

## The Women Who Made Mesa Possible

When I think of a famous woman from Mesa, I think of a group of women, those of the Hohokam tribe. Mesa would not exist without them. This is Mesa, it is the desert, it was almost impossible to live here. But the Hohokam made it possible and that's why we live here today. The Hohokam dug canals from the Salt River with just sticks and rocks. The water brought life to the hot desert. "Life in the desert, no doubt, revolved around the ebb and flow of water" (The Hohokam). I imagine being a woman of the Hohokam...

I'm sitting at the bottom of the canal, I look up, I see the sun. Right next to me is my stick, I pick it up and start loosening the dirt so I can dig and scoop with my rock paddle. I check how deep it is with my donut rock which I've attached a rope to. The top of the rope reaches level ground, it is deep enough. I'm done. I want to run and shout that I finished but my legs are aching so I slowly walk to the tribe's home. I was all alone. All I had was the sun right above me. I'm humming a tune when I see the adobe walls in sight. I begin to run, still tired, but I am proud that I helped my tribe finish the canal. Now the water can reach our crops. We were growing corn, squash, and beans (Nobel, et al. 4). Everyone in my tribe is helping out. Some are farming by the canales, it's cooler there with the mist and the light breeze, and some are gathering from our crops.

Right now I am gathering corn and squash with my sister so we can prepare dinner. We bring the food inside to grind. Inside it's cooler thanks to my grandfather who built our house. It's not just my family's house, it's our whole tribe's home. It's a four story home built from the rock and sand around us. They made a special mixture and plastered the walls (The

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Hohokam). When me and my sister get comfortable, we start grinding the corn for dinner. We use a bowl made of rock and smash the pieces with a rounded rock. Me and my sister are tired but we must keep grinding so we can eat.

After dinner if there is any sun we work on our crafts. My sister is weaving some clothing with some cotton we picked. I am making a bowl. I have already dug out some clay from the ground. I added some water and sand to make the clay just right. I coiled up the clay to make the shape. Then I used my paddle and a round rock to make it smooth. It takes a long time to make it smooth so while I wait I am thinking about the designs I am going to paint on it before I put it in the fire to make it hard. (The Hohokam)

After imaging a day in the life of a woman from the Hohokam, I hope you can tell how important the women of this tribe are to Mesa. This group of women made it possible to live here. They dug the canals so Mesa could have water and people could survive. Thanks to them we can live in this desert.

### Resources

Noble, David G., et al. *The Hohokam Ancient People of the Desert*. School of American Research Press, 1991.

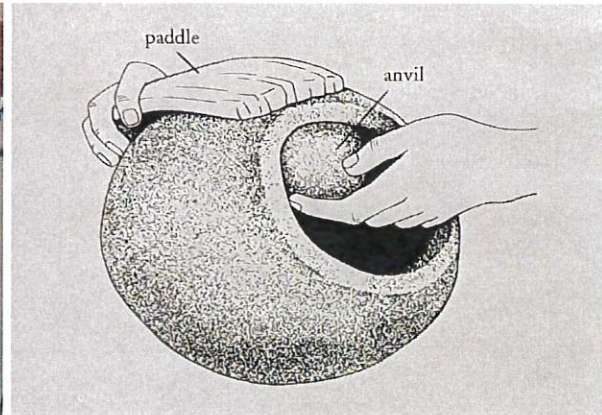
The Hohokam: The Land and the People. The Pueblo Grande Museum, Phoenix.

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## Images



Canal building tools



Making pottery



Grinding food



Site of the housing ruins