



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87106

AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM
BANDELIER EAST

May 3, 1973

Miss Laura Gilpin
409 Camino del Monte Sol
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Miss Gilpin:

I wrote to you a few weeks ago concerning a magazine that the American Studies Graduate Program at UNM was hoping to publish. Since I last wrote, our magazine has come closer to actuality. We have received funding for the first issue from the Graduate Student Association, and are intending to apply for grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the New Mexico State Commission for the Arts to meet publishing costs for the next year.

The magazine is called New America Review and, as I believe I mentioned, it will stress innovations in the arts, education, and lifestyles. We foresee that future issues will focus on particular aspects of life and art in the Southwest, and will attempt to articulate ideas which are of mutual interest and concern to the academic and non-academic communities.

We hope that you will choose to be one of the Board of Advisors. Thus far, Walter Briggs, and Nancy and Beaumont Newhall are members of the Board. We have also received encouraging responses from Dick Rudisill and N. Scott Momaday. Please be assured that being a member of the Board does not mean detailed supervision of our activities nor direct responsibility for the end product. Rather, because we respect your work and recognize your position in the community, we would be pleased with your interest and, as your time permits, your suggestions on our publication ideas.

There is another whole area, other than the New America Review, which I would like to discuss with you. I am in the process of choosing a dissertation topic for the

Ph.D. in American Studies. I had for a time thought of a dissertation centering on the portraiture of the American Indian, emphasizing those photographers who have, during the last century, rendered a sensitive and honest picture of Indian culture. But the more I thought of the idea, the more I became aware that the subject was too vast and might turn into a scholarly thesis which would only collect dust on the dissertation shelf in the UNM library. And the more I thought sincerely about my aims and my abilities, the more I became convinced that I wanted to attempt a study of your photography.

In your preface to The Enduring Navaho, you acknowledge your audience and your aims by saying that you hope "these pages will stir an understanding of this energetic tribe, and awaken an interest in its imaginative and poetic background." I remember the first time I read these lines, five years ago in Santa Fe, after having spent my youth in Wisconsin—a far cry from the Navaho and the Southwest. Since that time I've studied Indian culture. Two summers ago I spent a month traveling around the Navaho reservation. And during the last two years while at UNM, I've taught a special interest freshman English course on Native American literature.

Having met you at the Popular Culture Conference at the D. H. Lawrence Ranch and having heard you speak of your experiences on the reservation, I realized that not only your work, but your life merit serious and sensitive study. I have recently talked to Professor Newhall about the possibility of your work as the subject for my dissertation. He was very encouraging, as was Joel Jones, the chairman of the American Studies Program. Professor Newhall said that he knew you were in the process of a new book on Canyon de Chelly and that you would be pressed for time. He suggested that I contact you to see if it would be feasible to arrange an interview in the near future.

I hope all's going well with your book and that your busy schedule will nonetheless permit a brief response to my letter.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Strelke

Barbara Strelke
1812 Lead S.E., Apt. #5
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105
(phone) 843-7492