

January 23, 1932

Doctor Henry Allen Moe, Secretary,
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation,
551 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Doctor Moe:

I am informed that Miss Laura Gilpin has recently applied to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for a fellowship to enable her to undertake extended photographic studies within the state of Yucatan, Mexico.

Miss Gilpin's project is one I can give unqualified and enthusiastic endorsement. I am intimately acquainted with Yucatan and the outstanding features thereof which should successfully lend themselves to photographic study, as well as with the qualifications of Miss Gilpin to record artistically and successfully these features.

For over a period of ten years, I was Superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park, the only National Park created to protect and preserve notable remains of prehistoric Indian culture in this country. During this time, Mrs. Nusbaum and I encouraged and assisted Miss Gilpin, first in the making of an unexcelled photographic record of the outstanding ruins and scenic aspects of this area; then stimulated her work in similarly recording scenic and archaeological features of adjacent areas; and finally, suggested the importance of following up this program to include present-day Indian life on the Navajo Indian Reservation, as well as modern Pueblo Indian life in its varied aspects, including dances, crafts, architectural details, et cetera. Knowing personally, through intimate and periodical contact with her work, of Miss Gilpin's signal success in this particular project, I had hoped that funds might become available to this institution to employ her part time over a period of years in extending her work to a more detailed and thorough study and recording of the varied aspects of Indian life in the Southwest.

With this background of demonstrated ability to record artistically and faithfully in unexcelled manner both archaeological remains and architectural details, native life in all its ramifications and aspects, and scenic features in most appealing form and arrangement, the success of this project may be assured in advance.

Dr. H. A. Moe - Page Two

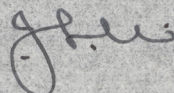
From the photographic standpoint, Yucatan is a particularly important field. Mayan architecture attained its highest classical development and embellishment in that area. The great temple areas of Chichen Itza and Uxmal present unexcelled opportunity for artistic photography. The native Mayan Indian, descendant of the temple builders, is found living adjacent thereto and but little influenced by our civilization. Just eastward of Chichen Itza and in the state of Quintana Roo, the Sublevado or unconquered Mayans continued their primitive pursuits untouched and uninfluenced by contact with our civilization for the past four centuries. Cathedrals, churches, gateways, haciendas, quintas, and historical buildings dating from Montejo's time, built very early in the sixteenth century, merit photographic reproduction by an artist of Miss Gilpin's photographic attainments.

During the dry season, or field-working period, from 1909 to 1912, inclusive, I was engaged in archaeological examinations with Doctor Sylvanus G. Morley and others in the Mayan ruins of Yucatan, Guatemala, Spanish Honduras, et cetera. Since 1905 I have always handled, as an extra duty, all photographic records of expeditions with which I have been associated either in the Southwest or in Central America. Doctor Morley, now head of Carnegie Institution's extended program of research in the Mayan field of Central America, whose principal working season's headquarters are maintained at the ruin of Chichen Itza and here at the Laboratory of Anthropology in the off-, or wet, season, still regards my photographic record, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, as the best available from many Mayan sites. Miss Gilpin is capable of bettering that record.

The extended and intensive scientific program of Carnegie Institution of Washington, of the University of Pennsylvania, and of Tulane University, and of others, have directed an increasingly greater public interest to that area. From the educational standpoint such a photographic record would be particularly opportune at this time. Scientific agencies working in that area would welcome and cooperate with Miss Gilpin because of her qualifications, experience, and success in comparable projects in the Southwest.

With this intimate knowledge of both the applicant and her work, as well as the field in which she is desirous of carrying out this project, I most earnestly recommend your favorable consideration of this particular application for aid on the part of Miss Gilpin.

Sincerely yours,



Jesse L. Nusbaum,
Director.

JLN:myh

Revised Copy.

Dear Sam,
Hope this help to bring home the bacon, which you
so nicely merit - Best wishes for your success.
John W.