

Q. How did you happen to do this book?

A. It really all began in the summer of 1941 when I was on a short trip up the Rio Grande Valley above Creede, Colorado, and I was impressed with the beauty of the landscape of that region. It suddenly occurred to me what fun it would be to follow the river, and the more I thought about it the more I realized what great changes took place in the landscape and also the variety of people and life all along the river. Then came the war, and I suddenly found myself in Wichita Kansas as public relations photographer for the Boeing Airplane Company where my duties covered almost every branch of photography except landscape. ~~I believe that~~ During many long, tedious hours in the darkroom there in the factory, I thought a great deal about the Southwest, and of-course with longing. Now that ~~this~~ book is finished, I believe that the strenuous work at the B 29 plant put me in good training for what was to come! In May 1945 I went to New York in quest of a job. I saw Mr. Duell and Mr. Goodwin of Duell, Sloan & Pearce about another book, and during the conversation something was said which made me think of the Rio Grande. I suggested such a project and was delighted when Mr. Duell immediately signed a contract with me to do the Rio Grande ^{river story}.

Q. Did you know the country all the way down the river?

A. No- I had never been below Socorro, New Mexico, but I knew the upper part of the river fairly well, and it was comparatively easy for me to make an analysis of this part for the book which set the pattern for it but which left a large question mark for all the part that I did not know. Little did I realize the size of task ahead, which I dare

say was just as well, but it has been a most exciting piece of work to do.

Q. As a photographer how did you handle the text?

A. This book was my opportunity to try to accomplish an idea that had been formulating in my mind. To make not only a photographic sequence with a story, but to make each page a unit of picture and text so that the two moved along together. In making the analysis, three natural divisions presented themselves. With each ^{division} it was necessary to have as short, ^{and} ~~was~~ = succinct a history as possible, ~~for each~~ ~~division~~. Then began the task of hunting out the most revealing points of view as to the river and the landscape and to find the characteristic native people and the most important of their activities. I found that ~~in order to~~ to write the most simple historic text, ~~it~~ took a tremendous amount of research, and I assure you that I have given myself a liberal education ^{on the subject}! But I had to sort out what seemed to me the most essential outline, for such a book as this can only be an outline, there is far too much material for more, and ~~that~~ it would take years and several volumes to do a complete job. Right here may I say that I am looking forward greatly to the publication of Paul Horgan's Rio Grande for the River Series. His will be just the reverse of mine- mostly text and some pictures. His coverage will be far more complete I am sure. As to the writing of my text, this particular form is probably the easiest; it does not require the creation of a character nor the development of a plot. ~~In order to~~ ^{ing} carry out my picture-text

unit idea, ~~me~~ meant saying what had to be said as simply and directly as possible. I find that in my kind of writing I apply the same principles I use in designing a picture. There must be purpose- balance-rythm- light and shade. The medium was different.

Q. Are the people of the Rio Grande as important as the scenery?

A. The people are important, yes, but this book is primarily the portrait of a river and the land through which it flows. The people- the Indians, the Spanish Americans, the Mexicans and the Anglos are important but are subservient to the river. The people come and go- the river flows on forever. That is why I have refrained from ~~showing~~ ^{all} any large heads or close ups. I wanted the people as they live and work along the river.

Q. What did you enjoy most in doing the book?

A. The creative part, of-course. Hunting out the subject matter and then trying to make it conform to my general plan, while at the same time, making each individual picture to the very best of my ability. I have tried to include all seasons of the year, all times of day; sunshine, storm, and moonlight, and to make the photography cover as wide a range as I was able. The whole project was one that I just loved to do. There were certain highlights of-course, ^{such as} the long horseback trip to the Source of the river. Mr. Carroll Wetherill of the Lost Trail Ranch, which is located at the end of the road, guided me to the very top, with camera and tripod on a pack horse. It was a long and a hard day's work, but as I love to ride (and to work) it was a day of enjoyment. The first six pictures were made that day.

Then there was the making of the pictures of all the different kinds of trees that grow along along the Rio Grande, I certainly enjoyed doing all of those. There was the interest of exploring the Big Bend National Park with my ~~good friend Dorothy Stewart who went down there with me.~~ There were many places in the Park we were unable to reach as roads and means of access are not yet available to many places that must be wonderful. Someday I hope ~~I may~~ ^{to} go back there and add more pictures to my own series. We had the fun of doing the roudup series on that trip too. Another highlight was finding the charming little town of Cerralvo in Mexico thirty five miles south of Roma, Texas. This Spanish Colonial town is the oldest European settlement along the entire river course. It was founded in 1583 by Carvajal and originally names Leon, Capital of the Province of Leon. Then I love to fly, and all the air photographs were ~~fun~~ exciting to do. My equipm ent was very inadequate, but even so they were all fun ~~to~~. One learns so much of the topography of the country from air. Perhaps the biggest thrill of all was making the final picture- the one of the Rio Grande emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. I had to wait five days for the right weather conditions. I planned the flight to backlight the water which would give me the brilliant reflections from it, but I did not anticipate haveing the waves out in the Gulf show up so distinctly.

Q. What were some of your difficulties?

A. There were lots of them. At the beginning, in late July of 1945 I was not only on rationed gasoline but film was still very hard to get, so that it was necessary to be

perfectly certain that each exposure I made was worth the doing. ~~Exundat~~ There could be only one negative to a subject. It was more than a year later before film was easier to get. You see, I used a 8x10 view camera for everything except the action and air photographs. One great difficulty, perhaps th' greatest, was wind. To get the depth of field which ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I always want in my photographs, it is necessary to use a small diaphragm. This means longer exposures, and wind can be a great menace.

Q. Is there anything I have neglected that you would like to add to this interview?

A. Yes, ~~Mr. Goodwin~~ ^{Walter Goodwin} there certainly is. I had the most wonderful help and cooperation from all the people I encountered the whole eighteen hundred mile length of the river. I can never thank them sufficiently, and I am sure that without their help I would have accomplished little. They were simply wonderful. Up in the Hight country in Colorado, all through New Mexico, then the long stretch along the Berder in Texas and the short trips over into Mexico- everywhere, the people were interested in the undertaking and entheusiastically helpful. And after all my work was done, and during the long months of preparation, my publishers, had wonderful patience and gave me gratifying cooperation. We none of us realized what a lengthy undertaking this was. Now that the book~~s~~ is finally finished, I am g~~re~~atly pleased with beautiful ~~book~~ job of bookmaking they have done. Mr. Walter Goodwin, formerly of Santa Fe ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ who is now a member of the Firm of Duell,

Sloan and Pierce, had the book in charge and is responsible for the fine design and format of the book.

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