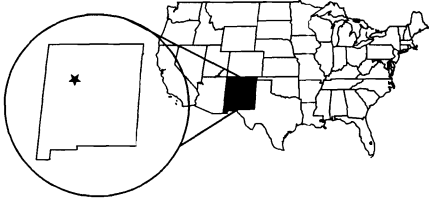


## ZIA PUEBLO OF THE KERES



*Pueblo* means “village” in Spanish, but for Native Americans it describes villages with a specific type of architecture: the multi-family, multi-story structures built by certain tribes in the southwestern United States. Six main nations are considered “Pueblo Indians”: the Hopi of

Arizona, the Zuñi of the New Mexico-Arizona border regions, and the four tribes along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico—the Tiwa, Tewa, Towa, and Keres (ENAT, 206-209).

The Pueblo of Zia is part of the Keres Nation. This pueblo has been occupied continuously since about 1250 A.D. (*Welcome to the Pueblo of Zia*, Pueblo of Zia, pamphlet, n.d.). The current Zia Pueblo Reservation comprises about 118,000 acres (AID, 42) approximately 35 miles northwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. From this pueblo came New Mexico’s very recognizable state emblem, the Zia sun symbol.



Dr. Harry Mera, designer of New Mexico’s flag, was a physician and an anthropologist at the Museum of Anthropology in Santa Fe. His design was inspired by a pot on display in the museum (Leslie Linthicum, “Native Sun”, article from an unidentified magazine, n.d.). That pot, made by an anonymous Zia potter in the late 1800s, featured a circle of white ringed in red with three rays emanating from each of the four cardinal directions. In the center were two triangular eyes and a rectangular mouth in black. Mera simplified the design into the red ring with four rays that forms the striking symbol of New Mexico today. In 1925, New Mexico adopted Mera’s burgundy sun on a field of gold as its state flag.

To the Zia people the sun design is an ancient symbol. It reflects tribal philosophy with its wealth of pantheistic spiritualism teaching the basic harmony of all things in the universe (*The Zia Sun Symbol*, State of New Mexico, pamphlet, n.d.). To the Zia, four is a sacred number, as it is to many other Native American peoples. It recalls the four directions, the four seasons, the phases of the day (sunrise, noon, evening, and night), and the four stages of life (childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age). Four also signifies the number most often used by the “Giver of all Good Gifts”. The Zia believe that man has four sacred obligations—to develop a strong body, a clear mind, a pure spirit, and a devotion to the well-being of his people.

To celebrate their link with the prime symbol of the state in which they live, the Zia have adopted a white flag featuring the red Zia sun symbol exactly as it appears on the state flag (Letter, Stanley Pino, Governor, Pueblo of Zia, 21 Mar. 1995). Above the Zia sun arches the black inscription “PUEBLO OF ZIA” and a black border surrounds the flag (drawing provided by the Office of the Governor, Pueblo of Zia). The combination of red, white, and black recall the work of that anonymous potter of over a century ago. ☛