



**Native American History, an LDS Perspective**  
(2344 B.C. - to Present)

**Epoch 1 – 2344 B.C. - 600 B.C.**

The Book of Mormon  
North America – Eskimos, Adena  
 Mound Builders  
Central America – Olmecs, Zapotecs  
South America – Chavin

**Epoch 2 – 600 B.C. - 0 B.C.**

The Book of Mormon  
North America – Hopewell Mound Builders,  
 Mogollon Culture, Hohokam Culture, Anasazi  
 Culture  
Central America – Teotihuacan  
South America – Nazca Culture, Tiahuanaco  
 Culture

**Epoch 3 – 0 - 800**

The Book of Mormon  
North America – Mississippian Mound  
 builders, Pueblos, Fremont  
Central America – Maya  
South America (Little is known of Native  
 Americans during this period, they are simply  
 known as “Pre-Inca”)

**Epoch 4 – 800 - 1200**

North America – Iroquois, Cliff Dwellers  
Central America – Toltecs, Mixtecs,

Caribbean – Arawak, Carib

South America – (Little is known of Native Americans during this period, they are simply known as “Pre-Inca”)

Pacific – Fiji, Maori

**Epoch 5– 1200 - 1532**

North America – Huron, Narragansett

Central America – Aztecs

South America – Inca

**Epoch 6 – 1532 - 1750**

North America – Chippewa, Abenaki, Potawatomi, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creeks

Central America & the Caribbean – Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago,  
 Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua

South America – Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile,  
 Paraguay, Uruguay

**Epoch 7 – 1750 - 1850**

North America – Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Pawnee, Teton Sioux, Chinook

Central America & the Caribbean – Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago,  
 Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua

South America & the Pacific – French Guiana, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Argentina,  
 Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand, Fiji

**Epoch 8 – 1850 - 1945**

North America – Chumash, Modoc, Paiute, Apache, Navajo, Pima, Yuma, Zuni

Central America & the Caribbean – Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago,  
 Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua

South America & the Pacific – French Guiana, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador,  
 Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand,  
 Fiji

**Epoch 9 – 1945 - Present**

North America – Canada, Organization of American States, American Indian Movement

Central America & the Caribbean – Cuba, Haiti, Barbados, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago,  
 Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua

South America & the Pacific – French Guiana, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Argentina,  
 Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand, Fiji

## The Cliff Dwellers

The Pueblo people believed themselves to have come from the center of the world, the innermost core of the earth. After achieving various intermediate levels they reached the surface of the earth, through the *sipapu*, a Hopi word meaning *navel*, a small round hole in the floor of each partially subterranean kiva, the connection between shadow and light, earth and heaven, night and sun. When they reached the surface, cleansed and purified, a world of color and light was revealed to them. They thought of themselves as living halfway between heaven and earth. The Hopi believe the gorge of the Grand Canyon to be the widest and deepest *sipapu*, leading to a past shrouded in mist and shadow. Just as an unborn baby is fed through an umbilical cord leading to his or her navel, so the Pueblos felt themselves to be connected to the spirit world. The spirits could enter the pueblo through the *sipapu* to help the people.

The Pueblo Indians who believed they came from inside the earth, lived, at the peak of their cultural development, in cliff dwellings suspended halfway between heaven and earth, between the floor of the canyon and its rim. There are three major groups of Cliff Dwellers and two minor ones. The major groups are known as the Hohokam, the Mogollon, and the Anasazi. The two minor groups are the Fremont Indians and the Patayan Indians. The Cliff Dwellers began around 300 B.C., but their achievements they are best known for, their cliff dwellings, did not appear until about 1000 A.D. They are located in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, California and Nevada.

The cliff dwellers farmed on the plains at the foot of their cliff homes or on the flat topped hills called *mesas*, above their dwellings. They grew beans, corn, cotton, squash, and tobacco, raised turkeys, and hunted deer and mountain sheep with bows and arrows. They chiseled footholds into the rocks so they could climb up and down from their homes to their fields above and below. This was even accomplished while carrying heavy loads. Water was a constant concern. The Pueblo people performed special rain ceremonies and dances and spoke special prayers for rain. They even used great ingenuity to catch and hold the rains that might come just once a year. They built irrigation systems, using fiber mats to control the flow, sending water to just the right places. They dug pools – as large as 110 feet across and 4 feet deep – and lined them with masonry to hold rainwater. Sometimes people even got together in the winter and rolled huge snowballs down mountains and into the pools.

Most of the water was brought in from small springs that came out at the base of the cliff. The women and girls filled jars with water that collected in pools fed by these springs. Then they balanced the jars on doughnut-shaped head pads and carried them on their heads back to the dwelling. One of the finest springs used by the *Cliff Palace* people was across the canyon, half a mile away by trail. This was a considerable distance to carry a jar of water. During the rainy season, the women set out jars to catch the rain water. The filled jars were then stored in the family rooms for use during the dry season.

Some cliff dwellers lived in caves that could provide shelter for several family groups, especially along river canyons, but most of these Indians lived in two or three story cliff houses. The people built their homes on protected ledges or in hollow spaces in cliff walls, using sandstone blocks and mud mortar. They constructed the small rooms one upon another and placed each story back a short distance from the edge of the one below. Each Pueblo home measured about 12 by 20 feet – about one-and-a-half times the size of a modern bedroom. As many as 1,500 people could live in some of these dwelling complexes. In 1900, a visitor watched as a Pueblo woman built a house:

*With a small heap of adobe mud the woman, using her hand as a trowel, fills in the chinks, smooths and plasters the walls inside and out. Splashed from head to foot with mud, she is an object to behold, and, if her children are there to "help" her, no mudlarks ever looked more happy....Then, when the whitewashing is done with gypsum [a chalky mineral], or the coloring of the walls, what fun the children have – as they splash their tiny hands into the coloring matter and dash it upon the walls. (Steven Cory, Pueblo Indian, page 14)*

The material for building their homes lay right at the Pueblo's feet. A special kind of earth called "adobe" – a mixture of clay and sand – covers much of the American Southwest. Adobe is not much good for farming, but it works great as a building material. When mixed with water, it is easy to mold. For extra strength, ashes, rocks, or straw are added. Adobe also insulates, keeping Pueblo homes warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

*Adobe is the Spanish name for sun-dried bricks, or for a house built with such bricks. A less common type of adobe is made with dampened earth pressed down in building forms similar to those used for poured concrete walks. People have used adobe to build houses and other structures in desert regions for thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians and Babylonians used adobe. To make adobe, workers mix sandy clay or loam with water and a small quantity of straw, grass, or similar material. The straw holds the mixture together, giving the bricks greater stability. The mixture is placed in wooden forms that shape it into bricks. Workers remove the forms when the bricks are dry. Then they bake the bricks in the sun from ten days to two weeks.*

*Adobe houses are common in Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States. Traditional adobe houses built by Mexicans and by Pueblo Indians are covered with mud. Modern adobe houses are covered with a plasterlike material called stucco. Adobe houses are cooler than uninsulated homes made of wood or stone, but adobe is not suitable for use in cold or damp regions. The bricks will crumble if they are exposed to rain or to periods of freezing temperatures followed by thaws. (Adobe, World Book Encyclopedia, 1990)*

Roofs are difficult to build out of stones or bricks, and Pueblo Indians did not have tools for cutting wooden beams. So they devised a five-layer roofing method: first came poles, covered by thick sticks, then willow branches, then mud, and finally dry earth. These roofs supported the weight of many people and often became the floor of the apartment above. The cliff homes had few doors on the ground level. The people used ladders to reach the first roof. In case of attack, they drew up the ladders. Pueblo Indians had special prayers and ceremonies to ask the gods to protect their children on stairways and ladders. The stairs were only about a foot wide and did not have handrails. The ladders, made to be easily moved or taken apart, were sometimes unstable. They even had prayers offered during construction to protect the home from harm. They hung special prayer feathers from the rafters and sprinkled cornmeal on the floor while singing a house-building song.

A collection of rugs or animal skins served as a family bed at night. In the morning they were rolled up and used for seating. There were no tables or chairs. Wherever possible, space was conserved. Ledges were built into the walls, and storage bins for food were sometimes built into the floor. Pegs and poles suspended like towel racks were used for hanging what little clothing the people had. The fireplace snuggled against one corner of the room and next to it could be found the cooking pots. Gourds were dried, hollowed out, and used for carrying water. Every home had a trough for grinding corn.

The floor of a Pueblo home was either stone or packed earth, but the people were able to keep it very clean using brooms made from long strands of grass tied together. Walls were usually whitewashed, a process that takes much more time than painting. Pueblos didn't make a clear distinction between doors and windows. If a home had no entry hatch, people crawled through what we would today call a window. A clear form of gypsum, called selenite, was used as a window covering. In cold weather, the windows would sometimes be closed with adobe. Entryways were often made in a "T" shape, to make it easy for a person to enter while carrying something on his or her back.

Most of the cliff dwellers' villages had underground chambers called *kivas*, a Hopi word which means *underworld*, which the people entered through a hatchway in the roof. For the Pueblo Indians the underworld did not mean hell, but rather the middle of the earth, the place where people came from. The underworld was also the place where many gods resided. Men held councils in the kivas and also used them for secret religious ceremonies. Only men were allowed to enter the kiva, but the room served the whole community. The kiva was the center of Pueblo religious life, the place where the most sacred objects were kept. The people plastered the walls and painted many with symbolic paintings in red, white, green, and yellow. The eastern cliff dwellers had round kivas, but the cliff

dwellers in the south and the west built rectangular ones. The kiva also served as the dressing room for men who danced in public religious ceremonies. The dancers would climb from the kiva to the courtyard above to perform.

Early Pueblos hunted with the “drive” method. A group of men – sometimes all the men and boys of a pueblo – would walk to where they knew there was game, surround the prey, and drive it to a canyon or a corral. There, they could easily kill it. Different animals required different techniques. For deer, one or two hunters would wrap themselves in buckskin and put antlers on their heads, acting as decoys while the other men drew closer. To stampede a herd of antelope, the Pueblos would howl like wolves, scaring the antelopes into a fenced area.

Pueblos were appalled when they saw that white people used only a small part of the animals they killed and sometimes even killed just for sport. Indians used nearly every part of the carcass. Besides eating the meat, they made skins into blankets and drums, stretched tendons and intestines for bowstrings and thread, fashioned bones into tools and wall hooks, used rabbits’ feet for paintbrushes, and even made hooves into rattles. They had great reverence for the animals they hunted. Dead animals brought back home were honored so that their spirits would not be angry. Deer often were covered with decorative blankets. Jewelry was hung around their necks, and prayer feathers were strung on the antlers. The Pueblos thanked the deer for giving their flesh so that the people might live, and they asked the deer to forgive the killers.

Mesa Verde in Colorado is the most famous area for cliff dwellings. Most of the Cliff Dwellers lived in small villages consisting of one dwelling sufficient for only a few dozen people. The walls of the canyons in Mesa Verde are dotted with hundreds of these small cliff dwellings set in shallow caves. The largest complex within the Mesa Verde area is called the *Cliff Palace*. About 400 people lived there at one time. Some sections of the structure are four stories high. The cave is crescent shaped, 325 feet across the front end, and 100 feet deep from the edge of the cliff. Twenty-three kivas have been located in the Cliff Palace.

*Canyon de Chelly* in Arizona is another area with many cliff dwelling areas. Streams have cut deeply into the plateau, creating steep cliffs that often have protective overhangs. As small square apartments accumulated in cliff dwellings, those built first near the back became storage rooms. Open space at the front was typically excavated and filled to produce a courtyard with circular subterranean kivas. When roofed they contributed to the flat open space in front of the apartments. The roofs of lower rooms provided balconies for the higher rearward rooms. A village built high in a cliff was reasonably safe from enemy attack. An invader had to climb down the cliff from the mesa top by a narrow trail or by means of ropes, ladders, or toe-holds in the rock. The defenders of the village could thus easily repel an enemy attack.

Besides having a spring right in the cave, the people who lived in *Balcony House* had better protection against enemies than the other Cliff Dwellers. Narrow walks and balconies extended outside the house under the doorways of the upper rooms, and led from one room to the next. The cliff dwelling is called Balcony House because of these balconies. Only a narrow ledge about 400 feet long separated the front of the cave from a sheer 30-foot drop down to the slope of the canyon. One end of this ledge came right up against the cliff. The other end came to a narrow cleft in the rock through which the top could be reached. The Cliff Dwellers of Balcony House walled up this cleft to a height of about 15 feet, but left a narrow tunnel in the base of the wall. A person had to crawl on his hands and knees to enter the cliff dwelling from the mesa above. Thus a few defenders could stand at the mouth of the tunnel and pick off any attackers one by one as they tried to enter the cave.

Looking at one of these abandoned towns today, one is very conscious of the ingenuity, determination and technical knowledge possessed by these Indian people. Simultaneously, a number of questions arise: Why were so many buildings constructed in such inaccessible places where there was little or no water? In some cases it was a matter of fortification, in others, these towns functioned as commercial centers. Or, perhaps people were simply better protected from inclement weather in these spaces.

A careful examination of artifacts at Mesa Verde leads to the conclusion that only a small fraction of the population lived in the cliff dwellings. For each cliff dwelling, there were dozens of small pueblos on the mesas. Viewed from the outside, the walls have a completely uniform surface. Sometimes the stones are so perfectly fitted that mortar was not necessary. The roof was supported by pine logs with a perpendicular covering of smaller timbers

and woven mats of willow branches and juniper bark. A thick layer of compacted adobe covers the entire room forming the ceiling for the downstairs room and the floor for the one upstairs. The rooms were mostly small, with low ceilings, and dark, since windows were rare. This made them cool in the summer and capable of storing heat during the winter.

On the top of the mesa, across the canyon from Cliff Palace, is a mysterious structure that has been given the name of *Sun Temple*. It shows no signs of ever being used as a dwelling. In fact, no one has discovered what its actual use was. Yet it became known as Sun Temple because some of its features hint that secret religious rituals were performed there. Sun Temple is a D-shaped structure 121 feet long and 64 feet wide. It does not seem ever to have had a roof, and is open to the sky. It has an outer double wall about 8 to 10 feet high. Between the two parts of the wall are a number of small rooms. Nine of these rooms have no doors and can be entered only from the top. There are 25 rooms in all. In the center of the courtyard enclosed by the walls are two kivas, and a third is off to a side. The entire building was built around the three kivas. This fact, plus the lack of a roof and the nine doorless rooms, has led archaeologists to think that the structure had some religious significance.

The Cliff Dwellers, for the most part, looked like modern Pueblo Indians. They were short to average in height, had long straight black hair, and high cheekbones. A fold of fat on the inner part of the eyelids near the nose made the eyes appear slanting. However, the shape of the heads of the Cliff Dwellers differed, for the back of the head of every mummy and every skull was flat. The flatness distorted the skull and made the face wider than those of other Indians. Infants were tied to cradleboards from the time they were born until they were about 15 months old. During those first months of an infant's life its skull is soft enough to be shaped flat by a cradleboard. Examination of the mummies and of skeletons found in cliff dwellings also showed that many of the people suffered from rheumatism (painful conditions of the joints and muscles, characterized by inflammation and stiffness) and arthritis (inflammation of a joint or joints). Bad teeth were common.

### **Religion of the Cliff Dwellers**

For Indian people the universe is a lively place; each stone, plant and natural force gives shape to a specific spirit. The Pueblos believed themselves to be surrounded by these spirits and sought a special relationship with them in order to win divine good will and grace. This in turn required strict adherence to and constant renewal of those rites related to important aspects of life such as hunting, seasonal change, the harvest, and rainfall. Above all, those powers that determined the course of the universe had to be placated. Of the deities who ruled over the heavens, lightning and rain assumed the highest rank.

This set of beliefs was the basis of religious life and it is through them that it becomes possible to understand the behavior of these prehistoric Indians. A hunter could not therefore despise his prey, for each animal species had its own guardian spirit who watched to see how the hunter treated the animal. A complex ritual accompanied the beginning of a hunt, the return of the hunters, and the manner in which the meat and bones were used and disposed of. If the hunter violated the ritual, the guardian spirit of the animal would take revenge by causing the hunter misfortune or allowing the game to become scarce.

Religious life was centered in the kiva, which was the domain of the men, serving as both ceremonial and work space. Each clan maintained its own kiva. If no ceremonies were taking place, the men would put up their looms there for the women to spin cloth, participate in meetings that determined the conduct of community affairs, and pray for the good of the whole. Ritual practices, depending on the place and time, achieved a remarkable multiplicity of form that reached far back into the mythical past, into the source from which all beliefs originated. Religion not only imparted meaning to nature, but bound individuals together as a community.

The kiva was a place of consciousness between heaven and earth where the past, present and eternity merged. Musical instruments, trumpets, flutes and rattles made out of gourds, turtle shells or deer hoofs, called to the guardian spirits and asked their favor. Dance was particularly important in communication with the gods of thunder, lightning and rain. Other dances were performed in honor of particular gods, such as the snake dance. Snake pictographs begin to appear throughout the Southwest, around 1000 A.D., the same time that the Meso-American belief in the god Quetzalcoatl, the "feathered snake," spread into the Southwest.

Pueblo Indians have been called the “Rain Dance People.” Pueblo people knew that their lives could be threatened at any time by lack of water. So a good deal of their religion – and religious dance – had to do with asking the gods for rain. There was much more, however, to their religion than that. Pueblo people told hundreds of stories about the gods and themselves. They revered the natural world. Their religious dances were great works of art, developed over centuries. Dancers wore elaborate masks and costumes. They were decorated with paint, branches, horns, and feathers, representing gods, animals, and humans.

Pueblos believed in kachinas (kah CHEE nuh)– the spirits of animals, insects, plants, people, and even places. These godlike beings carried messages between gods and the people. They all had their own special personalities and purposes. Part of the year the kachinas lived far away in the mountains, and part of the year they lived in the pueblo. When a man dressed up as one of these spirits, he too was called a kachina, and the spirit was thought to live in his soul. There were more than 250 kachinas, so it took plenty of homework for Pueblo children to learn about them. To help them learn, Pueblos made kachina dolls. These were carved out of wood, covered with white clay, and then painted in bright colors. Each was made to look like a certain kachina.

*Many peoples use doll-like figures in the practice of religion or magic, but such objects are not really toys. For example, the Pueblo Indians of the Southwestern United States use kachina dolls in their religion. The dolls are carved from cactus root, cottonwood, and pine. Each is painted to represent one of the hundreds of kachinas – powerful spirits of the earth, sky, and water. To honor these spirits, the Indians hold ceremonies in which masked dancers seem to become the kachinas. Afterward, Pueblo children are given the figures as educational toys to help them learn about the kachinas. (Dolls, World Book Encyclopedia, 1990)*

Pueblos had to spend most of their time gathering and preparing food and building shelter, but they also joined societies for special purposes and events. These societies would be similar to guilds, organizations to which specialists in today’s modern industrial world might belong. There are guilds for gold and silver smiths, tailors, carpenters, plumbers, etc. Rain making societies specialized in prayers and dances to bring rain. Members of hunting societies knew the most about where prey could be found. Healers shared their lore with each other – they knew of more than 70 different plants that could be used for curing illness. Singers practiced and performed together. When someone died, a funeral society helped prepare the body and the burial site.

There were many ways to join such groups. A person could simply be born into a society. If your father or mother was a healer, you probably would be too. If you had a special interest in hunting or medicine, you could become a member. More than casual clubs, these groups often had secret rites and holy objects. Among the Pueblos, members of clown societies impersonated important people and mocked them with songs. Clowning often meant speaking and acting in a backward way. Clowns even mocked religious ceremonies.

Pueblos respected old people for the wisdom they had gained over the years. When too old to work, a person would often become the head of a society or would join the town council. While the others were working in the fields, grandmothers and grandfathers taught children stories, training them in the Pueblo way of life. Pueblos often prayed that they would live long enough to die in their sleep of old age. They believed that when they died they would go to a place that was very much like this world. The only difference was that there things would be backward: winter would be summer, and night would be day.

The dead were lovingly prepared for the next life by their relatives. The bodies were washed and dressed in their best clothes, their hair was fixed up and their faces painted. Then they were buried in a sitting position, with their most precious possessions next to them. Pots and plates were “killed” – that is, holes were punched in them so they could not be used. A shallow grave was dug in the loose rocks at the foot of the cliff or in the trash pile outside the cave. In bad weather the grave was dug in the trash pile in the back of the cave.

Because of disease and difficulties in childbirth, many children died. The Pueblos felt the loss of their small ones deeply. The children were buried wrapped in furs. Often Pueblos would bury their children under the house

floor. Because children were too small to make the journey to the next world, it was hoped that their souls would enter new babies born in the home. Grave sites give us a helpful peek into everyday Pueblo life, because the dead were prepared for an afterlife that was much like this life. Burial sites have yielded ears of corn, bone knives, hairbrushes made of yucca leaves, seeds for planting corn and other crops, jewelry, charms to ward off disease, and other practical and beautiful everyday objects.

### **Legends**

The following is a version of the Creation Story from modern day Hopi (HOPE ee) and Zuni (ZOO nee) Indians. They are descendants of the Anasazi Cliff Dwellers.

*In the Beginning, there was a great nothingness, a blackness without space or time. And then there was Tawa, the Creator, whose power was the Sun. Out of the blackness, Tawa created all the stars and planets of the Universe, and He created the Earth. And so the Earth would not be alone, Tawa reached deep inside the Earth and planted insect creatures, ants and beetles, and things that crawl.*

*Mockingbird gave them Tawa's laws and told them of his desires. But the insect creatures didn't understand how Tawa wanted them to live. They fought and quarreled among themselves. This displeased and sorrowed Tawa so He sent Spider Grandmother to show the insect creatures the way to a better world so that they might live as Tawa wanted.*

*Spider Grandmother showed the way to a new world Tawa had created closer to the surface of the Earth. As they came into this new world, some of the creatures found that their bodies had changed. Now some of them were wolves, rabbits, coyotes, bears, deer, and all the other animals that live on Earth. But they still didn't understand what Great Tawa wanted, and again they fought and killed each other. Again Tawa sent Spider Grandmother to them. This time Spider Grandmother led all the animal creatures to a third world that lay just below the surface of the Earth. In this world, some of the animals became men and these Spider Grandmother taught how to live in peace, to plant corn, and to worship Tawa and all the lesser gods.*

*For a time, all was good and Tawa was pleased. But there were sorcerers among the people, evil men who tempted them away from the life Tawa wanted them to live. The people started to spend their time stealing and gambling, fighting and killing. They neglected their work and they no longer worshiped the gods. But a few of the people did not follow the evil sorcerers. They tended their crops and made their prayer sticks and lived peacefully with each other.*

*When Tawa saw what was happening, for a third time He sent Spider Grandmother to them. She led the people who had resisted evil, up to a small opening in the world. As the people came out of this sipapu hole onto the surface of the Earth into the light of Tawa's Sun, Mockingbird changed them into all the different people that now live on Earth. Some were Hopi, some Zuni, some White Men – and they all went their different directions to live as Tawa decreed in the valleys and forests and mountains of the Earth. The legend has lived in the smoke of kiva fires since before the memory of the oldest man. It is a tale passed down from the Ancient Ones – the Anasazi.*

### **The Gift of Corn**

*When the world was young, all people made their living by hunting, fishing, and farming. They had many crops, but they did not have corn. One day, the star spirits decided to give people corn. But which people should be taught how to grow and use it? The star spirits assembled to decide this question. Moyachuntanah, the Great Star, proposed a*

*plan. "Let us have a race," he said. "Each group of people will send its best runner. Whoever wins the race will win the gift of corn for his people."*

*The other star spirits liked this plan and agreed to it. So the three groups of people sent their swiftest runners: one from the pueblo of Zuni, one from the pueblo of Acoma, and one Navajo. (The Navajo are not Pueblo Indians, but they live in the same area.) Moyachuntanah took an ear of corn, broke it into three parts, and placed the pieces at the finish line. The tip was the shortest piece, the middle was a little longer, and the end was the longest. The winner of the race could choose whichever part he wanted.*

*At the starting signal, the three runners were off. They ran swiftly as deer. The people watched them excitedly, admiring their speed and hoping that their group's runner would win. The Navajo runner was swiftest, and he won the race. He chose the top of the ear of corn, a surprising choice because it is the poorest for seed. Next came the runner from Zuni, who picked the middle piece. The runner from Acoma got the end piece.*

*Mokwanosenah, the Morning Star, who was brother to Moyachuntanah, said, "The Navajo has won the race. His people should receive the knowledge of corn." But Moyachuntanah, the Great Star, said, "It is true that the Navajo ran the fastest. But he chose the smallest piece of corn because it is the lightest and the easiest to carry. The Navajos will always wander from this place to that. They will never settle down long enough to plant and harvest. So his people cannot receive the prize. The Zunis and Acomas stay put and tend their fields well. So we will give them knowledge of how to plant and use corn."*

*And so it has been from the most ancient times. The Navajos continue to move from place to place and do not plant or harvest. They have a winter home in one area and a summer home somewhere else. But the Zunis and Acomas remain in their pueblos, and they make their living by farming. Corn is their most important crop, providing food to last the year round. (Steven Cory, Pueblo Indian, page 44)*

### **Why the Moon Has One Eye**

*The Kachina spirits, who are called the Trues, created T'hoor-id-deh, the Sun, to be father of all things. He was alone, so they made the first woman, Pah-hlee-oh, the Moon Maiden, to be his wife and companion. She had the seeds of all that was good and beautiful in humanity. All the world and all the creatures in it came from Sun Father and Moon Mother. They were full of joy as they watched their strong, happy children. Father watched over them during the day, Mother watched over them at night.*

*But there was no real night, for at that time the Moon Mother had two eyes. She could see as well as the Sun and was just as bright. There was unending day on the earth. Birds always flew, flowers never closed, people continually danced and sang. No one knew how to rest.*

*The Trues saw this was not good. The unending daylight lay heavy upon the young eyes of the world. Their tender eyelids needed soothing night. The Trues said, "Without sleep, the world is growing tired. We must not let the Sun and the Moon see alike. So let us put out one of the Sun Father's eyes. Then there will be darkness half the time, and his children will be able to rest." They summoned the Sun Father and Moon Mother and told them their plan.*

*When she heard, Moon Mother wept, thinking of her husband so strong and handsome. She cried: "No! For my children's sake take my eyes, and spare my husband! How will*

*he supply them with good things? How will he protect them from harm or help them find game if his vision is darkened? Please, blind me instead!" The Trues said, "So it shall be, daughter." And they removed one of her eyes. Never again would she see as well.*

*Night fell upon the earth. This was good: the flowers, the birds, the people all slept their first sleep. And the Moon Mother, who sacrificed with pain as a mother will, did not grow ugly, but became even more beautiful. We all love her to this day. For though she lost the kind of loveliness that girls have, she gained the beauty that can be seen only in the faces of mothers. (Ibid., page 45)*