

May 31, 59.

Dear Imogen Cunningham,

After a near lifetime, I am at last in touch with you! I first knew of you and your beautiful work when I was a student at the Clarence H. White School in 1916-17. Mercy that is a long time ago.

My coming to California this spring has been a bit nebulous until recently. Now, however, I am definitely coming to be of some slight help to Ansel with a large class he has on for June. Then, my friends the Nat Owings (Margaret Wentworth Owings) have asked me to come down to the Big Sur and I will be showing my Navaho slides there. Margaret also asked me if I would show at the S.F. Museum if they could arrange it. I wrote her more than a week ago in the affirmative but as yet have heard nothing more. I think it is much too short notice nor does California know what my show consists of. What I would like to do is to show if (for free) to a small group and then if you should like it perhaps I could come back at a later date, say in the fall or next spring with it. Perhaps by then my long stalled book will be finished and that would all be to the good. To give you some explanation, I have been working on a book on the Navaho ever since the publication of my Rio Grande. I encountered publisher troubles after over three years work on it. I then found someone who wished to present it to a foundation but wants it complete before such presentation. So for the past three years it has been a struggle to finish it and earn a living at the same time. I will have my dummy with me and can tell you all about it if you are interested. I also want to go over it with Dorothea Lange if she can give me the time. I am writing to her to-day. This is a big theme and keeps producing new lines of approach all the time. I first started working with the Navaho in 1931, so you see I cover a generation, And what changes!

I did not mean to plunge into my own affairs right at the beginning of this letter. Nor have I told you that Virginia has sent me your letter to her. I shall be in California a short time

after the close of Ansel's school. I must be home early in July at the latest. The interim will depend on what develops in California. I have a cousin living at Aptos who also wants me to come there, and as I have not been in California since the Fair, and have never seen that wonderful coast, I am so very eager to see it.

It seems a wonderful opportunity for me to come to see you and to see your wonderful work at first hand. This I look forward to more than I can say.

So, as to my Navaho story, let me show it to you. You may or may not be interested in it. I have ~~now~~ now worked this into a "performance" complete with sound effects. Have had three auditorium shows, two here, Los Alamos, and smaller shows in 16 places in the East and last fall at the art dept at Colorado University. My talk is purely my personal experiences plus a brief background on the subject. I am not an anthropologist, and I try to make this a human interest story plus some information scattered along the verbal route. This sort of thing is the last thing I ever expected to do! But while working in black and white for my book, it was more than natural to build up a series of slides. These are standard size, not 35mm. I will be bringing my own projector and I can arrange to show all this to a small group perhaps something else will develop at a later time. I have not pushed this yet because I still feel it will be much better to have the book done and out and then go on the road so to speak with the slides.

I have such a strong feeling that you and I see very much eye to eye. Your beautiful Graves portrait is all I need to see to feel this.

Please do not go to a lot of trouble on my account. I live a lonely photographic life, here in Santa Fe. I do see Eliot Porter occasionally, and Ansel storms through every so often, otherwise I plug along in my own old fashioned way.

My very best to you, and I cannot tell you how I am looking forward to meeting you at last.