

Oct. 9,

Mr. Mitchel Wilder,
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center,
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dear Mitch:-

Here are "lifts" from the text of "Follow the Rio Grande". Some are doubtless too long and please cut and select as you wish. In a couple of instances, I am sending you a whole passages such as the one on corn. As I have three pictures here you can select what you think best. This subject is so very important that I felt it hard to cut. At the same time the whole book can't go on the walls and for the show, people should look rather than read. I have also included the whole passage on Snata Fe, the key point of the whole story. Here again do as you wish. I can still send you more if you wish, such as the historic background for the MIDSTREAM section. But here again I was afraid of sending too much. Please look this over and let me know if you want more and if you think the selections cover the whole well enough. I may have left out some portion or put in too much somewhere else. The answer to that would doubtless be that best pictures are where the text selection lies. There are some prints already captioned which are so self explanatory that nothing else is needed. However if you wish to keep the labels uniform, it would take but a few minutes to write those when the show is being hung.

There will be certainly six possibly eight 16x20's. One possibility for a group arrangement is the round up on the big Texas cattle ranch. I will not mount these on 16x20 mounts like the rest, but bring them along and it will not take long to group them, or mount them singly as you wish.

I am planning to leave here on Nov. 10th unless you want me to come up ahead of that time. As I am taking my negatives east with me for possible need there, I could make a few prints at the Art Center if we find a need.

My 400 word scribble about the project will follow very shortly with the two pictures. I don't know how Dorothy is coming but she seems to be very pleased to write it. She certainly knows all my prints better than anyone and has been so interested in the project.

I certainly appreciate your want to circulate the

show. As I told you the only thing that kept me from accepting your offer at once was the fact that I did not know (still do not know) about a New York showing. I received a second hand bit of information that Sally Goodwin was working on this for a show at the Museum of Modern Art. But I have heard nothing direct on this subject. Would you feel like writing him a note to find out? Perhaps that would bring forth information, or I shall write again if you prefer. Aside from this show with you, I imagine that it had best be held until the book is out, and then routed, though of-course it takes time to work out schedules.

If there is anything else you want or need, just drop me a line. I am working hard to finish up work here as near Nov. 1st as possible, for my belongings here will go into storage until I return from New York.

With best wishes,

Sincerely

P.S. Are you sending out any announcements of this show? If so I should like to send some to my friends along the upper Rio Grande, like the man to took me to the Source, the forest ranger, etc. from the San Luis Valley area, as well as a few people down here.

FOLLOW THE RIO GRANDE.

The project of making a pictorial book of the Rio Grande, the land through which it flows, and the people who live within its valleys, was a challenging and formidable undertaking. The final work consists of approximately three hundred pages of photographs with accompanying text illustrating this river of varied and colorful interest. The book has taken more than two years to complete, and even in moments of frustration over seemingly insurmountable difficulties, it has always been an inspiring endeavor. Perhaps the greatest difficulty has been to decide what subject matter to omit, so much is there of beauty and interest along the eighteen hundred mile course of the Rio Grande. While essentially documentary in substance, it has been my intent to make each picture more than a document- to make the entire series reveal- to the best of my ability- the forms of mountains, the contours of desert, the flow of the river, and the historic background with the contemporary activities of the peoples who live along the river's path. The text, though comparatively short, contains the ^{most important} ~~essential~~ history of the land and informative material about the river, the country and the people- Indian-Spanish-Anglo and Mexican.

This work was commenced late in July of 1945 just

before the close of the war. During the first year the difficulty to obtain materials, both film and paper, and the ever present problem of an old car and worn tires, were often discouraging obstacles. Then came a severe drought and the river shrank to less than half its normal ~~size~~, and the land suffered. Approximately twenty seven thousand miles of travel, covering the entire length of the river twice, and certain sections of it many times more, have gone into the making of the book. To reach the actual source required a lengthy horseback trip, and there have been some long and arduous climbs on foot. Three flights were necessary in order to reveal certain aspects of the river and the country. Most of the ^{it} journey was done by automobile making possible to carry the eight by ten camera with which the majority of the photographs were made.

To encompass such a vast amount of subject matter within the binding of one book, required the most severe elimination of material and my sins of omission may be many, but in each major division of the river, and each sub-division, I have tried to include only the picture material which most clearly showed the characteristics of that region. The greatest cooperation and courtesy have been given me by all from whom I have sought help and information

throughout th work, and to them I am deeply grateful.

For this exhibition, a selection of prints has
been made to present in this form the most essential
aspects from FOLLOW THE RIO GRANDE.

Laura Gilpin.

FOLLOW THE RIO GRANDE
Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. Publishers.
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