

Dec. 20,
1955.

Dear Mrs. Abbot:-

Your letter of the 16th came last night. First let me tell you that I am well on the road to recovery from the slipped sacroiliac and siatic nerve pinch from which I was suffering greatly when I saw you last and which grew increasingly worse. I just kept going to get everything done that I had gone east for.

Now about the book. I hasten to send you word that I hope you have not yet gotten in contact with Little, Brown. Do you not remember my telling you what had happened with D.S. & P. about the broken contract and that happening just after the merger with Little, Brown?

About the text. I am very well aware that I am not an Oliver LaFarge (whom I know very well). The whole point is that this book is PRIMARILY a book of vision. Otherwise the complete idea would be changed to an illustrated book by someone else. I trust that you told the editor from Rand McNally that the text for this was only just begun. There was an outline of the text to come in the dummy. I did cut the legend half a book to fit into four pages of text to go opposite the air photographs of the sacred mountains. It is in my own words, though I have tried to keep the feeling of the ~~xx~~ original version. And of course as the text progresses my whole effort will be to unify text and pictures. I deeply regret that my time with you was cut so short for there were many things to discuss to give you a better picture of the whole. Again, I realize deeply, the error of showing an unfinished product, but I was committed to the series of lectures with the color slides and I thought it best to try to line up the book while I was there.

I am wondering now what has happened with Mr. Holme. Perhaps I made a mistake in not leaving the dummy with him the day I saw him, but I wanted to line up with you first and it seemed such an instantaneous thing to see someone for less than an hour and then turn it all over to him. His only hesitation seemed to be the request to see the quality of my final prints. Now if his backing from Washington falls through, as I fear it must have, there are other places to turn. What about the American Philosophical Society? They have helped an artist friend here on

on an Indian research problem that had no immediate return. Then several people have suggested the Ford Foundation. I do not know anyone connected there but perhaps Mr. Holme would. As a last resort I had been given an introduction to a wealthy oil man, who is part Indian, who is very ready to sponsor Indian things. I have done nothing about this lead whatever and would far rather have any help come from other than an individual source.

Immediately after Christmas I shall be very hard at work on the text. There was only such a small amount of it in the dummy. I am sure that the personal anecdotes will have an appeal. They certainly did when I showed the slides to all varieties of audiences. The great interest I found in the Navaho and the response to my slides has given me the greatest possible encouragement and faith in the whole enterprise. I only wish that you had seen the slides. Holding an audience of children for over an hour as well as a sophisticated ladies club in New England proved to me the interest in the subject matter.

My feeling at the moment is to wait to hear from Mr. Holme, and then wait until I have the whole thing really finished. I appreciate deeply the way your pushing for it but I do not want to wear out your efforts. If the whole thing has merit, a few weeks more are not going to hurt anything. Possibly suggesting to Mr. Holme, the two foundations I have mentioned might help. He certainly gave me to understand that if he approved my final prints he would publish the book. I feel that Rand McNally are judging it incomplete and from the wrong angle. The text must be written to compliment the pictures and to give information to accompany them, not as a piece of literature illustrated by pictures. There is a vast difference here. And just between you and me Oliver has offered to go over the whole thing with me, and he will doubtless have valuable suggestions for smoothness and unity. He did a very nice review of my RIO GRANDE.

I am not in the least discouraged by your findings, and am only the more anxious to get the typewriter rolling.

With apology for my tendency to reverse letters in writing; and assuring you of my delight in your interest, I am

Very truly yours,