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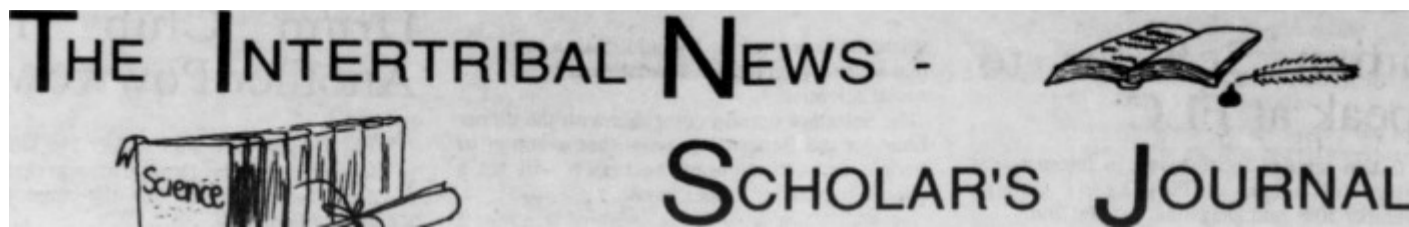
Anasazi's Leave Puzzle

Intertribal News

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Scholar's Journal [ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]**



by Lynette Mose

The Scholar's Journal gives students a chance to research and analyze issues of interest to our readership. If you would like to contribute an article to the Journal, check with Rick Wheelock at the Intercultural Center.

Anasazis Leave Puzzle

What ever became of those Anasazi people who occupied the Four Corners area thousands of years ago? Why did they leave their homes behind? Whatever their reason was, they left many wondering.

In northwestern New Mexico the remains of a prehistoric Indian village still stands. Approximately 900 years ago the village near present-day Aztec, New Mexico was built. The village itself was occupied by at least 1000 inhabitants. These people's diet

mainly consisted of goods they grew, plus deer and antelope meat. Being talented with their arts and crafts, they made cotton cloth, turkey feather blankets and pottery.

Not only were they brilliant craft makers, but they were able builders. According to Devereux Butcher "Their large stone apartment houses, now called pueblos (Spanish for village) were made of hand-cut sandstone blocks laid in walls two to three feet thick, in which adobe was used for mortar."

In the last quarter of the 13th century, streams dried up due to a great drought. This forced the people to leave the area, according to one theory advanced by archeologists.

Today, the Aztec Ruins National Monument is located 37 miles south of Durango, in the town of Aztec, New Mexico. Visitors to the monument will see 25 acres of the prehistoric ruins. Also at the monument is a museum which has preserved such artifacts as "pottery, stone hammers and knives, bone implements and jewelry, woven fabrics and basketry" according to Butcher. Visitors to the monument will most likely imagine what went on here hundreds of years ago.

Arizona's northeast corner is where another ruin, Canyon De Chelly, is located. Within the canyon there are more than 400 prehistoric cliff dwellings; some rise 800 feet above the canyon floors. Below on the canyon floors, the people grew crops which were watered by the runoff of the nearby plateau. There are three canyons that make up Canyon De Chelly: Canyon del Muerto, Monument Canyon and Canyon de Chelly itself. Within these canyons lie ruins such as the White House, which was constructed at 1066 A.D. Mummy Cave was considered "the oldest continuously occupied spot in North America" according to Butcher. For over a thousand years the cave has been lived in by the

early Basketmakers, which was around the first century A.D. The great drought of 1276-1299 made the occupants leave the canyon, never to return.

Canyon De Chelly National Monument is located 60-70 miles southwest of Durango, near the town of Chinle, Arizona. The monument itself is in the center of the Navajo Indian Reservation. The canyon is considered to be

some of the most magnificent scenery in the Southwest. Visitors to the area can arrange horseback trips and a National Park Service ranger will give tours around the canyon.

Another site, Chaco Canyon, was built around 919 A.D. to 1130. It "is the largest and most impressive" according to Butcher. It is located in northwestern New Mexico. Chaco Canyon consists of 18 major ruins and many smaller ones. The ruins were once 4 or 5 stories high, with 800 rooms and 32 kivas. Neil M. Judd of the Smithsonian Institution estimates about 1200 people lived there at one time.

They made many beautiful artifacts that included black and white Chaco pottery and turquoise jewelry. Also found were painted wooded objects of bone and stone. Skeletons of a macaw were found; their colorful feathers were probably used for sacred dances. No one is really sure why the Chaco Canyon civilization came to an end.

Chaco Canyon National Monument is 70-80 miles south of Durango. Visitors to the monument will see the huge D-shaped ruin of Pueblo Bonito. The workmanship of this pueblo is of higher quality than that of any other pueblo in the Southwest. It was built without mortar; they stacked stones that were cut to fit into their positions.

Mesa Verde National Park is considered "the greatest assembly of ancient dwellings and villages in this country" according to Butcher. Its location is in southwestern Colorado. Caves in a 2000 foot plateau were the ideal place for

homes. In this way the "Ancient Ones" were protected from the weather and from their enemies. Archeologists say that Mesa Verde was inhabited around 1 A.D. to about 1300, and as many as 400 lived here.

Mesa Verde has three kinds of ruins: the pit houses, open pueblo and the cliff pueblos. These ruins ranged from floors two to three feet below the ground to eight floors levels above the ground. Kivas and storerooms were also common.

Mesa Verde National Park is located 30-40 miles southwest of Durango. Visitors to the park will experience the Anasazi culture by getting to know about the physical setting of the park by actually traveling along the mesa top. They can also see the dwelling down in the canyon.

Visitors are encouraged to take part in the cultural activities. The main purpose is to gain some insights on how life went on in these places.

These four monuments have a great deal in common. Each has ceremonial kivas, and their inhabitants all grew crops, such as corn and beans. They also had their own kind of arts and crafts, such as pottery, jewelry and wall paintings.

Many people believe these prehistoric Indian people left their land because of a great drought. Whatever their reason was, they left their culture and heritage which we in return inherited. Today, arts and crafts in this area are very much visible and many Native Americans also take great pride in their native culture.

For further Reading:

Devereux Butcher. Exploring our Prehistoric Indian Ruins

Elizabeth Chesley Baity. Americans Before Columbus

"Mesa Verde National Park", pamphlet.

AIM Still Work For Tribal Sovereignty

By R. Roberts

Just as Indian leaders still strive to maintain Indian independence today, the leaders of yesterday have been the ones who have established the existence of our present National Status as American Indians.

Throughout history many Indian organizations have been formed to help Indian people. One organization still active in many political Indian activities is the American Indian

political Indian activities is the American Indian Movement (AIM).

AIM was first organized in 1968. It was started by a group of Chippewa Indians in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During that time, a population of about ten thousand Native Americans lived in the city. And the crime rate among Native Americans alone was higher than any other race. The majority of the Native Americans living in Minneapolis were Chippewas. So a group of Chippewa Indians formed "Indian Patrols" in Indian neighborhoods. Their goal was to protect other Native Americans from the harassment of police. They watched for arrests of Indians and acted as witnesses for them.

After nine months, arrests of Native Americans declined back to the general city arrest rates. George Mitchell and Dennis Banks headed the Indian Patrol, but later decided to recognize the group more formally. That's when the organization was named the American Indian Movement.

Not long after AIM was organized in Minnesota, other chapters formed in Denver, and in Cleveland.

"What tribal leaders had dared not to do AIM had done" said historian Alvin Josephy, JR. AIM focused much of its attention to treaty rights and the more traditional part of Indian society. An example of AIM involvement is the "Trail of Broken Treaties." The Trail of Broken Treaties was a march of Indians to Washington, D.C. in November, 1972.

They issued a document called the "Twenty Points." Twenty points was a list of demands which the people in the march wanted the government to read and give a written reply to. It dealt with treaty relations between the tribes and the government, land, religious freedom, and funds for Indians.

Early leaders of AIM were Dennis Banks, George Mitchell, and Russell Means. Banks and Means, however, were the prominent leaders during AIM's most publicized early cases.

The American Indian Movement dedicates its organization to Indian Rights. Their organization supports Indian sovereignty. Since 1968, when AIM was established, Indian people had been divided in their opinions of the organization. Some have supported them while others have resented them. AIM is still in existence and still supporting Indian sovereignty.

See our next issue of Intertribal News for information about Colorado's AIM Chapter and recent developments in the American Indian Movement.

For further reading:

Agents of Repression By Ward Churchill, 1988.

American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century Edited by Vine Deloria, Jr., 1985.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse By Peter Matthiessen, 1980.

The Great Father Vol.II. By Francis Paul Prucha, 1984.

ANALYSIS:

PELTIER STILL IN PRISON

by LIBBI CHISSOE-GANN

Many people don't know, don't remember or don't care but Leonard Peltier is still waiting. He has been serving two consecutive life sentences in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary since 1977 for a crime he says he did not commit. The Peltier situation has gained international recognition but he is still in prison.

In 1973, the American Indian Movement's (AIM) strategy of media confrontation with the United States government was in full operation. The takeover of the village of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota, was the big news of the year. Leonard Peltier was on the Pine Ridge Reservation at the time and was an active member of AIM.

On the Pine Ridge Reservation there had

On the Pine Ridge Reservation there had been a dispute between two factions of the Lakota Sioux Nation, the traditionalists and those who supported the Tribal Chairman, Dick Wilson. As a result Wilson had hired his own police force, known as "the goons" by the people on the reservation, to control the traditionalist faction. During this time the goons helped create an atmosphere that contributed to an annual murder rate of 170 per 100,000 people on the reservation. It was in these trying days that three men were killed on the Pine Ridge Reservation; Jack Coler and Robert Williams, both FBI agents, and Joe Stuntz, an AIM member.

After the killings, a full scale investigation was mounted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This outraged the traditionalists because little or nothing had been done to solve the hundreds of Indian murders on the reservation but the murder of two white men warranted a full scale invasion of Pine Ridge.

Four members of AIM were indicted for the murders of the two agents. Two were found not guilty. The charges against the third were dropped for lack of evidence. Leonard Peltier was forced to face a count of first degree murder all alone. The main evidence against Peltier were affidavits signed by a woman named Myrtle Poor Bear. These stated that she was Peltier's girlfriend, that she heard him conspire to kill the two agents and that she had actually witnessed one of the murders.

On April 13, 1977, Poor Bear testified in court, without the jury present, that she had never known Peltier and that she had only signed the papers because she and her family had been threatened by the FBI. The affidavits were the only evidence directly linking Peltier to the murders.

Frederick Coward, an FBI agent, said that he had seen Peltier at the scene from a half a mile away through a seven powered sight on a rifle. The defense tried to duplicate such a sighting and found it impossible. When the jury wanted a chance to recreate the sighting to see if it could be done, the judge denied their request.

Another important piece of evidence was also withheld from the jury which involved the murder weapon. The gun which killed the two agents was said to be an AR-15 rifle. The firing pins did not match those of Peltier's gun.

On April 18, 1977, the jury, who had not heard most crucial parts of the defense, pronounced Leonard Peltier guilty of two counts of first degree murder. On June 1, 1977, he was sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

Much has been done in the battle to free

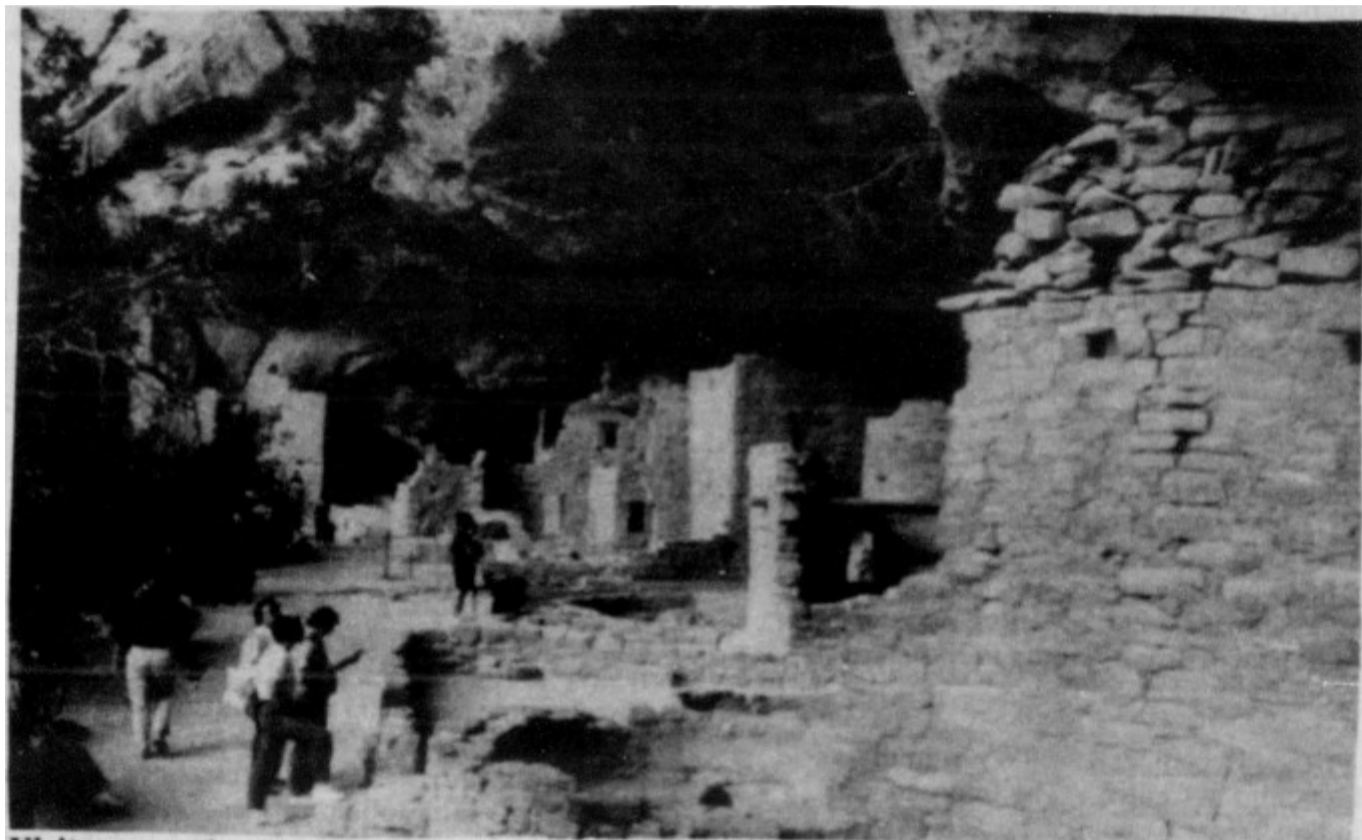
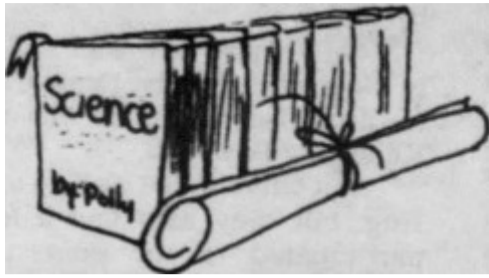
Leonard Peltier. According to the *New York Times*, in 1978, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the eighth circuit said that there had been a clear abuse of the investigative process by the FBI. In 1983, fifty members of congress petitioned the court to grant Peltier a new hearing. The petition was denied.

In 1984, four Nobel Peace Prize Winners from the Soviet Union appealed to President Reagan on behalf of Leonard Peltier but to no avail. Their appeal asked the United States government to show the same humanity that they had asked of the Soviet Union on behalf of Dr. Sakharov. The Soviet government even offered to allow Peltier to defect to the USSR.

Peltier, a promising artist, has now lost sight in one eye and is losing sight in the other. Doctors from the Soviet Union have requested the Peltier be sent to the Soviet Union so that they may treat his illness, but the U.S. has refused. The Soviets were even reprimanded by the U.S. government for considering such a thing.

It is painfully clear that something has to be done to free Leonard Peltier. He was sentenced to life in prison even though there is no evidence against him. Every piece of evidence that the government and the FBI had against him has been dismissed because the so-called witnesses were coerced and even threatened with physical harm to themselves and their families.

Why then is Leonard Peltier still in prison? This is the question that still remains unanswered. Many people are trying to find the answer to that question. Among the most well known is the Free Peltier task force located in Kansas City, Kansas. If you would like to help free Leonard Peltier please write to the task force or to your local congressman.



Visitors to the Mesa Verde National Park ruins are treated to a rediscovery of the ancient peoples of the Southwest. Trails wind throughout the huge park, giving visitors a chance to imagine the lives of the people who once lived there.

