Anasazi

The Ancient Ones

from

Mystic Lands Series

catalog # 3326

Published & Distributed by...

AGC/UNITED LEARNING

1560 Sherman Avenue
Suite 100
Evanston, IL 60201
1-800-323-9084

Website: http://www.agcunitedlearning.com
E-Mail: info@agcunited.com
Mystic Lands, a 13-part documentary series, takes the viewers on an incomparable journey of discovery to some of the world’s most unique spiritual places. From the cloud-shrouded majesty of Peru’s Machu Picchu to the pagoda-studded plains of Myanmar’s Bagan, and from the architectural grandeur of India’s Taj Mahal to the simplicity of a rural Haitian village’s vodou hounfor (temple), Mystic Lands explores the allure of these sacred spaces and vividly documents their continued powerful influence on the daily lives of countless believers. The Mystic Lands series, in its artistic blending of the past and present, details the legends, mysteries, history, and facts that surround these great spirit lands of the world. Intended for grades 9-12, the series highlights the “living faith” embodied in the architecture, expressive arts, contemporary spiritual practices, lifestyle, people, and cultures that surround these spiritual sites today.

Through worldwide, on-location, live-action video, original illustrations, maps, excerpts and translations of sacred writings and oral traditions, as well as interview footage, Mystic Lands acquaints the viewers with the world’s “sacred geography,” identifying the mystical sites, temples, holy cities, places of pilgrimage, prophets, gods and beliefs that have molded the world’s diverse spiritual traditions. Mystic Lands is narrated by acclaimed actor Edward James Olmos and features original music by international recording artist Chris Spheeris.

Programs in this series are ideal for use in multi-cultural studies. Viewers will gain an appreciation for cultural diversity and become more globally conscious through learning about religious differences, how other societies relate to the natural world, and lifestyles totally different than their own.
Titles in the series include:

**Anasazi - The Ancient Ones**
The mysteries of the Anasazi culture from America’s southwest desert unfold through their myths and legends. Sunbaked ruins, broken pottery sherds, elaborate road systems, ceremonial great houses and kivas weave an amazing tale of the spiritual life of this great Native-American culture.

**Australia - Dreamtime**
The legends, ceremonies, songs, dances, sacred beliefs, and aspects of everyday life of Australia’s indigenous Aboriginal Anangu and Tiwi tribes are explored. These native people see the landscape as a living embodiment of the myths and stories of their creation—an age of legendary heroes called “the Dreamtime.”

**Bali - Island Of A Thousand Temples**
On the magical island paradise of Bali, religion and spirits blend themselves into all aspects of Balinese life. The Balinese spiritual beliefs are richly expressed through their arts. Delicate weavings, intricate carvings, vivid paintings and imaginative dances are an integral part of Balinese life.

**Bhutan - Land Of The Thunder Dragon**
In this secluded Himalayan Kingdom, Buddhism is not just a religion; it is a way of life. From fluttering prayer flags to the rhythmic spin of prayer wheels, worship to Lord Buddha permeates every aspect of life in Bhutan.

**Burma - Triumph Of The Spirit**
Burma (Myanmar) is a devout Buddhist nation struggling to find its way in today’s post-industrial world. This reclusive country, graced by golden pagodas and teak temples, is considered one of the last magical destinations in the Orient. The spiritual life of Burma is explored through its historic religious sites.

**Egypt - Cycle Of Life**
Rising from the windswept desert sands along the banks of the life-giving Nile, the great pyramids of Egypt rise to the heavens—eternal monuments in stone to the pharaohs’ quest for immortality. This program delves into the complex culture of Ancient Egypt and its rich spiritual traditions.
Greece - Isle Of Revelation
From the majestic Athenian Acropolis to the cloud-shrouded top of Mount Olympus, Greek ruins dot an epic landscape. Greece was once home to a powerful pantheon of gods, but a new religion, a legacy of the historic visits of the Christian disciples John and Paul, shattered the old myths and still shapes the faith of Greece today.

Haiti - Dance Of The Spirit
Dispelling the myths and preconceptions that surround the practice of Vodou, this provocative episode dramatically explores the truth and beauty of mystical Haitian Vodou spirituality through fantastic dance and fire ceremonies.

Jerusalem - Mosaic Of Faith
Claimed by three living religions, Jerusalem is perhaps the most spiritually charged city in the world. The historic and mystic roots of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism unfold in an exploration of this ancient city of faith.

Maya - Messages In Stone
The mysterious cities of the Maya–Tikal, Chichen Itza, and Palenque–are explored, focusing on the legends, history and facts derived from the “rock records” left by the ancient Maya. Human sacrifice is explained through Maya religious beliefs.

Peru - Kingdom In The Clouds
Considered to be the most significant archaeological site on the South American continent, Machu Picchu was built and then abandoned by the Inca after only 100 years. The influence of the Inca spiritual beliefs on their lifestyle, architecture and astronomical achievements will be explored in the ruins of Machu Picchu and the spiritual centers of Peru’s Sacred Valley, including Ollantaytambo and Pisac.

Taj Mahal - Heaven On Earth
Located in Agra, India, the Taj Mahal is a complex of gardens, mosques, and minarets constructed as a tribute to Shah Jahan’s wife, Mumtaz Mahal, after her death. In his grief, Shah Jahan vowed to build the most beautiful tomb that ever existed. The spiritual motivations behind the building of the Taj Mahal and the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri will be highlighted.
Varanasi - City Of Light
Located on the banks of India’s great river Ganges, Varanasi is considered by Hindus to be the holiest place on earth. The eternal city of Varanasi has been a center of enlightenment and civilization for more than 2,000 years. The spiritual and cultural aspects of the Hindu faith continue to define this sacred city. Rituals and beliefs surrounding death by cremation and the end of the cycle of reincarnation will be explored.

Each program in the Mystic Lands series includes one video, the average length is approximately 25 minutes; a Teacher’s Guide with lesson plans, suggested student activities, Internet listings, and script; and a set of reproducible blackline masters for classroom use.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES
It is suggested that you preview the video and review the teacher’s guide before involving your students in the lesson activities. In this way you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt them to the needs of your students. You may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions or additions to fit the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program to your students will they obtain the maximum benefits afforded by the materials.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place before the entire group under your supervision. The lesson activities grow out of the content of the video; therefore, the presentation should be a common experience for all students.
ANASAZI - The Ancient Ones
from the Mystic Lands Series
Viewing Time: 25 minutes
Grades 9-12

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION
OF THE PROGRAM

In the remote desert landscape of the American Southwest, among its vast plateaus, sun-scorched mesas, deep, jagged canyons, and sheer cliff faces, the Anasazi once constructed their dwellings, prayed to their gods, nurtured their families, celebrated their rituals, and created their lifeway. Today, the sunbaked, crumbling ruins of Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and Canyon de Chelly, bear silent, yet powerful, witness to "those who came before."

Anasazi is a Navajo word whose translation is open to several slightly different variations including, ancient strangers, the alien ancient ones, the ancient ones, the ancient enemy, and those who were before us. The Anasazi have no association with present-day Navajo people. Archaeologists have chosen to use the Navajo word for these early settlers because they do not know what they actually called themselves.

The Anasazi culture reached its peak in the Four Corners region—where the borders of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah meet—from approximately 900 A.D. to 1300 A.D. Little is known about the Anasazi origins or their demise. Ancient legends suggest that the original Anasazi climbed out of the lower world (or third world) through a hole in the sky, relocating to the deserts and mesas of the fourth world. Another mythical version suggests that they entered through a sipapu, a shallow round hole located in the floor of a ceremonial kiva. It is believed that they left behind an evil world in search of a better existence.

The reasons for the abrupt "disappearance" of the Anasazi remain shrouded in mystery and speculation. The Anasazi left behind a legacy of oral traditions, crumbling cliff dwellings, pictographs and petroglyphs which are now just starting to reveal the scope of the achievements, strivings, and visions of this great Native-American civilization. Some scholars believe that the Anasazi were part of a great trade network that stretched from the Pacific Ocean to north-central Mexico. Their sunbaked ruins, broken pottery sherds, elaborate road
systems, ceremonial great house and kivas, rock art, and ancient lore weave an amazing tale of the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of the Anasazi.

Religious belief and practice infused every aspect of life for the Anasazi, as it continues to do today for many of their Pueblo descendants. The kivas, or ceremonial chambers, were gathering places for ritual activity. There were ceremonies attached to every activity from harvesting to road-making, from hospitality to controlling the forces of nature. The gods and spirits were called on through rituals and ceremonies to exercise their powers—grant blessings, provide protection, heal and restore.

In this program, shot on location in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, the mystical ruins of Canyon de Chelly, Mesa Verde, and Chaco Canyon, all great cultural centers of the Anasazi, are highlighted. The Anasazi lifeway is explored through its ancient myths, rituals, spiritual traditions, ceremonial kivas, and rock art. Interviews with contemporary Native Americans who live near the ruins will add insight into the ancient Anasazi culture, as well as provide an understanding of their own contemporary spiritual beliefs.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

The overall goals of this program are to…

- Introduce the viewers to significant cultural and sacred sites of the Anasazi including Cliff Palace, Chaco Canyon and Canyon de Chelly.

- Explore the lifeway of the Anasazi through their architecture, myths, spiritual traditions, and art.

**USES OF THE PROGRAM**

This program can be used in a variety of ways and in different courses of study. The lesson activities focus on the following:

- Cultural Studies
- Religion
- Geography
- History

A thematic approach is suggested, but not required, in order to achieve the student objectives and thereby accomplish the program goals.
STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing Anasazi - The Ancient Ones and participating in the lesson activities, the students should be able to...

• Explain why Chaco Canyon is considered the spiritual center of the Anasazi world.

• Discuss the Anasazi origin legend and explain its possible relationship to the abrupt "disappearance" of the Anasazi.

• Discuss the significance of both the kiva and the sipapu for the Anasazi and their Pueblo descendants.

• Discuss theories regarding the disappearance of the Anasazi and explain the significance of the Itiwanna as one possible explanation.

• Explain the significance of the Anasazi ruins for the contemporary Pueblo Indians.

INTRODUCING THE VIDEO/BLACKLINE MASTERS

• Map Activity: On a large wall map point out the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. Have students locate the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah.

• Before viewing the video, ask a few leading questions. For example:

1. What do you already know about Anasazi history, religion, creative arts, culture, and/or lifestyle?

2. What do you already know about contemporary Pueblo Indian religion, creative arts, culture, and/or lifestyle?

3. How might learning about a society’s spiritual beliefs and practices make a difference in developing an understanding of its culture?

4. Without a written language, how were a people’s history and traditions passed on and preserved?

5. Why do you think myths and legends have evolved in different cultures and what purpose might they have served?
• Distribute Blackline Masters 1 and 2, Vocabulary Guide. This will help acquaint viewers with some of the unusual terminology used in the video presentation. It is suggested that this list be duplicated and distributed before viewing the program.

• Distribute Blackline Master 3, Viewer's Guide. It is recommended that you duplicate and distribute this before viewing the program. Some questions may require additional reading. Have viewers answer the questions either while watching the video or shortly after the video presentation. You may want to divide the group into smaller units, assign each group certain questions, and share answers with the entire group.

• Present the video. The viewing time is 25 minutes.

• Blackline Master 4, Word Match, allows students to use some of the terms introduced in the video lesson. It can be used as an in-class activity or as a take-home assignment.

• Blackline Master 5, Quiz. This quiz may be taken immediately following the video or at a later date after viewers have participated in other follow-up activities. The quiz is a brief check on what the viewers have retained from this lesson.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Immediately after viewing the video, ask for questions and comments about the content of the video.

• Use Blackline Master 3, Viewer's Guide questions as a basis for a discussion of the information presented in the video. If the discussion leads to details that were not covered in the video, you may want to have the students or groups of students research the subject and report back to the class. An answer key for the Viewer's Guide is provided on page 12 of this teacher's guide. Some additional suggested discussion questions are:

1. What do we know about the ancient road system of Chaco Canyon? Answer: Since the 1970s, nearly 1500 miles of ancient roads have been mapped. They radiate from Chaco Canyon like the spokes of a wheel. Scholars suggest that the roads may have been used for trade, they might have been an expression of spiritual values, or they could have been used as the route pilgrims
followed to the Great Houses and Great Kivas of Chaco. At least seven roads lead to Chaco Canyon. It appears quite certain that generations of Anasazi traveled these roads to and from Chaco. Perhaps they came to pray and worship their gods, perhaps they came on their spiritual odyssey looking for the Itiwanna, their center place.

2. What were some of the difficulties the Anasazi faced in living in the southwest desert?

Answer: Answers will vary. The climate is very difficult arid and hot in the summer, very inhospitable and cold in the winter. The terrain is filled with gorges, river washes, deep ravines, and mesas. Farming is very difficult. Even the indigenous animals, such as the bighorn sheep, find survival in this desert environment very difficult. Rainfall is extremely limited. Finding and maintaining an adequate water supply were constant challenges.

3. According to legend, the Anasazi mysteriously disappeared more than 700 years ago. Can you think of any other civilizations that people believe mysteriously vanished? What do you think happened to these civilizations?

Answers will vary. The Inca, the Mesoamerican civilizations of the Olmec, Aztec, and Maya, the Harappans (India), and Mycenaen (Greece) civilizations are a few examples of civilizations that mysteriously disappeared.

3. Do the Navajo consider the Anasazi ruins a sacred place? Why or why not?

Answer: The Navajo do consider the ruins a sacred place. It is their practice to avoid the ruins even though the ruins of Canyon de Chelly are actually located on Navajo land. The Navajo believe that the spirits of the ancient ones are still in the ruins. The ruins belong to the ancient ones and their spirits are still around and watching what goes on. According to some Navajo, the chindi, spirits of the ancient cliff dwellers, are evil spirits and often come out at night. They can appear in different forms, as a man, bird or animal. Some Navajo believe that the chindi can bring bad dreams, illness and even death to those who see them.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

1. You may choose to assign individuals or groups to research and prepare written or oral reports on the following topics:

• Richard Wetherill, his discovery of Cliff Palace and his extensive exploration of Anasazi ruins. As a self-taught archaeologist, how are his efforts regarded by today’s research community?
Anasazi pottery.

• Chaco Canyon Community—its Great Houses, Great Kivas, and elaborate road system—their design, purpose, and spiritual significance.

• The cultural continuity of the Anasazi and contemporary Pueblo peoples, most specifically as demonstrated in the Hopi and Zuni.

• The effects of tourism and looting on the Anasazi ruins.

• The disappearance of the Anasazi.

• The Anasazi world view as reflected in the architecture of the kiva. In addition or instead, students could draw a diagram of a kiva, labeling all significant features and explaining their symbolic significance.

• Motifs and symbols of the southwestern pictographs and petroglyphs. Rather than a paper or presentation, this could be done as a symbol dictionary.

Work with the school librarian. Have him/her pull books and other resource materials related to different aspects of the culture, history, religion, and/or customs of the Anasazi and Pueblo Indians. If possible, have the materials available in your classroom. Distribute a list of materials available through the school library/media center.

2. Have the students create their own paper pictographs and then share their “rock” story with the class.

3. Have students create a timeline of the Anasazi civilization noting major historical periods, architectural developments, and cultural adaptations.

4. If possible, bring in a archeological resource person from an area museum or college that can describe the role of the archeologist in the discovery and recovery of ancient sites.

5. If possible, make a field trip to a local museum that has a collection of southwestern Native American artifacts.

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. You may choose to assign individuals or groups to research and prepare written or oral reports on the following topics:

• The influences of the natural environment on the character and a culture of a people; in this instance, how the landscape, climate, and overall physical attributes of the southwest desert impacted food, tools, crafts,
architecture, religion, rituals, and/or society of the Anasazi.

- Building orientation as a reflection of the cosmos in the cultures of the New World–Anasazi, Maya, Inca, and/or Aztec.
- Anasazi creation legend. In addition, have students compare and contrast it to the creation legend of another culture.
- “Death by Deforestation” or how the Anasazi land and resource management practices might have contributed to an ecological disaster that led to their eventual "disappearance."
- The Rock Art of the Southwest. In addition, have the students compare and contrast it to other North-American rock art, or to the rock art found on other continents, such as the cave paintings of Lascaux, France or Altamira, Spain, or even Australia’s Aborigine rock art.

2. Have the students imagine they had a chance to visit Cliff Palace, Chaco Canyon or Canyon de Chelly at the time when each center was at its cultural peak. Have them keep a travel journal describing what they saw, felt, and heard as they observed daily life in the community.

3. Have the students create an illustrated map of the cosmos as perceived by such cultures as the Maya, Inca or Navajo.

4. Have students create an Anasazi time capsule for the time before the abandonment of their great centers. Have them explain the reason why each item was chosen for inclusion in the capsule.

5. Compare the lifestyle of a 13th century European peasant to the Anasazi lifestyle of the same time period.

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

This website lists facts about the country’s geography, people, government, economy, transportation, communication, defense forces, and a map. Discuss the differences between this country and others around the world. How do the country’s features contribute to its position within the world economy? Given the background that was in the video, how did the spirituality of Native Americans influence modern America? Locate the Four Corners area where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet–this was the seat of Anasazi civilization.
2. Visit the homepage of the Anasazi People at http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/Bretharte/Anasazi/Anasazihp.html. This page contains links to Anasazi ruins, history, drawings, and astronomy. Use the information presented to surmise what happened to the Anasazi people and what factors led to their disappearance.

3. Access the Anasazi Heritage Center homepage at http://swcolo.org/Tourism/Archaeology/AnasaziHeritageCenter.html. This site includes links to archaeology and Indian cultures. How did Anasazi life compare to modern urban, suburban, and rural life in the United States? How did the way the Anasazi lived influence their spirituality, and vice versa?

ANSWER KEY

Blackline Master 3, Viewer's Guide

1. Who discovered the Cliff Palace Ruins, under what circumstances, and where are they located?
   Answer: In December 1888, rancher Richard Wetherill and his brother-in-law Charlie Mason discovered the Cliff Palace ruins as they were tracking stray cattle on the high mesa above Mancos Valley, Colorado. They stumbled upon the ancient ruins as they worked their way to a rocky ledge in a blinding snowstorm.

2. Who are the descendants of the Anasazi?
   Answer: The Pueblo Indian tribes who now live in the areas south, west and east of the ancient Anasazi ruins claim to be their descendants. Many of today’s Pueblo villages are located near the Jemez and Rio Grande Rivers of New Mexico.

3. What was the territorial extent of the Anasazi civilization?
   Answer: Most of the ruins of the ancient Anasazi villages and cities are scattered across the southwestern part of the United States. The majority are clustered near the adjoining borders of four states—Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico—in an area known as the Four Corners. According to some sources, the domain of the Anasazi, in size actually larger than California, stretched from the Four Corners area to the Las Platas mountain range in the northeast and to the Lukachuckai range in the northwest. The Colorado River courses the western edge of Anasazi. Most Anasazi settlements have been located on the Colorado Plateau, centered around the Four Corners area in the drainage of the Little Colorado and San Juan Rivers.
4. What do the Anasazi descendants believe about the ruins?
   Answer: Many believe that the ruins are still inhabited. As noted in the interview with Peter Pinto, many Pueblo people believe that Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde are still occupied by the spirit world. They believe that these sites possess spiritual power and that prayers made in true connection to the spirit world will be answered. Another contemporary spiritual leader, Joe Santo, noted in his interview that it is believed that the souls of the Pueblo people still exist in the ruins today. Offerings of corn pollen are made to the spirits that remain alive there today.

   The Pueblo people of today rarely enter the ruins, but when they do, it is usually to pray to their ancestors. Even the Navajo tribes who live in the area surrounding Canyon de Chelly believe in the presence of the Anasazi spirits. They consider the canyon a sacred place. They do not go to the ruins, pick up the broken pottery, or in any way disturb the spirits.

5. What forces did the Anasazi worship?
   Answer: They worshipped the powerful forces of nature—the sun, rain, moon. They believed in the sacredness of the earth and referred to it as mother earth. The sun was considered the father and the night father was the moon. They believed that everything had a spirit—humans, animals, rocks, plants. Therefore they believed that everything needed to be treated with respect.

6. What explanation is given for all the broken pottery sherds?
   Answer: Many believe that the pottery was deliberately broken as part of a sacred ritual. In his interview, Peter Pino noted that the pottery was an offering. If the pot was left whole it might have been picked up and taken off to be used by someone else. If the offering pot was broken, there would be nothing left but pottery sherds. The sherds, now of no use to anyone but the spirits, would be left untouched.

7. What are the continuing links between the spiritual beliefs of the Anasazi and the beliefs of today’s Pueblo peoples?
   Answer: The spiritual beliefs of today’s Pueblo peoples and the ancient Anasazi are very similar. One of the strongest links between ancient and contemporary spirituality is the kiva. The Anasazi kivas were ceremonial rooms used for rituals, social gatherings and as work rooms. Today’s Pueblo kivas serve the same purposes. They are considered a religious structure and, as such, both ancient and contemporary kivas remain sacred. The Pueblo Indians still honor the sipapu found in the kivas as shrines to the story of the ancestors’ creation and their death.

8. What is a sipapu and what traditional beliefs are associated with it?
   Answer: The sipapu is a small dusty crater often found towards the center of
Many believe that the sipapu is the birthplace of the Anasazi. According to tradition, the Anasazi came from the underworld through the sipapu, the Place of Emergence. It is also believed that at death the spirit retraces its path and returns to the place of origin. The spirit enters back through the sipapu and into the first level of the world. There the spirit is reassigned into another world.

9. What is the Anasazi origin legend?
Answer: The story of the ancestor’s emergence from the underworld is among the most sacred told by the Pueblo people. Ancient stories tell of an underground world, a parallel dimension from which the Anasazi emerged into this world. In the story there is talk of several different worlds - first, second, third and even fourth worlds. It is believed that the ancestors were often led by some kind of animal as they emerged from each world. Many of the Anasazi descendants believe that the Anasazi came from the underworld through the sipapu. They emerged worshipping light and praying to their father Sun with offerings of sacred cornmeal and pollen.

10. What are some explanations that have been offered to account for the abrupt disappearance of the Anasazi?
Answer: Scientists postulate that a prolonged drought from 1276 to 1299 might have contributed to the Anasazi’s decision to move south. It is believed that they relocated near the Jemez and Rio Grande Rivers of New Mexico. This is the same area where many of today’s Pueblo villages are found. Climatic changes leading to crop failure or significant reduction, deforestation with its resultant erosion, invasion, over population and food shortages are also theories that have been offered as explanations for the Anasazi’s disappearance. The Pueblo descendants have their own explanation. Many of the Pueblo people believe that the Anasazi migrated from one community to another as part of a quest for Itiwanna, their center place. According to the Anasazi migration myth, most cliff dwellings and villages were considered only temporary residences. The Anasazi were on a continual spiritual odyssey that would not end until they found their center place. There is also the theory that the Anasazi entered back through the sipapu to their point of origin, choosing to return to another world, leaving behind their dwellings. Their spirits are said to still inhabit the ruins.

11. Why do many consider Chaco Canyon the spiritual center of the Anasazi world?
Answer: Although the structures were designed to house hundreds of individuals, very few remains of the dead have been found there. This lack of grave sites suggests to many that Chaco was a site of spiritual retreat, a place to
pray, not live. Many believe that the dwellings were meant only as temporary residences. The area around Chaco Canyon is so limited in natural resources, receiving less than 10 inches of rain each year, that the ability to permanently support large populations would seem highly improbable. Since the 1970s nearly 1500 miles of ancient roads have been discovered radiating out from Chaco Canyon. Many believe that the Anasazi might have followed religious leaders along these roads to the Great Houses and kivas of Chaco Canyon.

Blackline Master 4, Word Match
1. G
2. H
3. B
4. E
5. A
6. F
7. I
8. D
9. J
10. C

Blackline Master 5, Quiz
1. Anasazi
2. Cliff Palace
3. kivas
4. Kokopelli, fertility
5. Petroglyphs
6. T
7. T
8. T
9. T
10. T
LIST OF RESOURCES/SUGGESTED READINGS


Roberts, David. ‘Reverse Anthropologists’ are tracing the footsteps of a cowboy explorer (Richard Wetherill) Smithsonian December, 1993, pp. 28-38.


SCRIPT OF RECORDED NARRATION

It is a land without time–a deserted landscape carved with desolate canyons and painted in natural colors.

Among the vast plateaus and sheer cliffs of America’s arid Southwest, a great culture once thrived. Today, its ancient cities lie in ruin, shrouded in mystery.

Legends suggest the people who built these stone cities virtually disappeared more than 700 years ago.

Many of the secrets behind their departure remain, some locked among crumbled fortress walls forever. But to their descendants, it is a spiritual story carried through generations, a sacred tale of the ancient ones.

On a snowy December day in 1888, American rancher Richard Wetherill and his brother-in-law, Charley Mason, rode on horseback to the high mesa above Mancos Valley, Colorado.

A stiff wind cut through the treacherous canyons and granite crevasses. Each man knew the deadly power of a blizzard.
As nightfall approached, the ranchers worked their way toward a rocky ledge in search of stray cattle. What they found instead changed their lives forever.

The remains of a great stone city appeared through the blinding snowfall like a mirage. And in that moment, legends of an ancient civilization became reality.

Their discovery became known as the Cliff Palace Ruins.

Before Wetherill and Mason found the Cliff Palace Ruins, stories of a lost civilization filled the folklore of the American west. Today’s Navajo Indian tribe refers to the people of this legendary civilization as the Anasazi, which means the ancient ones.

Pueblo Indian tribes who now live to the south, west and east of the Anasazi ruins have long claimed to be descendants, yet that intriguing connection was ignored for decades.

Europeans who settled near here in the 19th century were slow to believe in the oral histories of the Pueblo or the Navajo. Like Wetherill, scholars and historians wanted proof.

Who were these remarkable people and what inspired their architectural achievements?

In the century since the discovery of Cliff Palace, the ruins of thousands of ancient dwellings have been uncovered and explored.

The ancient villages and cities now attributed to the Anasazi are scattered across the southwestern part of the United States. Most are clustered near the adjoining borders of four states—Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, in the region known as Four Corners.

The civilization stretched from the scenic Las Platas mountain range in the northeast to the Lukachuckai range in the northwest. Although the mighty Colorado River courses the western edge of the Anasazi world, most ruins have been uncovered in the barren, dry lands to the east on what is known as the Colorado Plateau.

The ruins of the Anasazi vary greatly in size, from simple earthen structures to elaborate communities, such as the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, Colorado, the Towers of Hovenweep in Utah, the solitary ruins
of Arizona’s Canyon de Chelly, and the mysterious assembly of more than 30 stone villages that riddle New Mexico’s Chaco Canyon.

No one knows how many Anasazi people once lived in the Four Corners area. But archeologists estimate that as many as 30,000 Anasazi once populated the valley between Hovenweep and Mesa Verde, more than five times the number of people who live here today.

Most scholars believe the civilization lasted for more than a millennium, from roughly 100 A.D. to 1300 A.D. However, it appears the end of the civilization came quickly. Many of its cities were seemingly abandoned in less than 100 years. Yet some Pueblo leaders, such as Peter Pino, believe the ruins are still inhabited.

"Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde are still occupied by the spirit world of the Pueblo people, so they’re both spiritual and they have a lot of spiritual power for people that go to those sites with all three in unison with one another. Like again, that’s the mind, the heart and the body. And if you go into those sites with prayers that are really connected to the spirit world, they’ll be answered."

Joe Sando is a Pueblo spiritual leader.

"Well, we believe that the souls of the Pueblo people still exist today. And when we go to those places, we take out our corn pollen and offer it to the spirit that is alive there yet to us."

For many who visit the ruins, there is little proof of a spiritual power beyond a feeling and a sense of wonder.

Here, in this desolate region of North America, was a civilization that rivaled the Maya and Inca cultures to the south. But the Anasazi left behind little evidence of their culture beyond the crumbled cities and villages found around Four Corners. Some of their knowledge was passed to descendants through oral traditions, yet for most of the world, their story is only beginning to unfold.

For more than 700 years, the stone ruins of the Anasazi have been uninhabited, their treasures of the spirit lost, hidden or buried under the sands of time.

The natural forces that plagued the Anasazi still remain. While they coped with the hazards of winter, they worshipped the powerful forces
of summer–sun, life-giving rain, and the changing moon. Pueblo leader, Peter Pino:

"Everything has a spirit. A rock, a tree, humans, animals. As a result, we treat everything with respect. We know that there is a source of being beyond what the eyes see. The sacredness of the earth, we refer to as mother earth. We have the sun, that’s the father, and the father that comes out at night is the moon."

Reverence for the sun and moon can be interpreted from the only known writings of the Anasazi, stone carvings called petroglyphs. Some petroglyphs are easy to understand, others defy explanation. The dancing flute player, known as the Kokopelli, is still meaningful to the Anasazi’s descendants who believe it symbolizes fertility.

Leon Skyhorse, a Navajo guide in Canyon de Chelly, interprets the spiritual beliefs of the Anasazi from petroglyphs found on canyon walls.

"They believed in the sun and the stars, the rocks, the plants. And you can see it, we can interpret some of these rock art that we see, you know. We see the four cardinal directions there, we see animals there, we see the sun, we see the moon."

Similar symbols appeared on pots, urns and bowls–artifacts now housed in museums. These artifacts demonstrate the Anasazi’s skills with ceramics, yet many of the illustrations are difficult to understand. Even more puzzling is the abundance of broken pieces of pottery scattered throughout the Four Corners region.

From the north rim of the Grand Canyon eastward, it’s as if ceramic pots rained from the heavens and were shattered on the hardened ground. Many Pueblo people believe pottery was willingly broken by the Anasazi as part of a sacred ritual.

"Essentially, it’s an offering. If you make an offering of a piece of pottery, and you put the whole piece of pottery there, somebody is going to come along and take that pottery and your offering is lost. If you break that pottery, and all there is is pot sherds, it’s of no use to anybody except the spirits that you made the offering to."

The spiritual beliefs of the Anasazi and those of today’s Pueblo people are uniquely similar. Among the strongest links between ancient and modern spirituality is an architectural structure known as a kiva.
"The structures that remain at Chaco, or whatever the ruins are that have a kiva, are the kind of chambers that we still use today as ceremonial centers."

"Essentially, a kiva is like a gathering place of religious society members. In the Four Corners area, the kivas are small because it’s really just a membership of one society holding meetings and holding gatherings, and holding religious ceremonies within those chambers."

The word kiva translates as “ceremonial room.” These circular, subterranean structures are found in Anasazi ruins throughout the Four Corners region.

The ancient kivas at Cliff Palace and Balcony House in Mesa Verde are relatively small, only a few feet in diameter. Much larger kivas have been unearthed at the ruins of Chaco Canyon. Many of these Great Kivas are more than ten times the size of those at Mesa Verde, yet they all seem to serve a spiritual purpose.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of the kivas is a small, dusty crater often found toward the center of the room. It is called the Sipapu, and many believe it symbolizes the entrance to the spirit world and the birthplace of the Anasazi.

*I am visiting your home, but as a visitor, I want to ask you to give me your blessings so that my children, wherever they are, might also have the blessings and live long and live a good life.*

The Pueblo people of today rarely enter the ruins, and when they do, it is usually to pray to their ancestors.

The Navajo tribe settled the lands near Canyon de Chelly long after the Anasazi had departed. Like the Pueblo people, most avoid the ruins. They’re considered a sacred place.

Marjorie Thomas, a Navajo, herds her sheep on the plateau above Canyon de Chelly:

'It used to be way back that you don’t talk about them, you don’t go to the ruins, their spirits are still there. You don’t pick up the broken pottery because it’s not made for you, it’s theirs, and their spirits are still around and they’re watching you.'
Many people believe the spiritual power of this landscape extends to the beginning of time, to the time of creation. Ancient stories tell of an underground world, a parallel dimension from which the Anasazi emerged into this world. It is a story supported by many descendants, including Joe Sando.

"The story is that they came from the underworld. They talk about the first world, second world, third world, even the fourth world. Many times they are led by some kind of an animal."

Many Pueblo people believe the Anasazi came from the underworld through the sipapu.

As if from the womb of mother earth, they emerged worshipping light and praying to their father sun with offerings of pollen and sacred cornmeal.

To the Anasazi and today’s Pueblo people, the sipapus found in kivas throughout the Four Corners region are like shrines to the story of their creation, as well as their death.

"At death, the spirit follows that same path in reverse and back down to the point of origin; they enter back into that hole and back into the first level of world, point of origin, and that’s where they are reassigned into the next world."

The story of their ancestors’ emergence from the underworld to this world is among the most sacred told by the Pueblo people. While it helps to explain some of the architectural features of the ruins, it may also hold the secrets behind the mystery of the Anasazi’s departure from their majestic stone city.

Survival is nearly impossible on the desert-like terrain of the southwestern United States. The Four Corners region is riddled with twisting gorges, river washes and mesas. Farming proves a constant challenge, even the bighorn sheep must fight for food in this parched landscape.

To the Anasazi who once occupied the stone communities scattered across the Colorado Plateau, simple rainfall was a blessing, a prayer answered by mother earth.
During the 12th and 13th centuries, the Anasazi departed from most of the Four Corners region. Despite centuries of progress in architecture, masonry, irrigation, and ceramics, something forced them to leave. And their departure sparked a mystery for the settlers who followed.

Based on the study of tree rings, many archeologists believe a prolonged drought from 1276 to 1299 A.D. contributed to the Anasazi’s decision to move south.

It’s believed they relocated near the Jemez and Rio Grande Rivers of New Mexico, the same area where many of today’s Pueblo villages are located.

But the departure of the Anasazi may also be rooted in the story of their creation. Some Pueblo descendants believe the Anasazi migrated from one community to another as part of a quest for Itiwanna, their spiritual center place.

It’s believed the Anasazi migration began soon after their emergence from the sipapu. According to the migration myth, most villages and cliff dwellings were only temporary homes and their abandonment was part of a spiritual odyssey that would not be finished until the center place was found.

There’s an increasing belief among scholars that the ruins of Chaco Canyon were once the spiritual center of the Anasazi world.

Although the structures here were designed to house hundreds of people, very few remains of the dead have been found. The lack of grave sites suggests that visitors may have come here to pray, not to live.

Some believe the pithouses were constructed as temporary housing. And in a land so limited in agricultural resources, it would have been difficult to sustain a large population year round. Less than ten inches of rain fall here annually.

Was Chaco Canyon the center place of the Anasazi world? Was it used by worshippers on a spiritual retreat?

The theory may be supported by the ongoing discovery of the prehistoric roads of Chaco. Since the early 1970’s, nearly fifteen hundred miles of ancient roads have been mapped.
Though difficult to see from ground level, they radiate out from Chaco Canyon like the spokes of a wheel, within an area of nearly 100,000 square miles.

But why were the roads built? Some believe the Anasazi may have followed religious leaders on foot from their distant homes to the great houses and kivas of Chaco Canyon.

Some of the roads may have been used for trade. Others, such as The North Road out of Chaco Canyon, may be an expression of spiritual values. The North Road is littered with ceramic potsherds and ends abruptly in an isolated canyon.

At least seven roads lead to Chaco Canyon. It appears certain that generations travelled to and from Chaco, perhaps to worship their gods, perhaps in search of their spiritual center place.

The smell of campfires and the laughter of children have been gone from the ruins of the Anasazi for nearly eight centuries. Hundreds of architects and builders toiled with primitive tools in searing heat, yet their castles of earth and stone were left behind.

Though much has passed with time, the spirit world remains for today’s Pueblo people.

“You can sit on the mesa top and just have a quiet moment to yourself, and you can sense the motion of the time when the community was occupied. You sense a sense of energy that goes beyond words, and essentially in order to feel what is happening there, you would have to feel it in heart, and in mind, and in body. And unless you can feel that spiritualness of the area, you haven’t felt what’s truly there.”

Even in their worn, eroded condition, the ruins still rise like stone altars, monuments to the spirit of the ancient ones.
ANASAZI-The Ancient Ones
from the Mystic Lands Series

VOCABULARY GUIDE

Anasazi - The Navajo name given to the Native American peoples who developed a great civilization in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. The word Anasazi has several slightly different translations including the ancient ones, the alien ancient ones, ancient strangers, and those who were here before us. Legend suggests that the Anasazi civilization, that lasted almost a millennium from 100 A.D. to 1300 A.D., "disappeared" almost 700 years ago. The Pueblo Indian tribes who now live to the south, west and east of the Anasazi ruins claim to be their descendants. Significant Anasazi ruins can be found at Colorado's Mesa Verde, Utah's Towers of Hovenweep, New Mexico's Chaco Canyon, and Arizona's Canyon de Chelly.

Canyon de Chelly - Located in Arizona, on Navajo land, 135 miles southwest of Farmington, New Mexico. It is believed that the ready availability of water drew the Anasazi to this site. Canyon de Chelly is made up of two major canyons: Canyon del Muerto and Canyon de Chelly. Both canyons vary from 200 to 1,000 feet in depth. There are more than 2,000 archaeological sites in the canyon area. Only White House Ruin and Mummy Cave are open to the public.

Chaco Canyon - Located in northwestern New Mexico, the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon–Penasco, Blanco, Pueblo Alto, Kin Letso, Hungo Pavi, Pueblo del Arroyo, Chetro Ketl, Una Vida, Wijiji, and Pueblo Bonito–were constructed from approximately 900 A.D. to 1115. There are a number of ancient roads surrounding the ruins. Researchers believe that these roads identify Chaco Canyon as both the ceremonial center and the hub of a vast regional network. Great Kivas are found within the walls of some of the larger great houses.

Cliff Palace - Located in Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado. The Cliff Palace Ruins, the largest cliff dwelling in North America, were discovered in December of 1888 by Richard Wetherill and Charlie Mason when they were out tracking stray cattle. Cliff Palace contains 217 rooms and 23 kivas. It housed a population of 200 - 500 people. It is believed that, although the Anasazi had used the cliff alcoves since their arrival in the area approximately 500 A.D., they did not build the cliff dwellings until 1200 A.D. By 1300 A.D., they had abandoned the area having lived in their impressive cliff dwellings only 75 - 100 years.

Four Corners - The name given to the region in the American southwest desert where the borders of the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah, come together.

Itiwanna - According to legend, Itiwanna is the Anasazi spiritual center place. The Anasazi migration myth states the Anasazi were on a continual spiritual odyssey until they found the center place.

Kiva - Kiva is a Hopi Indian word which means "ceremonial room." Archaeologists believe that the kivas, in addition to being ceremonial centers, were used for social gatherings and as work rooms. These circular, subterranean structures are found in the Anasazi ruins throughout the Four Corners region. Present-day Pueblo people still use their kivas in the same ways. The kiva is a religious structure, and whether it is found among the ruins or in a modern Pueblo, it remains sacred to the Pueblo people.

(Continued on Blackline Master 2)
Kokopelli - Dancing flute player. This figure is found in rock art throughout the Four Corners region. He is usually depicted as a hump-backed, crooked stick figure blowing on a pipe. Many believe him to be a fertility symbol connected with the harvest. Others see him as a medicine man that acts as a mediator as he wanders from tribe to tribe. For the contemporary Hopi, he is a symbol of the flute clan. He is considered a mediator between the gods and men. Grain and plant seeds are carried in his humped back. His flute playing generates warmth which helps the seeds to germinate and both harmony and friendship to thrive.

Mesa Verde - Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado. The 52,000 acre national park is located ten miles east of Cortez, Colorado. There are almost 4,000 sites and the park holds the largest collection of Anasazi tools, implements, and pottery in the Southwest. The ruins range in style from simple pithouses to elaborate cliff dwellings. The area is believed to have been occupied by Anasazi around 600 A.D. and was deserted in the 13th century. In addition to Cliff Palace Ruins, Spruce Tree House, Square Tower House, Balcony House, Fire Temple, and Sunset House are a few other notable ruins found within the park boundaries.

petroglyphs - A form of rock art in which the rock is both the background and the medium. The image was carved directly into the rock, either by pecking or gouging, with rock hammers or bone chisels.

pictographs - Another form of rock art, pictographs are actual drawings on rock. The Anasazi created colored pigments from natural substances and then applied the paint with fingers, yucca leaves, or brushes made of animal hair.

sipapu - Small, dusty crater often found toward the center of the kiva. Many believe it symbolizes the entrance into the underworld and the birthplace of the Anasazi. It is believed that the Anasazi came from the underworld through the sipapu, the Place of Emergence. It is sometimes called the spirit hole. According to Hopi lore, the Hopi ancestors emerged through several underground worlds. The entrance to each of these previous worlds was called a sipapu. Sipapus are still found in many present-day kivas of the Pueblo people.

Richard Wetherill - The American rancher, who in December 1888, accidentally discovered the Cliff Palace Ruins while searching for lost cattle in a blizzard. He found the ruins with his brother-in-law Charlie Mason. He was so enthralled by his discovery that he transformed himself into a self-taught archaeologist. During the next 14 years, with the help of his brother-in-law, Charlie Mason, and other partners, he discovered and excavated countless Anasazi sites. As his early attempts, especially at Mesa Verde, were rather crude excavations, Wetherill’s efforts are regarded negatively by many contemporary researchers.
ANASAZI-The Ancient Ones
from the Mystic Lands Series

VIEWER'S GUIDE

**Directions:** Answer the following questions immediately after viewing the video or as instructed by your teacher. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. Who discovered the Cliff Palace Ruins, under what circumstances, and where are they located?

2. Who are the descendants of the Anasazi?

3. What was the territorial extent of the Anasazi civilization?

4. What do the Anasazi descendants believe about the ruins?

5. What explanation is given for all the broken pottery sherds?

6. What forces did the Anasazi worship?

7. What are the continuing links between the spiritual beliefs of the Anasazi and the beliefs of today's Pueblo peoples?

8. What is a sipapu and what traditional beliefs are associated with it?

9. What is the Anasazi origin/creation legend?

10. What are some explanations that have been offered to account for the abrupt disappearance of the Anasazi?

11. Why do many consider Chaco Canyon the spiritual center of the Anasazi world?
ANASAZI-The Ancient Ones
from the Mystic Lands Series

QUIZ

Part 1 - Directions: Fill in the blanks with the missing term.

1. ______________ is the Navajo name given to the ancient people who developed a great civilization in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest? This name has various translations including, the ancient ones, ancient strangers, and those who came before.

2. ______________ is the largest cliff dwelling in North America. These ruins, now located within the boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park, were accidentally discovered by two ranchers in the late 1800s.

3. These rooms, circular and subterranean, were used as ceremonial centers, as well as social gathering places, and work rooms. They are considered sacred places. They are called ____________.

4. ______________ is the dancing flute player whose image is found repeatedly in Anasazi rock art. He is believed to be a ____________ symbol. The Hopi consider him a mediator between the gods and men.

5. ______________ is the form of rock art in which images were carved directly into the rock with rock hammers or bone chisels?

Part 2 - Directions: Place a T before the true statements and an F before the false statements.

6. ____ There’s an increasing belief among scholars that Chaco Canyon was once the spiritual center of the Anasazi world.

7. ____ The sipapu is a small opening found in the kivas which is regarded as the entrance into the underworld and the birthplace of the Anasazi. It is also referred to as the"Place of Emergence," and/or "spirit hole."

8. ____ Pottery was willingly broken by the Anasazi as part of a sacred ritual.

9. ____ The Anasazi migrated from one community to another as part of a quest for Itiwanna, their spiritual center place.

10. ____ The Pueblo Indian tribes claim to be the descendants of the Anasazi.
**ANASAZI-The Ancient Ones**  
*from the Mystic Lands Series*  

**WORD MATCH**

**Directions:** Match each term in Column A with its correct definition in Column B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. _____ Itiwanna</td>
<td>A. Founded the Cliff Palace ruins during a blinding snowstorm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. _____ Four Corners</td>
<td>B. Word which means &quot;the ancient ones.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. _____ Anasazi</td>
<td>C. A small, dusty crater near the center of a kiva; to many, it symbolizes the entrance to the spirit world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. _____ petroglyphs</td>
<td>D. This dancing flute player is still meaningful to the Anasazi's descendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. _____ Wetherill</td>
<td>E. Stone carvings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. _____ kiva</td>
<td>F. A circular, subterranean structure used as a ceremonial center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. _____ Chaco Canyon</td>
<td>G. The spiritual center place of the Anasazi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. _____ Kokopelli</td>
<td>H. The region of the southwestern part of the United States where the borders of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. _____ Mesa Verde</td>
<td>I. The ceremonial center and hub of a vast regional network due to the number of ancient roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. _____ sipapu</td>
<td>J. Holds the largest collection of Anasazi tools, implements, and pottery in the Southwest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>