



Anasazi America: Seventeen Centuries on the Road from Center Place

By David E. Stuart

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At the height of their power in the late eleventh century, the Chaco Anasazi dominated a territory in the American Southwest larger than any European principality of the time. A vast and powerful alliance of thousands of farming hamlets and nearly 100 spectacular towns integrated the region through economic and religious ties, and the whole system was interconnected with hundreds of miles of roads. It took these Anasazi farmers more than seven centuries to lay the agricultural, organizational, and technological groundwork for the creation of classic Chacoan civilization, which lasted about 200 years--only to collapse spectacularly in a mere 40.

Why did such a great society collapse? Who survived? Why? In this lively book anthropologist/archaeologist David Stuart presents answers to these questions that offer useful lessons to modern societies. His account of the rise and fall of the Chaco Anasazi brings to life the people known to us today as the architects of Chaco Canyon, the spectacular national park in New Mexico that thousands of tourists visit every year.

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Editorial Review

Review

Stuart cogently distinguishes between powerful societies . . . and efficient societies, which run frugally but sacrifice wealth and power to do so. --Booklist

Anasazi America draws a fascinating dichotomy between modern pueblos and modern America, which has failed to learn history's lessons. --American Archaeology

From the Inside Flap

Describes the rise and 12th century demise of New Mexico's Chaco Anasazi--uncontrolled growth and separation into "haves" and "have nots" were their undoing. Modern industrial society has much to learn from this compelling saga of failure, adjustment, and redemption.

From the Back Cover

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Chaco's failure, Stuart argues, was a failure to adapt to the consequences of rapid growth. Foremost among Chacoans' problems were misuse of farmland, malnutrition, loss of community, and inability to deal with climatic catastrophe. The descendants of the Anasazi, the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, adapted strategically to minimize the impact of these problems. Stuart sees the contrasting fates of the Anasazi and their Pueblo descendants as a parable for modern societies.

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Fannie Wymer:

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