

On the western slope of the Chuska Mountains in North Eastern Arizona, exist a maze of related canyons deeply eroded by water and wind during the past 100,000 years, known to us as the Canyon de Chelly complex. Here during the past 1900 years have lived Indian People of many strains. First the Basket makers, whose primitive dwellings have been found by archaeologists ^{during} the past century. Then the cliff dwellers - the Anasazi - the early Pueblo People - the ancestors of possibly of the Hopi - Zuni - or others. Lastly came the Navaho - sometime during the ~~last of the~~ ^{seventeenth} ~~eighteenth~~ century as they gradually moved westward from Diné Tah, Old Navaho Land, near the junction of the San Juan and the Pine Rivers of northern New Mexico & Southern Colorado - ~~who~~ we first know of ~~there~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{Navaho} speaking people sometime about AD 1550 as they appeared in the Southwest of the United States, following a slow migration from the North West and even in more ancient times, (no one knows yet -) from Mongolia via Behring Straights.

more
{ Here also exists to-day some of the }
{ greatest beauty to be found anywhere }
on this planet Earth.

The Headwaters of this great drainage
system commences near the top of
Washington Pass ^{in the Chukar} and adjoining areas
where the natural drainage gathers
in a ^{rather flat but} funnel like formation, heading
westward as it gains momentum to
the Leads of Canyons + Del Muerto
In all of this area, consisting of
some square miles, the
snow, in some winters lies deep, and
summer thunderstorms drop great
volumes of water which during the
thousands of years have gradually
eroded these canyons. These ~~fast floods~~
of rain water + melted snow send
flashes of turbulent water over the
rims and down the heads of the canyons
tearing up trees moving great boulders
sinking deep into the sandy beds,
later to rise ^{in places to} creating areas of thick
quicksand.

Yet during the quiet times
the Indians settled here - growing the
crops of corn, beans + squash on the ^{new} level
table slopes left by receded floods,

which over the years, now exist above flood level.

Until the advent of the automobile, these canyons were reached only by foot, on horseback or in wagons. This was an arduous life during that period. Then within ~~the~~ the past 50 (?) years, came the motor driven vehicle and since 1945 - the four wheel drive variety of car which has now given greater access to the canyons, though there are times when it is still dangerous to use even this mode of access.

In 1931 ^{with an agreement with the Tribe} the National Park Service established a Monument here to protect the ruined dwellings of the past from the relic hunters, and those who seek to destroy rather than preserve. The area is a part of the Navaho Nation and we Americans are the momentary guardians, until the day when the Navaho people themselves have developed this particular knowledge of preservation necessary to keep the entire area safe & for history.