• Nearly the whole Inca Empire was part of the rugged Andes mountain chain
• The pre-imperial homeland of the Incas was a small area along the Urubamba River Valley, on the eastern side of the Andes of present-day Peru
• Like nowhere else in the Americas, the people of the Andes had for over a thousand years domesticated beasts of burden: alpacas and llamas
• The origins of the Incas are murky.
• Archaeological evidence suggests they were a regional ethnic group, or tribe, living around present-day Cuzco. However, Inca oral tradition has them emerging from the chilly depths of the high Andes Lake, Titicaca
• There may have been as many as eight Supreme Inca rulers before the greatest of the Incas, Pachacuti, claimed the throne around 1438
• The foundation of the Inca empire was their ability to grow excess food and store it
• The Incas’ unique social organization brought together over 7 million people, speaking many different languages and spanning over 2,000 miles
• All worked towards a common purpose
• The Incas had no written language
• The Incas built stoneworks capable of withstanding tremendous earthquakes
• The Incas built 20,000 miles of roads
• The Incas achieved a great empire through a remarkable organization of human labor
• Human labor was the coin of the Inca Empire
• Through a system of communication called quipu, information was constantly flowing through the empire by runners
• Inca Empire created a world of magnificent accomplishments
• The Incas made pottery, including small effigies depicting animals such as llamas, alpacas and the large predator of the region – the jaguar
• Utilitarian pots, beakers and dual bottles with simple repetitive geometric patterns are distinctly Inca
• The Inca state organized artisan women to produce distinctive textiles
• The Incas are most famous for their spectacular stonework and naturalistic artistic design
• Machu Picchu, the temple palace in the clouds, is the crown jewel of Inca architecture and design
• Started by Pachacuti, but never completed, Machu Picchu was never touched, damaged or looted by the Spanish
• Lost to the ages, Machu Picchu was rediscovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham
• Machu Picchu is sharply divided into two parts: an agricultural area and an urban area