The Hopi People

Ancestral Pueblans, ancestors of the Hopi people, inhabited the area from A.D. 200 through 1600. The Homol’ovi villages just northeast of present-day Winslow were at peak activity in the 1300s. Inhabitants mastered techniques for growing corn in the high desert, which they traded for pottery with the Pueblo villages on the mesas to the north. They likely migrated there along the Palatkwapi Trail at the end of the 14th century. The land they left behind now constitutes Homolovi State Park. In 1882, the federal government established the Hopi Reservation on those northern mesas, which are a one-hour drive from Winslow.

The Navajo People

The Athabaskans, hunter-gatherer ancestors of the Navajo people, likely came to the area from northern Canada in the 1400s. By the 1700s Navajos, or Diné (The People), were building wooden homes called hogans, growing crops, tending sheep, and trading with others on the Colorado Plateau. In the winter of 1864, the federal government forced nearly 9,000 Navajos on the “Long Walk” to desolate Fort Sumner at Bosque Redondo, New Mexico Territory. Over 2,500 died from starvation and exposure, and more died from deplorable conditions at the fort. In 1868, the survivors returned from their imprisonment to the newly established Navajo Reservation, created from a small portion of their original lands. They stopped at Fort Defiance along the way to pick up thousands of sheep and goats provided by the federal government for resettlement. They crossed the Little Colorado River, which the Navajo called Béésh, and entered the Navajo Reservation, which borders Winslow to the north, is now the largest tribal entity in the United States in both area and population.

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