

Dear Laura Gilpin,

You may want to know something about the progress-of plans for The Navajo String Game (I haven't thought of any more appropriate name for the ~~but~~ proposed book-)

Mary Chavez has chosen a little boy and a little girl, who ~~are~~ both learn easily and ~~are~~ have beautiful ^{or very} Navajo faces. And they both communicate easily. They won't be shy -

the little girl is in her room (Mary's) and lives near here. Her mother works in the kitchen - so that arranging appointments with her (probably only one will be necessary) will be easy -

The little boy is in my room, and also lives near here. He was in Mary's room last year, and she knows his parents, and is sure there will be no problem of arranging to have him delivered at the right time. ~~He's a wonderful little boy, very intelligent, and eager to learn, and~~

I've talked to a number of people ~~Thos~~ Navajo people about a possible grandmother and grandfather, ^{near here} but only one couple

has been suggested - A trader's wife suggested the parents of a woman who works for her - She (the woman who works in the store) seems very guarded with white people, and I suspect her parents may not want any strange white people coming to their home to take pictures -

So I have arranged for the John Martins (the nice old people I took to the Santa Fe Museum the day we met you) to be the grandparents -

They lived about ten miles the other side of Crownpoint, but if there's snow - and of course ~~there~~ it may be deep, they have two teen-age grandsons who drive out of ten from Crownpoint to their grandparents, and they will both be available -

The Martins are old and close friends of mine, and are always dependable about appointments - I've taken a number of white people out there to meet them, including Dr. Ruth Underhill one time, and they seem to enjoy having them come -

Beatha, their daughter, works in the Crownpoint Hospital, and I can easily get messages to the Martins through Beatha -

And Beatha, who makes all of her mother's clothes, has already started to work on a Navajo dress for the little girl.

When I offered to buy the material, Bertha wouldn't let me do that. She said that she had material left over from her mother's clothes -

I bought a small cassette tape recorder last fall for Mary Chace to record her grandfather's legends. He had agreed to record them. But (she goes to Lukachukai almost every weekend) she says he keeps putting it off - She thinks now that he isn't really willing -

But John Martin, who is a medicine man, knows the same stories, and he will be, I'm sure, very willing to record them. He has gone to school, talks English, and understands that these sacred Navajo things will be lost if they are not recorded now -

Mary is disappointed, I'm sure, because John Martin's stories won't be quite the same as her grandfather's stories, which, of course, she remembers from childhood - she had told me that she would be able to interpret her grandfather's stories.

I may need someone from

Crownpoint to interpret John Martinis.

But I have a close friend, who retired last year ^{year ago} a blue girl at the ^{Crownpoint} hospital, whose family has had a great deal of Navajo medicine - and Gloria's English is quite good - Gloria will be very helpful -

I've learned so much from Gloria about Navajo medicine that I've often thought she would be a wonderful informant for an anthropologist.

This isn't quite relevant, but it will help you understand why I have so much confidence in John Martin.

I arranged last fall for a Crownpoint High School Music teacher to record John Martinis.

Big star way - Dr. David McAllester, who is head of the Ethno-Musicology Dept. at Connecticut Wesleyan had previously sent money for this recording - Don Roberts - ^{who was} ~~then~~ with the U.S. Nat. Archives then, came to record it - but it wasn't completed because we couldn't find an interpreter.

So, ~~I~~ feeling a responsibility for this, I gave John Martin \$100 from a tax refund. For this winter's recording. He said it was too much and offered to return most of it - She has given me 4 or 5 bags, and he has given me many sacred Navajo songs and chants.

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on my tape recorder - He's not able to give sings for patients any more, and their only income is from their sheep - But he's such a completely honorable person - And so is she -

You might like to know that they do have a hogan, of course, and they live on top of a mesa - with some rather beautiful rock formations nearby -

How are you? I assume that Mary Chavez is still planning to have her part of the project ready by January - Mary is also very dependable - I haven't asked her again, or tried to push her, because, as you well know, it isn't good Navajo manners.

Mary is very shy, and seldom talks to the other teachers, but last year they ~~voted~~ elected her "Teacher of the Year" because she is such a wonderful teacher, and always accepts more than her share of responsibility -

I'll let you know definitely before January 10 what weekend it is to be - or perhaps you'd rather suggest a time.

Sincerely
Mary Perrine
over

I had planned to write this letter on the typewriter. The yellow paper was just to make some notes. And I was going to copy them on the typewriter. But now I'm too lazy. I hope you don't mind getting such a sloppy looking - and maybe illegible letter -

P.S. If there is snow, Mary Chavez and I both have snow tires - and chains. so that getting to Crownpoint, or meeting you - if you come by bus, or train, won't be a problem.