

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Old Oraibi

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER 3 mi. west of Oraibi on Arizona Rte. 264

Hopi Indian Reservation

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Old Oraibi

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Arizona

CODE  
04COUNTY  
NavajoCODE  
017**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Hopi Tribe (Current Vice Chairman: Alvin Dashee)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Hopi Tribal Council

CITY, TOWN

Oraibi

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arizona

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION --Continued**

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC Southwest Title Plant, Bureau of Indian Affairs

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Suite 1000, First National Bank Bldg., 5301 Central Ave., NE.

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico 87108

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Old Oraibi is located on a southwestward spur of the Third Mesa between Dinnebito Wash and Oraibi Wash on the Hopi Indian Reservation in the dry climate and vegetation zone of the uplands of northern Arizona. Old Oraibi is almost deserted and largely in ruins. The sandstone and wood buildings have deteriorated considerably in the abandoned parts of town. The southeastern portion has long been abandoned and is nearly entirely in ruins. The northwestern part, still occupied by the Hopis, consists of houses in a fairly good state of repair.

As of 1970, the population of Old Oraibi was about 100. In 1930, the 150 people living at Old Oraibi constituted about 1/17 of the total Hopi population at the time. This 1930 figure represented a considerable decrease from the 750 Oraibians living in the town in 1905. About 905, or nearly half, of the 2000 Hopi in 1890 lived at Oraibi, which was a large and important Hopi town at the time. The 1745 population estimate of nearly 11,000 Hopis suggests that 4,000 or 5,000 people probably lived in 18th century Oraibi. Between 1775 and 1780, a decrease in the Hopi population from about 7,500 to about 800 because of drought and disease was probably reflected in a similar decrease in the number of Oraibians. The 1680 population of Oraibi was 800, and in 1630 Oraibi was said to have had 14,000 occupants, probably an exaggeration.

A description of Oraibi from a letter by Escalante written in 1775 indicates that the town was "the best formed (of) and larger than any known in the interior provinces." Escalante wrote:

"It (Oraibi) has eleven habitations or blocks of houses quite large and well arranged with streets....It would have about 800 families. They possess good horseherds, droves of sheep, and some cattle. As it has only a small source of good water, over a mile distant to the north of the town, they have constructed, on the mesa itself and very near the houses, six great cisterns in which when it rains and snows much water collects."<sup>1</sup>

In 1882, Oraibi was one of the largest pueblos, containing almost half of the Hopi population, with about 150 houses (each of several rooms) of which

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<sup>1</sup>Escalante, letter dated 10.18/1775, quoted from Reed, Erik K., "Special Report on Oraibi, Arizona," National Park Service, Reg. III, Santa Fe, 1940, ms.

(Continued)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1150 A.D. - present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Oraibi, located on the westernmost of the Hopi mesas, is probably the oldest continuously occupied village in the United States (with the possible exception of Acoma). It is the only one of the early Hopi towns to remain in its original location. Potsherds from trash mounds date the founding of the town back to the 12th century and thus provide a continuous ceramic series for about 800 years from about 1150 A.D. to the present, spanning all of Hopi history from the time it reached its final basic form. Clearly, then, Old Oraibi documents the culture of the Hopi prior to European contact and the reactions of the Hopi to the Spanish arrival as well as the more recent events of Hopi history.

## BACKGROUND OF HOPI DEVELOPMENT

Prior to 900 A.D., Arizona displayed a relative uniformity of culture. However, during the 10th century, various cultural areas became evident and the region of northern Arizona--later to become Hopi country--began to diverge from the general cultural traditions with the use of D-shaped, rather than circular, pit houses. By the 12th century, D-shaped kivas were evident in the area, and by the 13th century, influences from the south and southeast caused the inhabitants of the area to adopt the rectangular kiva, black-on-orange pottery as a replacement for black-on-white wares, and the 3/4-grooved axe. These new traits became characteristic of later stages of Hopi development. The general trend of settlement during the 12th and 13th centuries involved a decrease in the number of pueblos accompanied by an increase in their size. Judging from the pottery and an unpublished tree-ring date of 1290 A.D., Oraibi was probably founded sometime during this period and is thought to have been the only occupied town on the Third Mesa in 1300 A.D. Only excavation could clarify these early periods in the development of Oraibi.

As a result of the great drought of 1276-1299, considerable population shifts occurred in the Southwest. Oraibi must have been influenced by them and, like other Hopi towns, probably grew rapidly by accretion of migrants during the 14th century. The earliest published tree-ring date of 1358± 10 A.D. for Oraibi documents that the town was indeed occupied prior to 1400 A.D.

(Continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Reed, Erik K., Special Report on Oraibi, Arizona, ms, National Park Service, Santa Fe, 1940.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 800 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 2	5 3 3 5 5 0	3 9 7 1 2 5 0	B	1 2	5 3 3 5 5 0	3 9 6 9 0 5 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1 2	5 3 1 6 5 0	3 9 6 9 0 5 0	D	1 2	5 3 1 6 0 0	3 9 7 0 8 0 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Francine Weiss, Archeologist, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION  
Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE  
10/9/75

STREET & NUMBER  
1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE  
202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN  
Washington

STATE  
D.C. 20240

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

3/4/77

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

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Old Oraibi

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Hopi Agency  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Keams Canyon, Arizona

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only 6 were vacant. Most of these houses are vacant now, and many are still standing though gradually disintegrating. There are also ruins and foundations of older houses and large trash mound deposits. Ruins of the mission church of Oraibi, destroyed in 1680, undoubtedly could be located by archeological excavations unless covered by recent houses.

Old Oraibi consists of seven discontinuous north/south house rows. The houses--generally of masonry construction--all face generally east and rose to three or four stories on their western sides. Each house row consists of two or three continuous groups, separated usually only by the space of approximately one house. The roads are all unpaved. The north/south streets between the house rows are in general rather narrow. Irregularities of arrangement and unusually large gaps between house groups produce a few enclosed courts, each with four or more openings. There is "city planning" at Oraibi only in a rough way, and the plan which exists was apparently not for defensive purposes.

The kivas at Oraibi are rectangular, subterranean structures. A ladder through their flat stoned roofs gives the Hopis access to them. They are generally situated in enclosed courts and between the southeastern corner of the village and the edge of the mesa. In 1882, there were thirteen kivas in Oraibi, more than in any other Hopi village. Each kiva was associated with a different clan. These structures have largely disintegrated and fallen in except for the few still in use or recently in use.

Old Oraibi is a very traditional Hopi town. There is no electricity. The few more modern structures, such as a cinderblock house, are of a small scale and do not radically compromise the integrity of the whole. Certain aspects of the lifestyle of the present-day Old Oraibians probably are very similar to those of their ancestors.

The arts and crafts of the present town of Old Oraibi include decorative wicker basketry, plaited and twilled utility basketry, heavy unpainted household pottery, weaving and silversmithing. Subsistence is largely based on agriculture, supplemented by groceries purchased from the trading post, by sheep and cattle, and by hunting. Aboriginal crops include maize, pumpkins and beans, while crops introduced by the Spaniards include peaches, chile, melons, and onions. The corn fields are located along the bottoms of washes, utilizing floodwater, with some against the cliffs along the valley edges utilizing underground seepage.

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The Oraibians govern their own village independently from the other Hopi towns. Past experiences have made them wary of non-Indian visitors, and a sign at the entrance to the village clearly prohibits non-Indians from entering because of previous exhibitions of disrespect for Hopi culture. Thus, although a brief car tour by a Hopi tribesman was allowed, much of the information used in the preparation of this form had to be taken from the Park Service's 1940 Special Report on Oraibi by Erik Reed. Neither sketch maps nor new photos could be obtained during the brief tour.

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During the 14th-16th centuries, the rectangular kivas, 3/4-grooved axes, and flexed burials continued, but changes in pottery style became manifest. The gray utility ware (plain and corrugated) used from 500 to 1300 was replaced by a yellow ware; and the decorated wares changed from the black-on-orange type to Jeddito Black-on-yellow and its variants, including polychromes such as the black and white and/or red-on-yellow wares. Hopi culture took shape in the early 13th century and has continued with relatively little change except for the addition of European elements such as metal, glass, and certain crops and domestic animals. Old Oraibi, with its beginnings in the 12th century, is the only Hopi town of such an early date to remain occupied and is thus the only town which covers the entire span of Hopi culture from the time it first took its final basic form.

HISTORY OF ORAIBI

The history of Old Oraibi followed that of the Hopi villages in general, with some local differences because of its western location. The first accounts of Oraibi date from Spanish records of the 1500's. The town was probably visited by Tovar and Cardenas in 1540, by Espejo in 1583, and by Onate in 1598 and 1604. In 1540, there were seven Hopi towns of which Oraibi was the westernmost, but by 1598 only five remained because of the abandonment of Kawaioku and Sikyatki. At about 1600 A.D., Oraibi was said to have had a population of 14,000, probably an exaggeration.

Although the five Hopi towns rendered submission to Spain in 1598 (at Awatovi), actual Spanish control and occupation did not occur until 1629 when three missions, under four priests, were established in Hopi country. Two friars were stationed at the Mission of San Francisco de Oraibi, and they maintained control, despite occasional trouble, until 1680. In 1680, however, the Great Pueblo Rebellion claimed the lives of the four priests in Hopi towns, including the two at Oraibi. Neither Catholicism nor Spanish civil government succeeded in regaining any real measure of control over the Hopi. In 1692, the Spanish under de Vargas were again able to receive submission of the Hopi at Awatovi, but none of the other Hopi towns complied. Indeed, the traditional Hopi allegedly expressed their displeasure of the return of Spanish control to Awatovi by destroying the town in 1700. It is possible that some of the Hopi attackers of Awatovi came from Oraibi.

For 65 years after the Pueblo Rebellion, Oraibi apparently did not receive any Spanish visitors although there was occasional contact and trouble in some of the other Hopi towns. Then, in 1745, a Franciscan monk visited Oraibi in an unsuccessful attempt to convert the Hopi. Another visit by a different priest in 1755 resulted in no greater success. In 1776, the explorer-priests Garces and Escalante likewise did not succeed in

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converting any Hopi. Between 1775 and 1780, the Hopi population dropped radically from about 7,500 to about 800 as a result of drought and disease. When Governor Anza visited Oraibi in 1780 to aid and convert them during that problem time, he was able to convince about 30 Hopi families, mainly from Oraibi, to move to the Rio Grande. At the time of Anza's visit, Oraibi consisted of 40 families. Thus, the 18th century was in general a period of strong Hopi resistance to Catholicism and to the few and feeble attempts at control by the Spanish civil and religious governments, in contrast to the temporary period of Spanish control during the 17th century. Spanish efforts appear to have ceased after 1780, for there is little mention of the Hopi from that time until 1820.

From 1821 to 1846, the Hopi country was ruled by Mexico, but in reality the Hopis had little contact with the Mexican government. Aside from droughts which plagued the Hopi from 1820 till the end of 1860, raids and attacks by the Navajo constituted the main feature of Hopi history during the first part of the 19th century until the 1860's when the Navajo were defeated by Col. Carson and the First New Mexico Volunteers.

In 1834, the Hopi received their first visit from Americans--two companies of fur traders who killed several Indians and destroyed Hopi gardens. In the 1850's and 1860's, the Hopi received other visits from American civil and military men. In 1870, an American agent was appointed and stationed in Hopi country. During the mid-1800's, the Hopi also established friendly relations with the Mormons through Jacob Hamblin, a Mormon visitor from the northwest, who attempted in 1865 to convince the people of Oraibi to move to Utah. Although his attempt at persuasion did not cause any immediate moves, in the 1870's a number of Hopi from Oraibi established the settlement of Moenkopi near the Mormon town of Tuba City.

During the 19th century, the history of Oraibi varied little from the history of other Hopi towns with regard to its relations with Mexico and America. Because of its western location, however, Oraibi may have suffered most from Navajo raids, and may have had the least amount of contact with government men and the most amount with the Mormons.

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From 1870 on, the history of Old Oraibi has been one of scattering to new sites--of gradual dwindling and abandonment. Factional differences, concerning, among other points, Hopi attendance at government schools, allegedly settled by a tug-of-war contest over a still evident line carved in a stone at Old Oraibi, caused the losers--the conservatives--to move and found the city of Hotevilla in 1906. In 1912, other differences initiated a move from Hotevilla and resulted in the founding of Bacabi. Meanwhile, from 1893 on, the Old Oraibi population was moving steadily down from the mesa top to New (or Lower) Oraibi at the foot of the mesa, which was originally established as a farming village but has grown and become a year-round village since the early 1900's.

At the present, Old Oraibi has a small population of about 100 people who live mainly in the northwestern portion of the village. It is a traditional village which governs itself independently from other Hopi villages. Previous experiences of the villagers with non-Indians who did not respect their culture have caused them to prohibit access by non-Indians into Old Oraibi.

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Refer to the USGS map for a clarification of the boundary description. Beginning at a point about .1 mile east of the west section line of Sec. 29, T. 29 N., R. 16 E., and .05 mile north of the south section line of Sec. 29 on the southern right-of-way of State Route 264, the boundary proceeds south about 1.05 miles, then east about 1.2 miles, then north about 1.25 miles to its intersection with the southern right-of-way of State Route 264, then west along the southern right-of-way of 264 about 1.4 miles to the point of beginning.

The boundary includes the village itself, the cisterns, the tug-of-war marker, etc. (i.e. the spur of the mesa on which the town was built) plus some of the lowland area which has been used for farming throughout the centuries of Oraibi's occupation. Basically, the boundary is determined by lines which enclose this mesa spur, the talus slope and terraces of the mesa which undoubtedly contain cultural refuse, and a portion of the culturally relevant farmland utilized by both the ancient and current inhabitants of the valley.