

41 West 53 Street New York 19 N Y

26 March 1948

Dear Laura Gilpin---

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of sitting down with all six volumes of Follow the Rio Grande--- a real achievement! And Charles tells me you are having a show at is it the Santa Fe Museum? in November---also good news. And how is the other book?

I asked permission to see the Rio Grande because the Women's International Democratic Federation is having a vast Exhibition in Paris this summer and I am chairman of the American Photographers' Committee, with Berenice Abbott, Lisette Model, and Barbara Morgan to help me. The theme of the whole is a cry for peace and the struggle of women in all countries for democracy. Our part in the American section, it seems to us, is to present America and to speak American. With more time---the thing was sprung on us from all professions only 2 weeks ago---we might have attempted a huge theme show. But since the show opens June 2, and the American section must be ready for shipping from New York by the end of April, we decided that the simplest and strongest approach was to gather from the ten or a dozen leading photographers who happen to be women and Americans statements that they felt were not only their best work but what they most wanted to say to Europe and the world. So far it has been amazing what richness and variety---what a panoramic quality these statements contain!

We've been aiming at somewhere between 10 and 20 photographs for each photographer. This is subject to the rapid decisions the over-all committee must make, but their tendency at the moment seems to be to expand our part! Presentation is also not final, though it looks as if the simplest, again, would be the best---white mounts, perhaps protected by a clear laquer which Barbara Morgan used in her South American show and found satisfactory. I have stipulated that our show is to be hung exactly as designed and numbered, and plan that it shall need nothing more than simply putting it on the walls.

The Rio Grande will make a superb and important section, if you can somehow manage to fit in the time and energy, and would like to be with us on this! Yesterday, I jotted down numbers of those plates in each volume which hit me the hardest, and looking at the list and remembering, it seems a fair coverage and very beautiful. But you will know best! I have probably listed too many mountain scenes (because I loved them) and to my dismay, no cowboys---perhaps the one where they are changing mounts? Anyway, here's this rough list, which I attach. And since in the show as a whole, in its present state, there are no landscapes featuring the earth and its immensity and beauty, rather than the works of man, perhaps some of these might be enlarged?

Do let me know as soon as possible if you can join us. It's all clear with Charles Duell; he and Walter seem delighted. If there are details you need to know, or if I can help in any way, call me up and reverse the charges---New York City, Circle 7-4631. And I shall let you immediately of anything developing here which affects our plans.

Best wishes,

Nancy Newhall

LAURA GILPIN: Follow the Rio Grande

Vol.I: Jacket photograph---shining river, also listed as I: pl. 33

✓ pl. 11: San Juan Mountains---dark forest hanging over stream
facing p. 29: October, cattle

or

- pl.21: sheep
- pl. 26: mountain sheriff
- pl. 27: the horse, king of the mountains
- pl. 30: cattle drinking at the river's edge

Vol.II:

- pl.54: island, ice, aspens---where Juan Bautista de Anza camped
- ✓ pl.57: snow on the mountains
- ✓ pl.62: irrigation ditch running to horizon, farmer with spade
- pl.94: Indian women and children in shade-mottle adobe courtyard
- pl. 101: Image of saint carried over crowd

Vol.III:

- pl. 116: Cordova churchyard, with Indian crosses
- ✓ pl. 117: the carver Lopez with his bultos
- ✓ pl. 123: aspens, autumn
- ✓ pl. 130: stormy sunset over mountains
- ✓ pl. 144: Elephant Butte, with boats

Vol. IV:

- pl. 169: chrysanthemum cart
- pl. 214: shack of the Justice of the Peace

Note: as I said, before, VERY rough! Maybe should have mines? and, of course, cowboys, preferably in native haunts. And how different photographs look when you lay them out as a show than when you look at them in succession in a book!

This is only an indication; if you like, I can ask Charles to let me go over them again and work out a more complete statement? We can't in 20 photographs cover the huge story of the Rio Grande, but we should be able to give a feeling of the vastness and grandeur of the country, the kinds of people and what they are like and what they do.

Or you send me a list and I check with the book?

Again, best!

