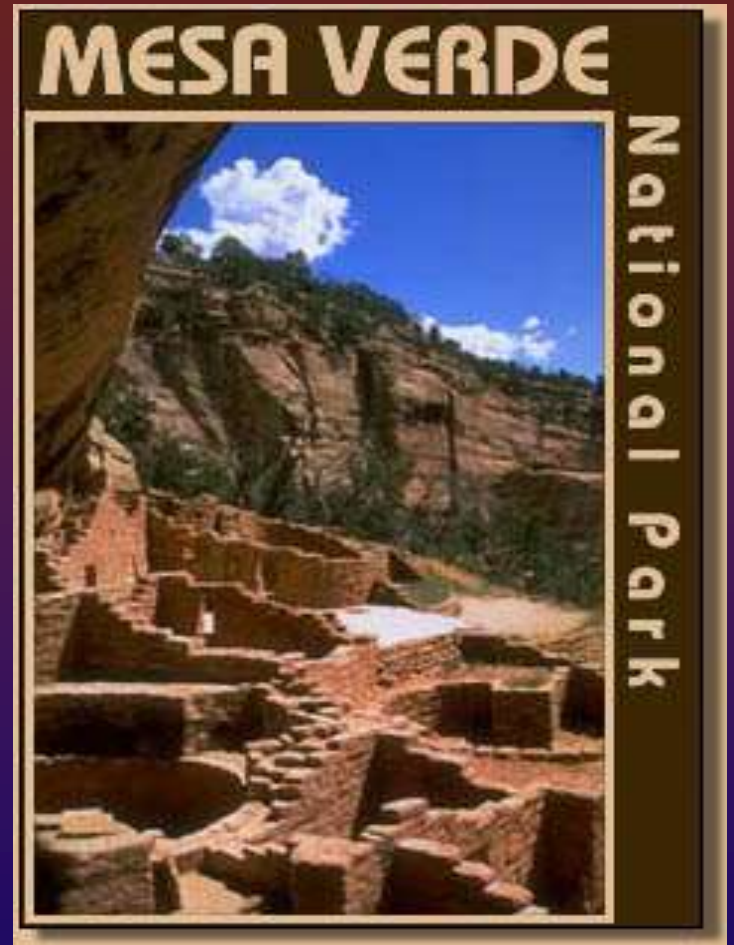


# The Mystery of the Anasazi People

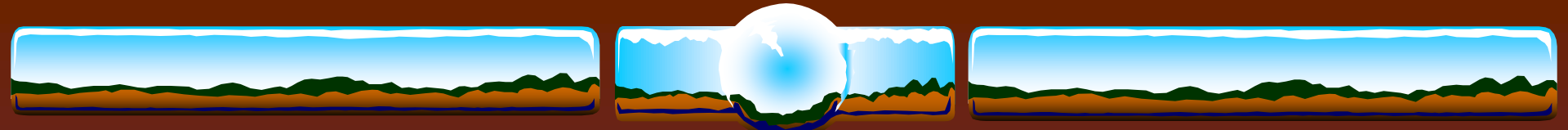




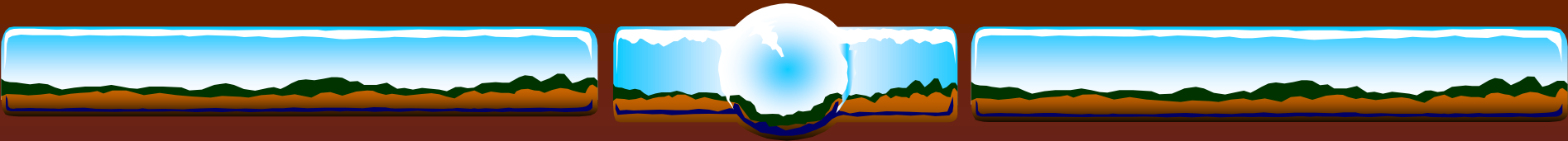
For thousands of years Native American  
pueblo people have lived in the  
American southwest.

Today, pueblo communities and  
reservation lands are scattered across  
northern New Mexico and Arizona.



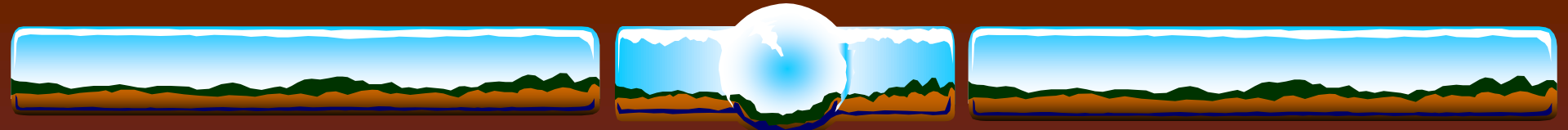


When the Spanish explorer Francisco Vazquez de Coronado arrived in northern New Mexico in 1540, he discovered over a hundred occupied Pueblo villages in northern New Mexico. Most of them were clustered along the Rio Grande River valley. Each Pueblo group was centered around a self-ruled village.



There are two large groups of modern Pueblo people, the Eastern Pueblos and the Western Pueblos.

The Eastern Pueblos include communities along the Rio Grande Valley and its tributaries.



The Western Pueblos include Hopi communities in northern Arizona, as well as the pueblo of Zuni, located on the Zuni River near the Arizona-New Mexico state line.

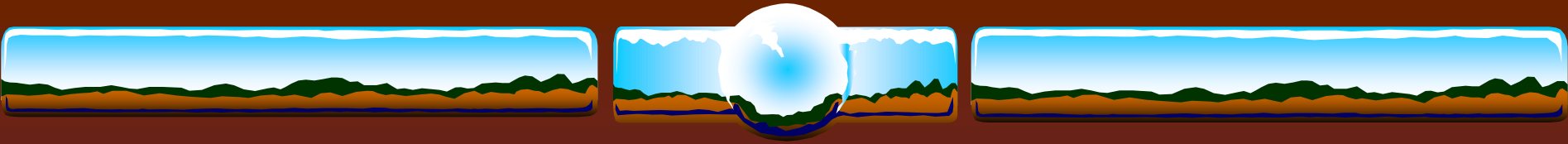




Together, the people of these two groups  
speak four different languages.

They are unified, however,  
by a wide range of shared cultural traits,  
called the Puebloan culture.





About 1500 years ago, a group of Indians living in the Four Corners region chose Mesa Verde- a high plateau- as their home.

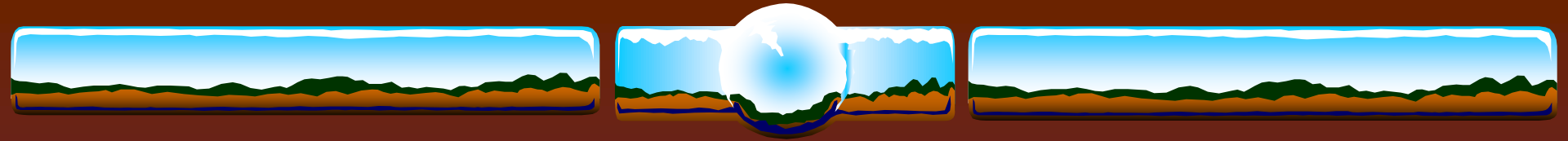
For more than 700 years they lived here, building huge stone cities in the recesses of the canyon walls.











We call these people the Anasazi,  
from a Navajo word meaning the  
“ancient ones”.

They left no written records  
and much that was important in their  
lives has perished.

Yet the ruins  
speak of a  
people skilled  
at building,  
artistic in  
their crafts,  
and talented  
with making a  
living from  
a difficult  
land.





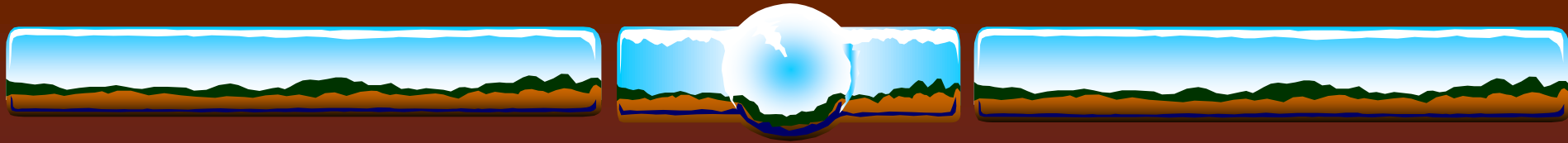
The first Anasazi who settled in Mesa Verde are known as "Basketmakers" because of their skill at that craft.



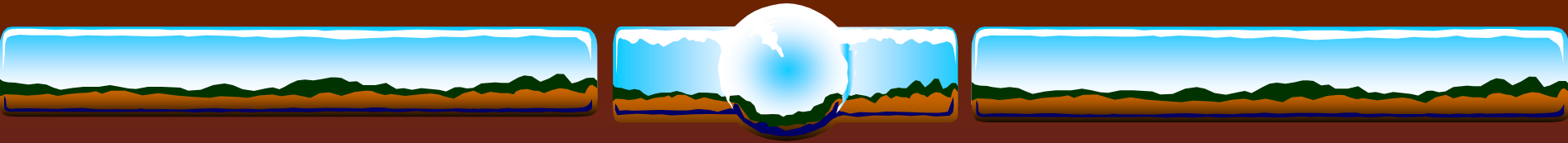
Formerly a nomadic people, they were just beginning to lead a more settled way of life. Farming replaced hunting and gathering.



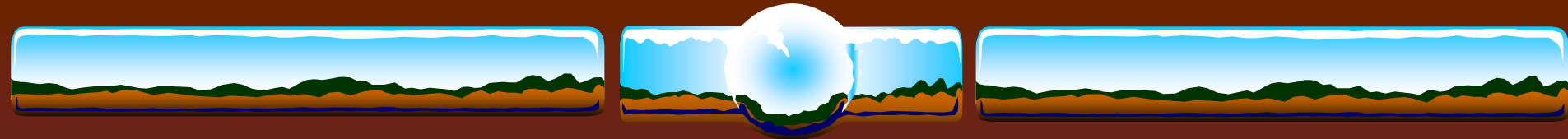




These early Anasazi lived in small villages, built on the mesa tops. They learned how to make potter and the bow and arrow- a more efficient weapon for hunting than the atlatl (spear).



The Anasazi were a stone-age people,  
without metal of any kind.  
They skillfully shaped stone, bone and  
wood into a variety of tools for  
grinding, cutting, pounding, chopping,  
scrapping, and weaving.



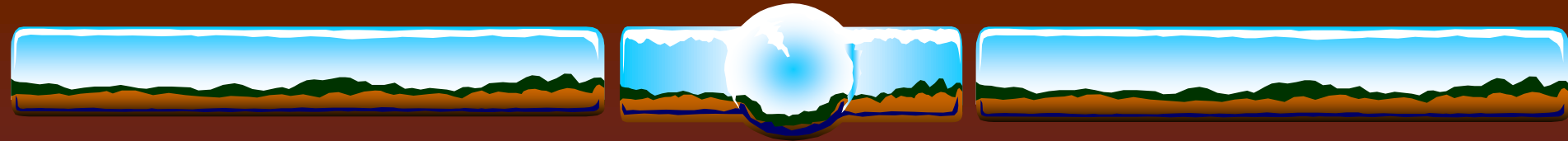
They used the digging stick  
for farming,  
the stone axe for clearing land,  
the bow and arrow for hunting  
and stones for cutting.

From bone they fashioned scrapers  
for cleaning animal hides for clothing.

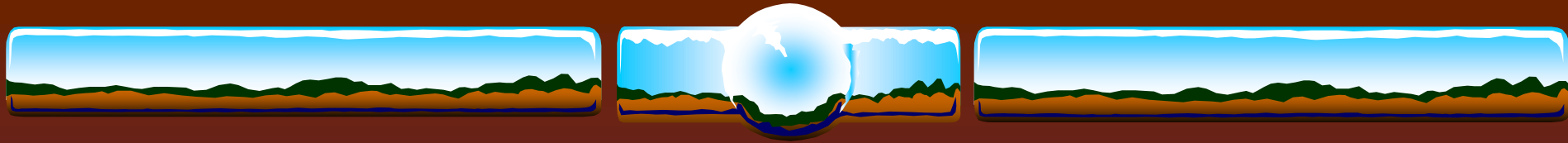


The prehistoric Anasazi people were  
the apparent ancestors of the modern  
Puebloan culture.





Their skills gave them a surplus  
(more than needed) of goods which  
they sold or bartered with neighbors.



The people were prosperous.  
Their cliff dwellings grew into huge  
complexes centered around large  
kivas  
(circular underground spaces where  
religious ceremonies were held).





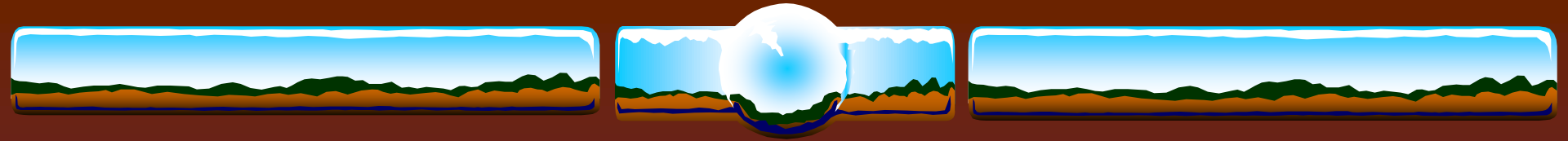




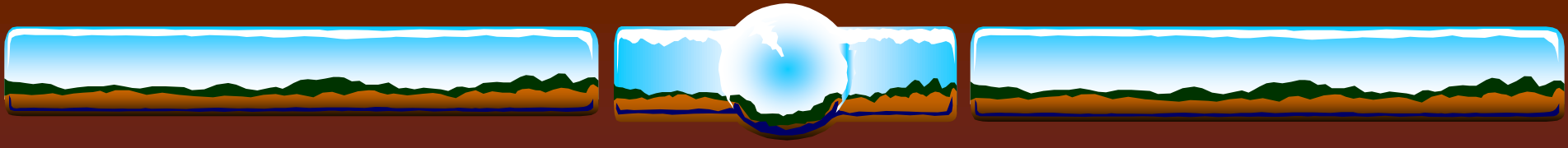




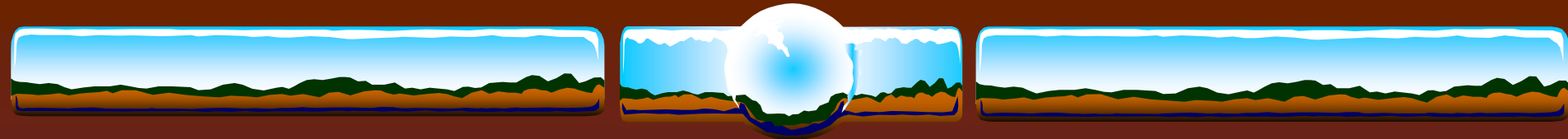




But something happened that made the cliff dwellers leave their cities around 1300. They abandoned their homes and mysteriously moved away forever.



We know that this was a time of drought and crop failures. Maybe after hundreds of years of overuse of the land and its resources, the soil, the forests and animal life were depleted.



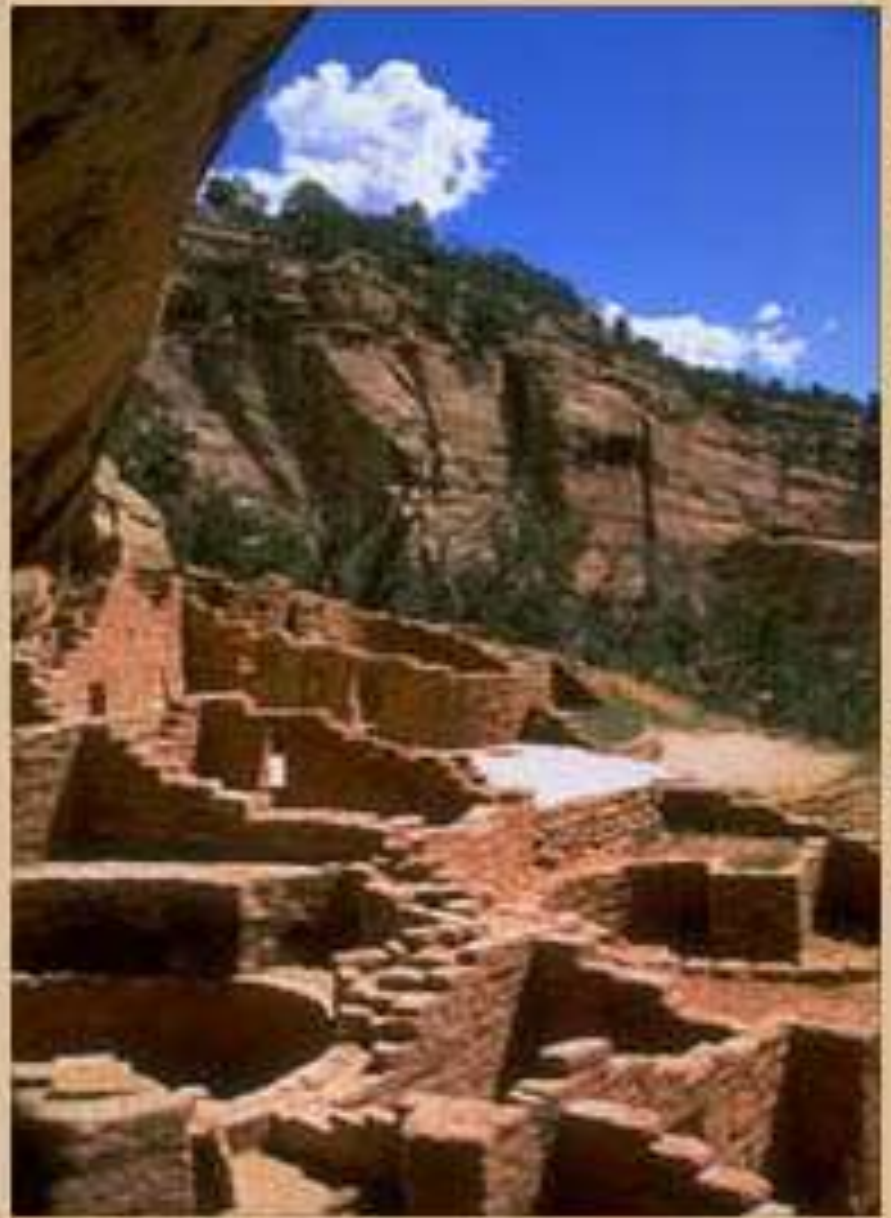
When the Anasazi left, they perhaps  
settling among the river valleys of  
what is today the Southwest,  
Whatever happened, it seems likely  
that some Pueblo Indians today are  
descendants of the cliff dwellers of  
Mesa Verde.



# The Mystery of....

## MESA VERDE

National Park



Source:  
*Mesa Verde  
National Park*

# MESA VERDE

National Park

