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October 7, 1970

Miss Laura Gilpin
409 Camino del Monte Sol
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Miss Gilpin:

I am writing this letter in hopes that you are the Laura Gilpin who wrote The Enduring Navaho.

I remembered your saying in the book that you lived in Santa Fe. So I took the chance that you still lived there and would be listed in the phone directory. I called Santa Fe today and was surprised and very happy to find your address.

I have wanted to write this letter for a year. I am 25 years old and for about ten of those years I have been very interested in the Navaho People. I have read many books about them and I have visited parts of Navaholand.

Last January, on my birthday, my brother and sister-in-law bought your book for me. The main purpose of this letter is to tell you how much I enjoyed your book. It is the most wonderful, most beautiful, the best written and the most accurate book on the People I have ever read.

It must be very gratifying to you to have accomplished such a great book. I know it is extremely gratifying to me to have had the privilege of reading it and to have it as part of my library of books on the Navaho.

I cannot really find appropriate words to express my love for your work. Perhaps to say that when people ask me what I consider to be the best book on the Navaho People, I always show them The Enduring Navaho, it surely speaks for itself.

As I said earlier, for many years I have made the American Indian, specifically the Navaho, my main interest. I have over fifty books, Geographics, papers, pamphlets and brochures on the Navaho and surrounding tribes, and plans to read forty-eight more books that I found listed in the Southwest Museum Research Library in Los Angeles.

I have been reading, talking, researching and lecturing about The People for so long that my friends and family consider me an expert and hope that I will someday write a book on the subject.

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I doubt if I am, at this time, an expert. However, it is my hope that I will be in the future. I have been seriously considering their suggestion of writing a book. I have played at writing in the past, but I had never really considered writing a book. The more I thought about it, though, the more I liked the idea.

So I have decided to give it a try. For so long I have been appalled at the treatment of the Indian, by the Government and the white man, past and present. And although I do not necessarily consider myself a crusader, I do think it is about time the Indian was recognized as a basic and necessary part of this country. Fortunately, we have authors such as yourself who have brought the Indian to a new light, so that finally people are sitting up and taking notice.

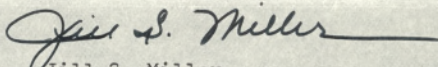
I strongly believe that people must be made even more aware that the American Indian does not (and has not) always received what is rightfully his. Their culture is beautiful, yet people are not aware of it. I want to let the rest of America know about The People and their ways.

I sincerely hope I will be able to write as good a book as you have written.

After my research is completed here I would like to visit Navaholand and complete my studies. While I am in the area I wonder if it would be at all possible for me to meet you. I would be greatly honored if you would allow me to visit and talk with you about your many books and travels.

Meanwhile, thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter. I will be looking forward to your reply. Perhaps you could make a few suggestions to a hopeful new author and your greatest admirer.

Very sincerely,


Jill S. Miller