

Dec. 8, 1978

Dear Laura,

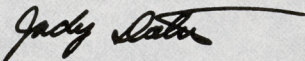
I am now in the final editing steps of my book about Imogen. We have edited down the transcripts to what we feel are the most interesting and informative parts. This interview with you and David adds such a nice dimension to it all I really hope you will approve of its use. Could you read it over and check for correct dates, spelling, names etc. If you approve, could you please sign the release and return it with the transcript to me immediately. We have a deadline of Christmas! I am also sending one of the snap shots I did of you for possible use. You had indicated that you might like the use of it better then the other one I sent you. If you approve of it, could you indicate that on the release. If not, we will just use your words.

David has already signed his release so there is no need to bother him with any of this at this time. I will be sending you each a copy of the book if we use any of this material in the final version. I hope we do because I think it is quite good.

I am inclosing return address labels and postage. Please try to return the transcript and release right away. You may keep the photo if you like.

I may be in New Mexico around January 13 and would love to come say hello if you are there. I hope you have a good holiday season.

Best regards,



Judy Dater

Laura Gilpin, photographer, and David Donoho, photographer, retired teacher of photography at San José State College

Laura: ^{With} ~~With Imogen gone, and that leaves me~~ ^{I'm now} the senior photographer of our kind of photography-- I don't know of any one older. I don't welcome the mantle, but maybe I'm not going to pass it on for a while. I don't get around the way I used to, but Thursday we're going to fly up to Shiprock to photograph. Then I want to fly over the ^{the valley} ~~canyon~~ ^{de Chelly} again when the leaves have turned, and then follow ~~it~~ clear down to where it ^{joins} the San Juan River. I should have started this book ^{on the canyon} ~~if~~ I'm not proud of my years yet-- thirty years ago. [^] there's so much I could have done, and should have done, but I was just too busy earning a living.

Photography seems to be a profession that fits women very well. I've always admired Julia Margaret Cameron's work, and of course I knew Gertrude Käsebier very well. In fact it was through her that I went to the Clarence White School in 1916. I knew of Imogen's work way back then, but in fact I didn't meet her until about twenty years ago. She was a terrific individual, and her work had great individuality. She knew what she was doing. David: Imogen told me once that she saw some photographs of Käsebier's and said to herself, "I want to be just as good as she is" and it was after that that she went to study in Berlin.

Laura and Imogen worked productively in the twentieth century longer than any two other photographers. One of the most graphic things I ever heard Imogen say was when she was about eighty-five or eighty-six. "It really bugs me," she said, "to see these old ladies sitting around on porches in rocking chairs. They act like they're ancient, and I'll bet they're not a day over seventy! They say things like ^{put on} ~~and she~~ this quaking old

(Donoho)

voice," "Oh, Imogen, how do you manage to keep so busy?" And I'd look at those old girls and I'd say, 'I don't manage to keep busy. I am busy."

Imogen suggested we exchange photographs once--she did quite a bit of that. So I chose the portrait of Stieglitz in front of the O'Keeffe painting. "David," she said, "that's going to be a valuable print. Do you see that sticker on the back? It says that that print was submitted for the "Family of Man" show at the Museum of Modern Art--and that it was rejected."

She took that photograph at An American Place in 1934. "It was quite an experience," she said. "You see that expression Stieglitz has on his face? He looks as if he didn't like me. Well, he didn't. It was ~~a~~ really unforgettable ~~experience~~. I had to borrow his 8 x 10 camera, and it was such an old rickety-rackety wooden job that after I put in a holder I had to wait at least a minute for the thing to quiet down before I could make an exposure."

Laura, do you remember that autograph I brought you? Imogen's photograph of her hands?

Laura: Of ~~a~~ yes, of course. "By the hand of Imogen to Laura Gilpin, with long memory and love."