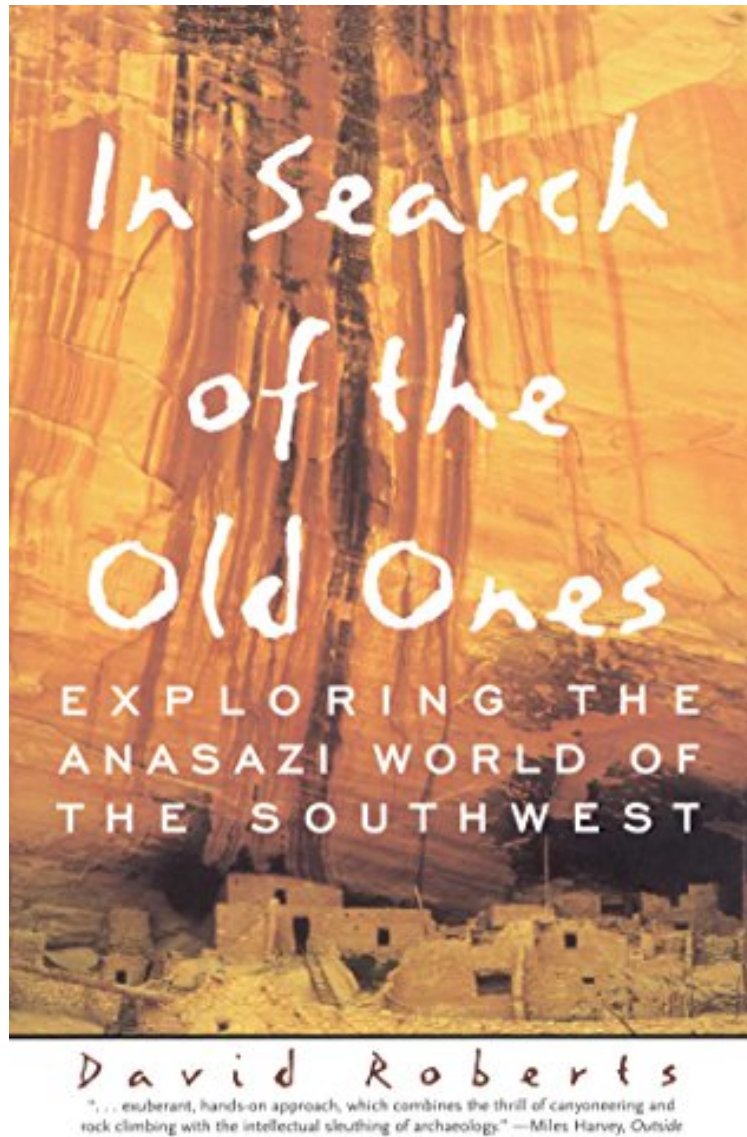


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## In Search of the Old Ones: Exploring the Anasazi World of the Southwest

*David Roberts*

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**David Roberts : In Search of the Old Ones: Exploring the Anasazi World of the Southwest** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Search of the Old Ones: Exploring the Anasazi World of the Southwest:

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An exuberant, hands-on fly-on-the-wall account that combines the thrill of canyoneering and rock climbing with the intellectual sleuthing of archaeology to explore the Anasazi.David Roberts describes the culture of the Anasazi--the name means enemy ancestors in Navajowho once inhabited the Colorado Plateau and whose modern descendants are the Hopi Indians of Arizona. Archaeologists, Roberts writes, have been puzzling over the Anasazi for more than a century, trying to determine the environmental and cultural stresses that caused their society to collapse 700 years ago. He guides us through controversies in the historical record, among them the haunting question of whether the Anasazi committed acts of cannibalism. Roberts's book is full of up-to-date thinking on the culture of the ancient people who lived in the harsh desert country of the Southwest.

.com Roberts describes the culture of the Anasazi--the name means "enemy ancestors" in Navajo--who once inhabited the Colorado Plateau and whose modern descendants are the Hopi Indians of Arizona. Archaeologists, Roberts writes, have been puzzling over the Anasazi for more than a century, trying to determine the environmental and cultural stresses that caused their society to collapse 700 years ago. He guides us through controversies in the historical record, among them the haunting question of whether the Anasazi committed acts of cannibalism. Roberts's book is full of up-to-date thinking on the culture of the ancient people who lived in the harsh desert country of the Southwest.From Publishers WeeklySix hundred years ago, the Anasazi, said to be the ancestors of the Hopi, Zuni and other Pueblo peoples, left their homes in the region known as the Four Corners, where Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona converge, and disappeared. They had inhabited the area for perhaps 5000 or more years. They left behind pots, weavings, tools, monuments, human remains and, above all, their astounding cliff "palaces," containing apartments of as many as 20 rooms each. Many of these are still viable but so fragile that, in the national park lands where most are located, they are closed to the public. Roberts (Once They Moved Like the Wind) has spent 20 years exploring the region, and he recounts the history of the discoveries, the appalling thefts of artifacts, the cave paintings and his own transcendent experiences in stumbling upon some vestige of this lost civilization. His awe at the region's beauty, with its sheer cliffs, canyons and mesas, and at the testaments to an unknown culture will be contagious for readers. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.From School Library JournalYA?Travel back 1000 years or more as Roberts weaves his way through the canyons of the Southwest, exploring sites once inhabited by the "ancient ones," now commonly referred to as the Anasazi. Perhaps no other group raises as much speculation, for they've left behind a legacy of basket-making, pottery, and well-constructed homes in the sandstone cliffs of the canyons, yet have left no substantive clues as to what caused their disappearance. Through the author's travels, readers learn of the problems of land management in the West; the dilemma of the National Park Service to preserve, restore, or maintain these sites as they stretch pinched budgets; the importance of the provenance of a found object; and the glory of the petroglyphs. Young people who hike or rock climb will be intrigued as they discover that the cut-out hand-and-toe trails that enabled the Anasazi to scramble up the cliffsides are still usable today. The anger felt by the author over the loss of thousands of sites to Lake Powell after building the Glen Canyon Dam is as obvious as his reverence for these unknown people and their culture. The book goes far beyond travel writing and will entice young people to continue their reading about these mysterious people, ponder the tantalizing clues left behind in their cliff-top and mesa dwellings.?Pam Spencer, Fairfax County Public Schools, VACopyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.