

This art spread rapidly and ~~many~~ silver ornaments of many kinds were made between the years 1850 to 1880 when the first Turquoise was set in silver. The silver was obtained by melting U.S. silver coins, until 1890 when the Gov. forbid such use. Then the Hawaiians switched to Mexican Pesos.

In addition to the usual bracelets, rings, conchas, silver plaques which are strung on a leather belt, beads, necklaces of several types, there were some unusual pieces. ~~Small tobacco containers~~

Powder measures, to day are very rare for they were never made after guns with regular ammunition appeared. Small tobacco containers, beautifully made.

Silver Bells - frequently made for women to wear hung from their belts to notify their sons-in-law of their approach.

Silver head stalls for brides. Many of these were ornamented and highly prized by all young men.

The Process

FORGE

The Navaho forge is a square structure made of staves and adobe mud, placed at a convenient height with the rear slightly elevated. There were tubes, for air, in the early days made of two grooved pieces of wood lined ~~inside & out~~ with mud, and fitted together. To-day, of course, ^a countless variety of tubing is easily available.

Bellows.

The early bellows were made of a sheepskin sack about 18" in diameter. It was held distended by hoops of willow twigs. One end of ^{the} bellows was secured to a nozzle & fitted into one of the tubes leading to the firebox in the forge. The other end was closed by tacking ~~into~~ it to a round disk of wood which had a leather valve in the center, and 2 extending arms. The longer arm projected downward.

Though one of the early chroniclers mentions Navaho wearing silver in 1795. This does not mean that it was Navaho made. In all probability it was purchased, ^{Tolow} or traded for with the Spanish People or Mexican People.

The earliest known Silver smith was Atsidi Sani. Through the research of Mr. John Adair for his classic book "Navaho - Pueblo Silver Smiths" information was obtained from a nephew of this man. Atsidi Sani learned the craft of ironmonger from a Mexican who lived near Fort Taylor in about 1860.

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Atsidi Sani learned how to make bridle bits and this craft he taught to his sons. It was until the return of the Navaho from Ft Sumner in 1868 - that he learned to work in silver. There is no record of any silver jewelry having been made at Ft Sumner, but there they did make bracelets of brass or copper.