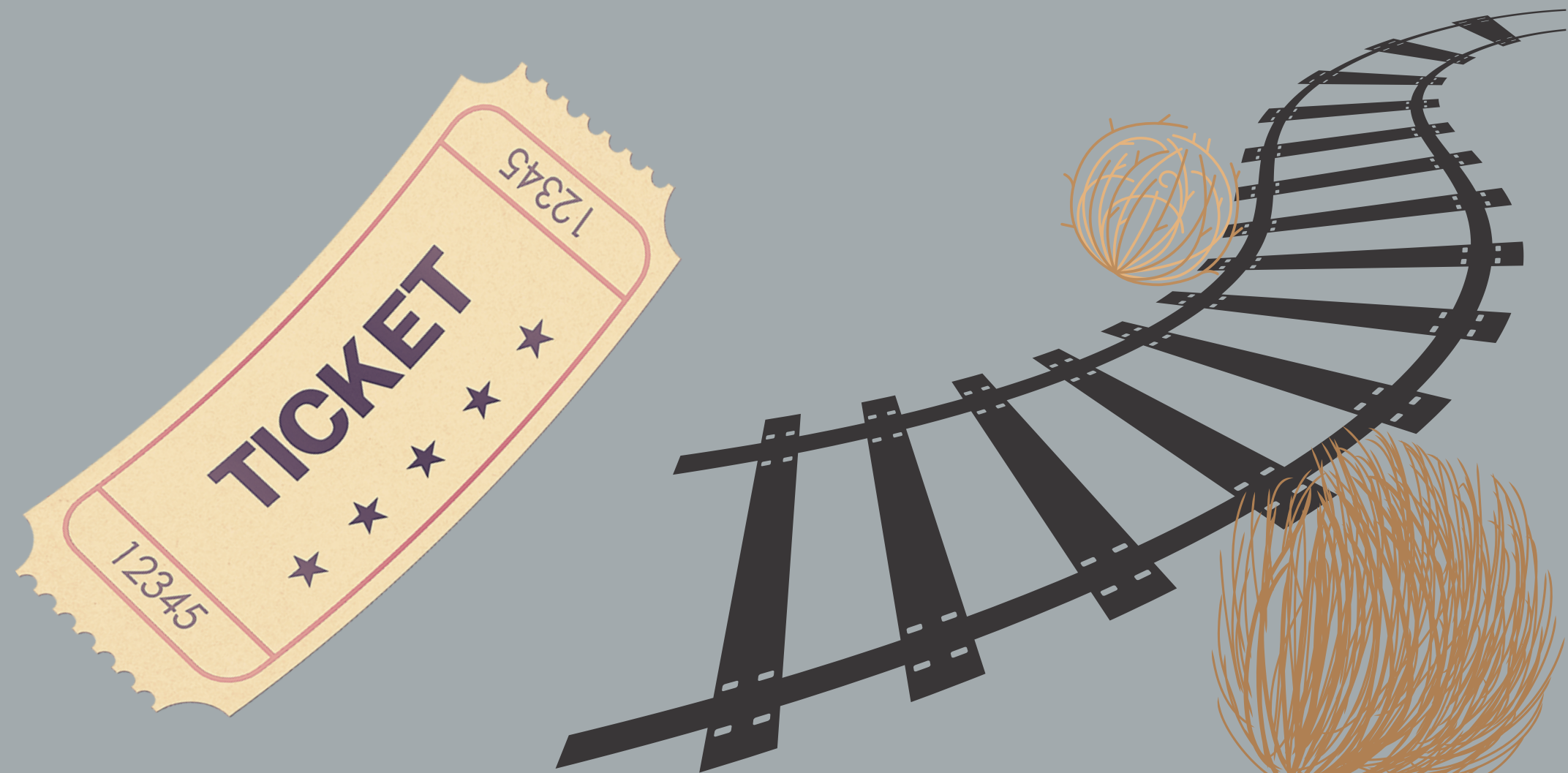
Spanish Influence

The arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century and their repression of the Pueblos wrought changes in local pottery. Franciscans and Spanish officials demanded that natives produce soup bowls with flat, wide lips, unlike the shape of traditional Puebloan bowls. Pueblo potters occasionally produced candlesticks, chalices, and cups-and-saucers to grace the tables of colonialists. In addition to new forms, design choices were expanded in response to Spanish influence. For a period of time, designs, such as curvilinear floral motifs and rosettes appeared alongside traditional designs on pots.



Railroads & Tourists

The expansion of the intercontinental railroad into the region ended the relative isolation of the Pueblos and led to economic transformations that had profound consequences for pottery production. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad reached Santa Fe in 1880, bringing commercial goods and increasing numbers of visitors to the region. This railroad company created an advertising campaign to entice tourists to visit the Southwest. Their posters incorporated images of the beautiful desert landscape with dramatic mesas and the Grand Canyon, as well as 'exotic' Indians and their crafts. In the late 19th century, a decline in rainfall and crop yields forced the Pueblos to participate more intensively in the American economy. Tourists via the railroads presented new opportunities to make money in order to survive extreme natural and economic change.



Wares for Sale

Pueblo potters began producing pieces for sale in this new market, while the nearby Navajo sold textiles like the remnants in the bottom of the case) and other goods. Some potters made vessels with traditional designs. For instance, the double-spouted vessel, or wedding vase, to the right is an older form (albeit modified) that tourists coveted. In the postcard reproduction behind, Native Americans are shown carrying traditional jars on their heads to a train depot and selling them to disembarking tourists.



American Expansion

By the early 19th century, the Southwest played a critical role in trade between the United States and Mexico. Goods and people traveled to the region along the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri. Puebloans obtained new vessels from the traders, which reduced production of traditional pottery. As knowledge about the Pueblos spread, private collectors, as well as museums in the U.S. and Europe, began to collect Pueblo pottery on a large scale. The Bureau of American Ethnology, a U.S. government agency, launched expeditions to study the Pueblos and collect objects for the Smithsonian. Since, it was assumed that native cultures would vanish as their members were assimilated into American society, it was considered imperative to study their cultures and collect their material goods.



Fred Harvey: Before Motels & McDonald's

Tourists bought Puebloan goods at train stations, as well as Fred Harvey shops. Fred Harvey was an entrepreneur who established restaurants, shops, and hotels along the railroad lines in the west to entice visitors to the region. In 1902, Harvey opened the Indian Building at the Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque. At the museum, a postcard reproduction shows the Indian Building's store filled with Native American goods (some from as far away as the Northwest Coast). Native artists also demonstrated their crafts in front of this building.



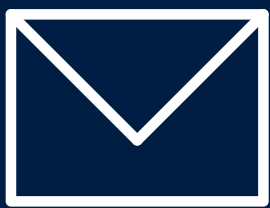
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