



Modern Perspectives

Where Did the Inhabitants Go?

Archeologists believe that these people, overcome by drought and other hardships, left to seek a better way of life elsewhere.

Modern Pueblo people have their own perspectives on the history of their ancestors. These tribes, such as the Hopi of Arizona and the Zuni and Rio Grande tribes of New Mexico, are descendants of the prehistoric people referred to as the ancestral Puebloans who occupied the Grand Canyon and other regions in the American Southwest.

Puebloan people do not consider places such as Bright Angel Pueblo to have been abandoned and forgotten. Nor do they believe their ancestors left simply because of changes in climate. The natural changes that forced the people to leave were not only prophesized, but in some instances were caused by the failure to lead responsible lives.



Above: Pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs (carvings) are believed to have significance as both communication tools and spiritual symbols.

Sacred Ground

For some tribes, their place of ancestral emergence into this world lies deep within Grand Canyon. They consider Grand Canyon their first home and believe that when they pass on from this life, their souls will return to the canyon to reside forever.



Above: This 1916 Thomas Moran vision, *Hopi Village, Arizona*, is said to capture the beauty and serenity of this Puebloan homeland.

These failures created an imbalance between the physical and spiritual worlds, ultimately resulting in social and environmental catastrophes. People viewed these events as signs that it was time to move on; to fulfill traditional prophecy and uphold their obligations as “caretakers” of the landscape.

The canyon remains an important cultural crossroad and sacred landscape to modern American Indian people, including the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, Southern Paiute, and Pai peoples. All have histories and traditions that intertwine in Grand Canyon.

Below: The confluence is the juncture in the canyon where the Little Colorado River joins the main Colorado River. This area is considered sacred by some Puebloan descendants.

