

Sent: 2004-09-15 - 22:00
Subject: Postcard

Today our vacation was in ruins. We went to to see the remnants of a lost American civilization, the abandoned buildings of Chaco Canyon.



Now stop reading this email. Go get a reference book on the Anasazi, read it and return here.

Last time at Chaco we concentrated on the dwellings on the floor of the canyon, like Kin Kletso.



And the great kiva at Casa Rinconada. You will recognize the traditional round structure and the wooden struts that once held up the roof.



This year we hiked up to the North Mesa and then the South Mesa. This is part of the trail on the north side. On the south side, we got as high as 6666 ft.



Once you get to the top, there are the ruins of Pueblo Alto and New Alto. You know by now that this pair of ruins represents two different building styles, respectively, from two culturally distinct sub-groups of Anasazi. Today the ruins overlook modern Navajo homesteads. Traditional Navajos avoid the ruins as they're full of the bones and ghosts of buried ancients. Modern Navajos don't worry about these *chindi*.



We had lunch at Chaco and no, I won't.

On the way out we stopped to visit with some Navajo horses. No fences. It was a nice break from the kidney-rattling ride down 16 miles of washboard dirt access road.



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