

Not until I moved to Santa Fe in 1946 did I have any desire to visit Mexico. Before that, with the exception of trips to Europe, the focus of my interest was the exploration of the United States, many regions ^{as} of which at that time were still not completely known ~~and visited~~ as they are today. In New York when Stieglitz exhibited my photographs, I met Georgia O'Keeffe, who soon after moved to New Mexico, and it was at the Ghost Ranch, where she established herself as a painter of the New Mexico landscape, that I saw her frequently and we became friends. A mutual friend was the Taos writer and poet ^{Spud Johnson, ~~then accompanied~~} who had ~~traveled~~ ^{traveled} to Mexico with D. H. Lawrence, Georgia, who

had never traveled abroad, got the idea from what she had been told about Mexico that she would like to visit that country and invited Spud to accompany ^{an automobile} her on a motor trip to Mexico and Aline, my wife, and I were asked to join them in our own vehicle. The proposal appealed to us very much, it being February in 1951, as a chance to enjoy a warmer climate for a few weeks.

^{my wife Aline} ~~had the idea~~ ^{proposed a trip} that it would be fun to go to Mexico ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{see} ~~for a few weeks to experience a different culture and~~ ^{Country} ~~enjoy a warmer climate as an escape from winter.~~ ^{away} She sought Spud's advice ^{approached} and together they ~~proposed~~ ^{proposed} to Georgia, who had never ~~visited a foreign land,~~ ^{been outside the U.S.} that the four of us ^{go} ~~drive down to Mexico~~ ^(in separate cars). It was an adventure that appealed to Georgia. We set off ^{from Santa Fe} on February ^{after} a delay over obtaining tourist visas, for Laredo, Texas where we crossed the border into Mexico. At a liesurly rate we followed the Pan American Highway south, ~~stopping early for the night.~~ ^{resting for picnic lunches with food that Georgia had brought along, and stopping early for the night.} Georgia always wanted to eat supper ~~xxxx~~ as soon as she was settled in her room which conflicted with ^{what} the wishes of Aline's, Spud's and mine who looked forward to ^{who looked forward to drinks having drinks} a preprandial happy hour ~~xxxxxx~~ together before supper. The solution too often was that Aline and I ate alone, Spud deferring ~~xx~~ ^{I preferred} as her guest, to Georgia's wishes.

^{traveled} We stayed together until we ^dreached Mexico City, ^{where} when we became separated while looking for hotel accommodations. ^{After} Following a few days in Mexico City,

In February, 1951 my wife, Aline, (to see a different country and to escape the last of winter), proposed a trip to Mexico for a few weeks. She sought Spud's advice, and together they approached Georgia, who had never been outside the United States, with the proposal that the four of us go on a trip to Mexico. It was an adventure that appealed to Georgia. We set off from Santa Fe ~~early in February~~ in separate cars (early in February) for Laredo, Texas, where we crossed the border into Mexico. At a ^{leisurely} pace we followed the Pan American highway south, resting for picnic lunches on food that Georgia provided, and stopping early for the night. Georgia always wanted to eat ~~what~~ ^{what Aline and I preferred} to have ~~to eat~~ ^{to have} early, which conflicted with ~~what the others preferred~~ ^{what the others preferred} having drinks in our rooms before supper ~~with the others~~. The solution ^{Separately} was that we ate ^{separately} alone, Spud deferring, ^{Georgia's} as ^{her} guest, to Georgia's wishes.

Aline and I headed south for Oaxaca. ^{It} was in Oaxaca that I had my introduction to the cathedrals and ~~into~~ Mexican village churches ~~and saw for the first time~~ naive iconology and colorful decorations that expressed ^{the} simple ^{Indian} peasant reverence. Although ~~we~~ ^I spent more time photographing the Zapotec ruins at Monte Alban and Mitla than the churches in Oaxaca, ^{it was the beauty of the Christian} symbolism that in the end ^{attracted the} ~~impressed~~ me most. On the way home we stopped at the Yanhuitlean, an isolated, lonely monument to classical architecture ~~and~~ which ~~contained~~ displayed ~~to the~~ that mixture of formal and unsophisticated ~~representation of the~~ symbols ~~characters~~ of the Christian religion. Yanhuitlean confirmed my earlier impression ^{my} and ^{generally} desire to return someday to record more widely this aspect of Mexican church art.

^{Aline} My wife had long felt the isolation of New Mexico from the contemporary art world and ~~decided in 1956 that she needed as stimulation for her own painting needed~~ ^{where she could be in} (closer contact with modern creative trends in art. ~~xxxxxxx To obtain the~~ inspiration she sought she decided to spend the winter of 1955-56 in New York ⁱⁿ ^{This} ^{with} ^{the opportunity was provided for me to} ~~xxxxxxx fulfill my goal to photograph Mexican churches. I~~ described the idea to Ellen Auerbach, a New York photographer friend, who liked the proposal and agreed to work with me on the project. We crossed the border into Mexico at Nogales, Arizona on ~~xx~~ December 2, 1955. In ^{our} ~~the~~ Chevrolet van we had large amounts of film and photographic equipment ^{which} ~~a~~ ^{according to} a Mexican customs inspector ~~said~~ ^{he said} exceeded the allowable ^{limit} ~~amount~~ for tourists; but ^{overlook the restriction} that for a consideration of ^{twenty dollars} \$20 ^{he said} he would ~~issue a special import permit~~ ^{route 15}. As we left he wished us a happy trip. ~~One hundred miles down the road~~ ^{We} ~~at a second~~ ^{down} inspection stop ~~the special permit got us through.~~ Route 15 ^{to attract us} followed ^{down} the west coast of Mexico to Tepic, where it turned eastward to Guadalajara. Our first stop was ~~at~~ Hermosillo, where we made a short side trip to Alamo, a gloomy mining town in which the cemetery ^{on} ~~on~~ ^{soilless} ground was ~~the~~ a sight of especially macabre interest with the tombs stacked on top of one another above the ground. From Hermosillo south to Tepic we found little ~~of interest to~~ ^{to attract us} photographically, except at Mazatlan, and covered the distance rapidly. Tepic, with its cathedral

and other churches, ^{was} much more interesting, ^{and} we stayed there for three days before driving on to Guadalajara. We had now entered ^{districts of} ^{where the} older Mexico with ^{the} that mixture ^{and Indian} ^{was more evident} ~~of Sixteenth Century Spanish culture with Mexican cultures~~

Here we stayed for five days, ^{photographing much more than} churches, street scenes, markets, ^{outlying} districts and even ^{school} children ~~in school~~. We had never intended to ^{limit} ~~confine~~ our work to churches, ~~but principal subjects were~~ but to take advantage of ~~other subjects that attracted~~ all photographic opportunities, especially those involving people. ^{a short drive} San Miguel Allende was

our next objective ^{town} from ~~which~~ Guajuato in the silver mining district ~~was~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ and from which we explored the outlying region visiting San Miguel Viejo, the Triadas Ranch and Atotonilco with its silver chapel. ~~from which~~ The silver had been stripped ~~by~~ from the chapel ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~by~~ during the revolution by a local ~~to pay his followers.~~

We photographed the extravagant ornate decoration of pulpit and confessional ^{from the roof of our hotel} ^{the celebration} in the Santa Rosa church in Queretaro and witnessed ^{on} Christmas night that

~~fireworks~~ ~~xxxxxxxx~~ enveloped the steeple of the church on the plaza in a firey ~~fireworks~~ ~~xxxxxxxx~~ display of ~~fireworks~~ rockets. On the way to Mexico City we stopped in Morelia for the six days of Christmas celebration. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ^{we went north} From Mexico City/ to Acolman and the Teotihuacan pyramids and Aztec ruins, ~~and we went south to Cuernavaca~~ ^{we} and explored the country east of Mexico City on the way to Tlaxcala and Cholula ^{the valley of} of the threehundred and sixty five churches, the most famous of which are Huejotzingo and Santa Maria Tonantzintla.

In Mexico City we obtained a permit from the Antiquities Department to photograph in monuments and churches under the jurisdiction of the state.

To escape the exceptional January cold that had settled on Mexico and had people talking about ^{the hiel}, ^{the frost} ~~an unwelcome experience~~, we decided to go to Yucatan. We drove to Vera Cruz on the Gulf of Mexico, ~~stepping~~ ^{various} investigating ~~other~~ places along the way, and from Vera Cruz along the Gulf coast to Minatitlan. In Minatitlan ^{the} a greedy landlord of ^a lodging house over-charged us and when we refused to pay he called the police who accepted our

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San Miguel Allende ^{politician, official leader} was our next objective, from which we visited San Miguel Viejo, the Triadas Ranch ^{church} ~~Chapel~~, and Atotonilco, famous for its silver chapel from which the silver had been stripped during the revolution by a local politician, official leader to pay his followers, and (a short drive from Guanajuato in the center of the silver mining district.)

^{From Atotonilco} We next drove to Queretaro, where (in the church of Santa Rosa) we photographed the golden door, pulpit and confessional, and on Christmas night we watched (from the roof of our hotel) the celebration that enveloped the steeple of the church on the plaza in a ^{fireworks} display of rockets. On the way to Mexico City we stopped in Morelia for the six days of Christmas festivities. From Mexico City we went north to Acolman and to see the Teotihuacan pyramids and Aztec ruins, and ^{also} we explored the country east of Mexico City around Tlaxcala and Cholula, renowned for its hundreds of churches, of which Huejotzingo and Santa Maria Tonantzintla are among the most celebrated.

To escape the exceptional January cold that had settled on Mexico and had people talking about the "hielo" (the snow,) we decided to go to ^{the} Yucatan and ^{in spring} return later to central Mexico. We drove to Vera Cruz on the Gulf Coast, visiting Jalapa and other towns on the way, and From Vera Cruz we continued along the Gulf Coast to Minatitlan, where the greedy proprietor of a lodging house over-charged us, and when we refused to pay, called the police, who accepted our account of the dispute and fined the proprietor.

~~xxxxxx~~ the railroad connecting Campeche with Coatzacoalcas. We took
a bus to Campeche to catch the Rapido, ~~the xxxxxx~~ a grossly exaggerated rating
~~exaggeration xxxxxxxx~~ of the train's speed. The train
Rapido was a grossly overstated reputation for the rail transportation that
chugged along at ~~xxx top speed~~ of 15 to 20 miles an hour. It took all day to

clearly manifest in the markets. We visited Salina Cruz on the Pacific coast and Ixtepec on the Pan American Highway, which continued ^{east} ~~on~~ into the ^{state} ~~province~~ of Chiappas to Ocozocuautla, Chiapa de Corzo and San Cristobal Las Casas. 16

We stayed in San Cristobal Las Casas for the better part of two weeks & days

We arrived in San Cristobal on February 8, at the time of fiestas and ^{Indian} dances at the Chamula and Tenejapa Indian villages, of which the fire dance at Chamula was the most ^{spectacular} unusual when ^{under} ~~under~~ ^{supposedly} ~~psychic~~ influence the Indians

of the train ~~the~~
an implied speed/not born out by actual performance of the train that chugged
a speed not so rapid as implied

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We took the bus to Campeche to catch the "Rapido" ^{for} Palenque, a name that
^{that was} implied a speed not born out by the actual performance of the train ^{which} that chugged
along at 15 to 20 miles an hour

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In the Santa Helene church of Xoxocatlan we discovered a red haired saint,
a striking ^{future for} anomaly in a latin country.

~~walked~~ In an alleged hypnotic state the Indians walked bare-foot ^{and harmless} ~~painless~~ on a bed of hot coals. I noticed, however, that they all wore thick rubber sandals. We stayed in San Cristobal eight days ^{visiting} ~~first~~ Santa Domingo, the ~~most important and principal~~ ^{also} and most ornate and richly embellished of its churches, and I explored the surrounding country with an American expatriate ~~for~~ guide, who took me to several Spanish ~~villages~~ and remote Indian villages, including ^{that of} the shy Lacandones, ^{who are} so reduced in numbers that siblings marry.

We drove to Oaxaca on the 18th of February and stayed until March 15th, the longest ^{time} ~~period~~ in one place of the entire trip. There are many churches in Oaxaca ~~and the surrounding area~~ ^{to occupy us} of which Santa Domingo is the most famous, but we spent ⁶⁵ a lot of time ^{one day} ~~also~~ in the markets, where I was pelted with ~~chillies~~ ^{pepers} ~~for photographing~~ a vegetable vendor, who didn't want to be photographed. We spent many days driving around the neighborhood of Oaxaca to villages, which ⁱⁿ the smallest beautifully appalled images of the saints the churches often contained, ~~exquisite representations of the saints and biblical events of the most beautiful and touching manifestations of devotion to~~ ^{the saints and} ~~the saints and~~ ^{exquisite} representations of biblical events. Especially notable were the churches in San Felipe, Huitzo, ^{Coyotpec} Talascohuaya, Matatlan and Xoxocatlan. In the Santa Helene church in Xoxocatlan we photographed a red-haired saint, a striking feature for a Latin country. ^{in the Coyotpec church} In one remote and unidentified village church the saints were ~~exposed~~ clothed with ^{even though} ~~apparently~~ such loving and lavish care that we asked the priest for permission to photograph them, which he willingly gave us, but when we returned the next day, we were confronted by members of the congregation, who refused to let us photograph in the church even ^{though} when we said the priest had given us permission. "He doesn't own the church," they said, "we do." After pleading with them and expressing admiration for the beauty of the images, they relented, permitting us to photograph a few selected saints. While we were ^{going} about it, they watched to ^{make} ~~be~~ sure we ^{cheat} ~~didn't~~ behave irreverently. We also went farther afield to the earthquake-ruined cathedral of Cuilapan and to Yanhuitlan and, of course, we could not resist ^{spending} ~~giving~~ time ⁱⁿ to the pre-columbian ruins of Mitla and Monte Alban.

~~On the last stage of our return to Mexico City we stayed in the vicinity of Puebla for a week, photographing many of the churches in the Cholula area that we had only briefly visited two months before on the way to Vera Cruz; and as a final digression before we drove to Cordoba on the southern highway to Vera Cruz. We arrived in Mexico City on Easter week, when all the churches were in religious services were being conducted and we witnessed the Easter service in Acolman on the first of April. From Mexico City we made excursions to Cuernavaca and to Pachuca, where we visited Atotonilco el Grande and watched a Judas pageant in front of the church. At Tepozotlan we spent a long time photographing the golden interior of the church.~~

Our Mexican journey was drawing to a close, but ~~before heading north and home, there was one part of Mexico we wanted to see. We drove west through Morelia to Patzcuaro, where the lake fishermen are more interested in displaying their nets to tourists than in catching fish, and on south to Uruapan which we had been told was of especial interest because of its isolated location, and on the way back to Morelia, stopped to see the Templo de Jesus in Naranja. The last place we stopped to photograph was at Zacatecas on the highway north from Morelia. Here, a deserted monastery and national monument, I took my last photograph of a beautiful Guadalupe fresco, By now we had traveled several thousand miles throughout Mexico, visited hundreds of chapels and churches, and taken thousands of photographs, and were eager to leave Mexico. We took the shortest route north through Aguascalientes, Durango and Chihuahua to El Paso, Texas and home.~~

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