Supplementary Materials: Primary Sources Background Information

Many ancestral sites were explored by individuals on the US government-sponsored surveys, which facilitated post-Civil War westward expansionism. Photographer William Henry Jackson made a trip to Chaco in 1877 as part of the U.S. Geologic and Geographic Survey (also known as the Hayden Survey). Anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan probably never visited Chaco Canyon before he published his 1869 article. He devoted most of his time to the study of the Iroquois but put forth a theory that the Chaco great houses were the Seven Cities of Cibola sought by 16th-century Spanish explorer Francisco Coronado. Lt. James Simpson, who visited Chaco in 1849 as part of a military expedition, disputed Morgan’s conclusion in 1874. Simpson made some of the first detailed drawings and descriptions of the canyon sites. The expedition’s Mexican guide identified some of the largest houses by name, which Simpson applied and are still in use today. By the 1890s, Chaco had become widely known due to articles published in popular magazines and newspapers; a 3D model of Pueblo Bonito was part of an exhibit at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition. Two newspaper articles are included among the list of primary sources. Reflections on Chaco written by Pueblo authors follow their concerns with ancestral, historical, astronomical, ceremonial, environmental, and social relationships with the place. Simon Ortiz’s essay offers an interesting challenge to the above-mentioned early explorers and present-day non-Indian visitors to the canyon who sought/seek knowledge of mysterious and ancient Others. Many early explorers ignored local Indigenous perspectives, believing that local Indians could not be related to the builders of Chaco. The first explorations of Chaco coincide with the period of increased US military aggression toward Indians in the West, as well as of federal policies bent on eradicating their cultural practices and knowledge. Since that time, Native American communities have increasingly promoted their engagement with and authority over the interpretation of their ancestral past. These sources present varied points of view toward Chaco Canyon, its architects, and its residents. In the writing assignment, which follows the immersive experience, students will be asked to reflect on the ways two of the primary sources better inform or challenge their Chaco Canyon immersive experience and how they might explain any differences in perspectives.