

42 Sharp Hill Road,
Wilton, Conn. 06897
January 5th, 1965.

Laura, my dear:

I have treated you outrageously, this past year. You are generous to write me at all !

But Oh, this has been the most difficult year I have ever lived through: The sudden loss of Alice Campbell, my doctor and friend, just before Xmas, '64; occurring in the same week that I had to see Shirley taken to a Nursing Home near Boston,---her mind completely gone. And the next day a racking fall on my sacrum, on an icy concrete bridge, which temporarily paralyzed the nerves controlling the backs of my thighs, so that I couldn't lift my heels off the ground, and could only shuffle about. All this made a nightmare of the Xmas, '64 season, when neighborhood Mothers of my "Nature Club Boys" came flocking to my door with beaming smiles, home-made fruit & nut cakes and cookies, and fatuous "Merry Christmases". And well-meaning friends, who had known Alice, came and talked about her for hours on end. I was so worn out I couldn't eat, sleep or walk.

A local doctor, near here, after two weeks of treatment, finally got my legs going again. But I was so sunk I was just going 'round in circles, and accomplishing nothing. I finally had to ask a good friend, (Emily Latham, of near-by Georgetown, who had recently lost a cherished husband), to come and stay with me through the rest of the winter. She did, bless her, and her quiet voice, her understanding, and her skill in cooking were such a boon, I was delighted to be able to buy her a new car, when her folorn old jalopy wore itself completely out in my service.

But all that winter my right arm and hand, weakened by that unrecognized childhood Polio, and further damaged by the shingles that abruptly put a stop to my job as draftsman for Sperry Gyroscope, and sent me to hospital for two months, has been going from bad to worse. I can no longer play anything but slow adagio Bach fugues, and have had to give up playing violin & piano sonatas with Leni de Vriendt, and two piano sonatas with Margaret Ball, who was a pupil of Horowitz.

Then, last February, just as Emily's thoughtful ministrations were beginning to pull me out of the doldrums, I received a most astonishing letter from the Manuscript Division of Syracuse University's Carnegie Library, expressing Admiration for my "extraordinary" career as a sculptor, and begging me, (now that I'm retired), to collect and send (or bequeath) to their Archives, all data concerning my work: Photographs, press-clippings, correspondence with committees, articles written by me or about me; any books I have written; *drawings, etc.* letters from famous personages whose portraits I have done, etc., for their Archives, and for the edification of their large and enthusiastic Art Classes, and for "Posterity" !

My first inclination was to say an emphatic "NO",---but then I thought of poor Desmond, who is now my sole heir; It would be an impossible job for him to tackle (once I've shuffled off this mortal coil), since he knows nothing about sculpture, to wade through the welter of material, and separate the wheat from the chaff. So, for his sake, I undertook the job. And it has been a whale of a job!. The sorting out and arranging in chronological sequence of the material itself took from March to June, and then I found that a lot of explanatory notes had to be written, in order to explain "how Come", for instance, I had the nerve to mount a huge gorilla skeleton for the Museum of Natural History; or why I undertook to work over the entire surface of a nine-foot marble Angel in a Pittsburgh cemetery while the sculptor was still living; and the weird problems that cropped up, when Grand Central Galleries enlisted

my services to raise money for the starving Artists (during the Depression Years), by modeling portrait heads, in an hour and a half, before an audience of artists and art-lovers; in towns as near as Englewood N.J., or as far as Savannah and Raleigh, or Dayton, Ohio! Or how I, being only an amateur musician, was made an Honory Member of the Beethoven Association, which gave such marvelous recitals in New York during the War years, etc. etc.

The pencilled scrawls I painfully made before checking & re-checking each of those brief articles as to dates and accuracy, fairly wore me out, and I simply had to give up trying to keep up with correspondence. But the end is now in sight, with only one more article to write, -- an aftermath of the Job of making three (imaginary) huge portrait-plaques of the great Lawgivers of history for the House of Representatives in the Capitol. There were about 23 marble plaques in all, and done by eight different sculptors. *Now they have a new project.*

But enough about me !

My dear, you not only wrote me last year, but you sent me Mrs Clark's Medicine Mans Daughter, but as far as I can remember, I haven't even acknowledged it! How awful of me. But for several months I just couldn't read any book,--guess the old brain just gave out. Now I have read it, and find it an extremely perceptive and sympathetic elucidation of the Ethos of those proud, lonely, and idealistic people who have been so brutally treated, and cheated, by us "civilized" white folk. You wrote in your accompanying letter, that you so admired the author's style, that you hoped to collaborate with her on another Navaho book. Of course I realize that she is a teacher, and was writing for young people, who find it difficult to "digest" a long sentence, and is probably very much like the brief and succinct vocal statements, of the Indians themselves. But I'm afraid I cannot agree that the brief, and "choppy" sentences in every paragraph make for style in writing: to a mature white person who has been brought up with classics of almost every period of literature, the "sameness" of every short sentence becomes curiously tedious.

You say you hope someday to work with her on another book: if this is to interest mature and thoughtful people, as were your "Pueblos", "Temples in Yucatan", and "The Rio Grande", I, for one, and very probably the publisher: too, would find your way of writing flowed along with far more rhythm and variety of expression, and bits of humor, than "Medicine Man's Daughter!" and would be far more saleable to the general (white) public.

I am sorry this letter is so slow in reaching you, but I simply have no "staying-power" left, and can only poke out a few sentences at a time, and then have to quit and do something else for an hour or two until the pain in my back and neck subsides; so it has taken the better part of a week to get this appallingly belated letter off to a faithful and (I hope) forgiving friend.

Am enclosing a check which I hope will help a bit toward your trip East, where I do hope your Navaho book will reach and be appreciated by just the right publisher. A good New Year to you and Betsy.

Your crumbling, but still affectionate,

Bernice

Enclosure.