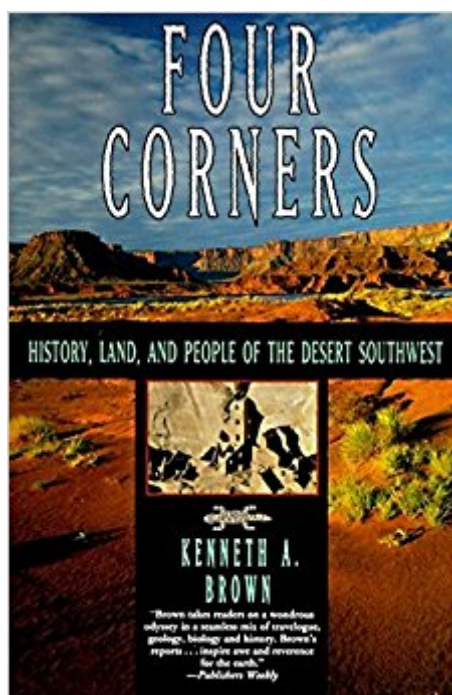


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Four Corners: History, Land, And People Of The Desert Southwest



Synopsis

In this masterful tour de force of nature writing, Kenneth Brown explores one of the most awe-inspiring regions on earth -- the Four Corners of Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. Weaving together its geological, ecological and human histories, he presents a unique portrait of this ruggedly beautiful landscape that goes beyond mere description to give readers a true sense of the land in all its richness. Here are rock croppings that are 2 billion years old and broad desert valleys where rivers of lava cooled to form floors of solid rock. Here ancient hunter-gatherers stalked the woolly mammoth, four-story pueblos were carved by the Anasazi from sheer stone cliffs and an ancient midnight Holy Week ceremony is still practiced in a modern Spanish village. Providing a fresh perspective on a region currently enjoying an upwelling of interest, Four Corners is a fascinating study of one of the world's great wonders -- compelling reading for all science, nature, anthropology and travel aficionados.

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Customer Reviews

With its spectacular ancient rock formations, high plateaus and desert valleys, its Native American multistory cliff dwellings, its confluence of Mormon, Spanish, Navajo, Ute, Anglo and other cultures, the Four Corners region--the intersection of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah--is a world unto itself. Nature writer Brown (*Cycles of Rock and Water*) takes readers on a wondrous odyssey through this sparsely inhabited region in a seamless mix of travelogue, geology, biology and history. He visits the hanging gardens and alcove pine forests hidden in Utah's canyons; takes us into lava fields near the Zuni Mountains; and joins an archeological dig of an ancient village in New Mexico

built by Archaic hunters and gatherers perhaps 7000 years ago. We stumble upon rock paintings depicting giant, ghostlike figures and tour pueblos of several hundred rooms built by the Anasazi, a sophisticated people who abandoned their homes some 600 years ago. Brown's reports on Arizona Hopi struggling to preserve traditional ways, on a Spanish village cooperative in New Mexico and on geophysicists' mapping of the Colorado Plateau's paleomagnetic fields inspire awe and reverence for the earth. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A fascinating, eloquent study of the ancient people and terrain of the dramatic high rock plains of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, from the author of *Cycles of Rock and Water*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If anyone has been to the Four Corners area, particularly the Grand Canyon and Monument Valley, you will appreciate the author who takes you well beyond those more obviously known pleasures and takes you into more remote and attractive parts of the large four corners area giving the reader an introduction to geology while explaining in the initial chapters how the land and continent was formed. The book goes on to discuss each area, its rock formations including mountains, plateaus and valleys and the vegetation that makes each area unique. The author includes interviews with numerous specialists throughout the book along his own personal journey through these areas that he hikes and camps and spends time in some very remote areas. His discussion of the people that once lived on the land and the ones that currently do provides a human linkage to present day. The mystery of the Anasazi is quite fascinating as these ancient cliff dwellers disappeared around 1400 AD but may have become part of the present day Hopi tribe. The description of their cliff like fortress dwellings and the archaeological studies is one of the most interesting parts of the book. Why did they live along a cliff in large communities and what happened to them? The book is not a quick read but one that deserves patience to appreciate the in-depth descriptions that Brown provides. The only downturn, which is very slight, is that the author has little tolerance for tourists that in his opinion, along with the specialist he meets, strongly feel that tourists overwhelm these sensitive sites. However, for one who loves to travel these wonderful places with great respect for the sensitivity of the environment, we must all do our part to try to rein in those few that unfortunately create a negative impact no matter where they visit or live.

As a native of Utah and a student of the geology and natural history of the Colorado Plateau, this is

without a doubt the best available summary of the fascinating heritage of the Four Corners region. I've read the paperback edition from front to back twice and parts of it three times. I recently managed to find a copy in hard back in excellent condition that I've added to my collection of keepers, and I'll read it again before I make my next trip to southern Utah. It astonishes me that I have yet to find this book at any of the national park bookstores. This book is very highly recommended for anyone with an interest in or planning to visit the most remarkable region of the continental United States. It's a great introduction to so many facets of this awesome area! In my opinion, it communicates the flavor of the country as well as John Wesley Powell's classic documentary of the first formal exploration of the Colorado River. Don't miss this one. Michael Shea, MD

Good buy!

Interesting but not the spellbinder I was anticipating. Very informative though - could use some diagrams along with the text I think.

This book deserves a less prosaic name. With an engaging writing style, Kenneth Brown provides a knowledgeable and highly readable introduction to the natural and human history of the Colorado Plateau, including the geology, forests and biological life zones, and the Anasazi, Pueblo, Navajo, Spanish, Mormon, and recent Anglo influences. I'd highly recommend Four Corners to anyone with an interest in this fascinating region.

If any book would benefit from pictures it would be this one. Too bad the author didn't feel the same way as there are very few pictures of all the beautiful places written about in this book.

The geology, the ecology, the human history of the Four Corners area, the Colorado Plateau surrounding the intersection point of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, is infinitely interesting. It teaches us that if we dig deep, we can learn so much about our whole world and how generations of peoples have interacted with it from a one single place. In "Four Corners," Kenneth Brown attempts to give a sweeping perspective. He discusses:- the extraordinary geology of the Grand Staircase that begins at the Grand Canyon and ends at Bryce Canyon. This is the land that defined our modern knowledge of geology as the Earth's history. It is literally the textbook definition of how land is created and

evolves.- the life and times of the Ancestral Puebloans people who created the magnificent cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde and around the Four Corners area (until recently this group was called the Anasazi, meaning ancient enemy in Navajo which isn't very nice). Why did these folks build such elaborate houses into the slides sides of mountains around 1200, abandon them in 1300, and never return? This is a great mystery of the America that we should all know about.- the Spanish who came later, then the American explorers like John Wesley Powell, the Navajo who were so adroit at mastering new skills like ranching and farming- the Mormons who made the desert bloom- the U.S. government who created the greatest national parks and giant dams and power plants Overall, I learned that the Four Corners area is super fascinating, and I want to explore more by reading other books (Cadillac Desert about water in the Southwest, The Gathering of Zion about the Mormons, Code Talkers about the Navajo). By the way, I highly recommend reading Desert Solitaire, which is quoted at numerous times in this book. However, the narrative of this book is draining. Brown jumps from topic to topic with such speed such that it's hard to put things into perspective. His many visits to speak with some local researcher or resident or his views during some backpacking or canoeing trip come out of nowhere. One minute, there will be a textbook-dense paragraph about a Pinyon-Juniper forest and the next he'll be giving the backstory and resume of some park ranger or scientist that we then never hear from again. There are many classics that help us better understand the Four Corners. This is not one of them.

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