

Canyon de Chelly is a place that I had heard about since about 1908-10. My father had been somewhere in the Southwest about that time and brought home a large photograph by Edward S. Curtis, the famous one of Canyon de Chelly with the seven Navaho horsemen in the foreground. When we moved to the ranch near Delta in 1911, that picture was on our living room wall, I have an early photo of my own showing it. Later, in 1915 when we moved back to Colo. Springs, the Curtis photograph hung over our fireplace, so I had long association with the Canyon. It was not until 1930 that my good friend Elizabeth Fortu and I made our first trip there. It was a windy September day, but as it was our only chance, we drove in a Navaho wagon as far up de Chelly as the White House. The wonderful sight of that ruin in the wall of the Canyon made me make almost the same photograph all the early photographs had made. Since 1930 I had longed to go back to the Canyon to explore it further, but it was not until 1942, that The School of American Research, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Schwartz, gave me a grant to produce a book on the Canyon. So here is a book full of pictures and there will be only a few words as to why and ^{how} I made them as we look, ~~at them~~ as we talk about it and decide the best way to put it all together.

It is hard to decide which is the best way to receive one's first impressions, because it differs so greatly from the Grand Canyon. It is a series of retreating mesas and is a mile deep and five miles wide giving a great feeling of space. De Chelly, on the other hand, is only one thousand feet deep at its greatest depth and its walls are sheer & perpendicular.

The small mountain range bisecting the Navaho reservation from west to east, is abrupt on its eastern side. On the western slope, however, it descends in diminishing mesas toward the west. Cut into these mesas is a wide funnel-like area that gathers the descending drainage into the Canyon de Chelly complex. The two major canyons, de Chelly & Del Muerto, join at first a short distance of about 4 miles above the actual entrance to the canyon, with the Chink Wash continuing the drainage of the whole area to the junction with the San Juan River.