Glimpses Of The Ancient Southwest

David E Stuart

The study, based on DNA analysis of corn cobs dating back over 4,000 years, provides the most comprehensive tracking to date of the origin and evolution of maize in the Southwest and settles a long debate over whether maize moved via an upland or coastal route into the U.S. Study findings, which also show how climatic and cultural impacts influenced the genetic makeup of maize, will be reported Jan. 8 in the journal Nature Plants. The study compared DNA from archaeological samples from the U.S. Southwest to that from traditional maize varieties in Mexico, looking for genetic similarities that would resolve the debate.

"The Southwest -- nowhere in the United States are the ancient and the modern so intricately interwoven. New Mexico alone boasts nearly 40,000 archaeological sites! Consulting anthropologist David Stuart describes how archeologists find and probe these riches from the ancient past -- from urban Albuquerque to remote mesa-tops and arroyos in Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Colorado. Photographs, drawings, maps, and a full index add to these 'glimpses' of the ancestors of contemporary Southwestern Indians and the archeologists who are their chroniclers." ~ back cover. Getting trained as an archaeologist, and learning to write for academic journals, ruins you as a writer.