

March 28,
1950

Dear Wally and Cap:-

May I send you a joint letter? Betsy and I are back from a weeks trip out on the reservation and we found much of interest, of distress, and of hope for the things we want to get this summer. I can hardly think of this Navaho book without Betsy, for it was through her and the nursing work she did in one region, that aroused my own interest in the Navahos. We went back to her old haunts last week. We found many of the Indians whom either one or both of us knew. The reception Betsy got was very touching, after sixteen years. Some Indians immediately began asking for medicine, or relating all their symptoms. Then we found that there has never been any medical aid in that area since Betsy left in 1934. If the Indians can get in to Shiprock, all well and good, otherwise no. We had presents showered on us by one particular family, friends of both of us. A prehistoric dipper found in the Red Rock area, a turquoise ring, a beautiful belt. We found them much less shy about pictures, and we both felt that we would have little difficulty in getting much that I want. One particular medicine man was away, but we know that by now he knows we were there, and we have every reason to think he will be really cooperative. We found the country suffering from excessive drought. No snow this winter. The Indians not even planting wheat and returning their seed to the traders. We found the roads exceptionally good and were amazed to find the places we could get to easily where a few years ago it was next to impossible. As I see the picture now, I should like to work in three or four areas during the summer. Setting up camp and staying for two weeks or more. We think we can get Yabbitsai pictures through this medicine man, it will be a question of cementing friendship first and possibly a few dollars. (I regret to say) John Collier tells me that he did some sand paintings by paying to have one made for him, which is fair enough, and I shall budget for the same. Then for craft pictures, I think the Wide Ruins area will be best. Here I have the offer of the use of Bill Lippincott's darkroom and I know their cooperation. Then I want to work in the Monument Valley, and Navaho Mountain area. As I see the book now, it will need about twenty landscapes, for variety

as well as symbolism, (the four sacred Mountains) and to show the kind of country in which the Navahos live. There can be some spectacular ones from the Canyon de Chelly, Monument Valley, I already have some from Shiprock area, some desolate ones from the east section. Trading posts and traders must be included, as well as schools, and what hospitals and work I find for the TRANSITION section. Many sections of all this have been done, ofcourse, but nothing that I have been able to find fo the whole picture, nor sufficiently pictorial. We hear too, with interest, of the experiment of moving 1200 families to a newly created reservation down the Colorado River at Parker. The whites tell us that they are doing well, the Indians told us that they were desperately homesick.

What has intersted me is to find the differences brought about by the past sixteen years not only in the country, the Indians, the agencias, but also in myself in reaction to it all. There certainly is a book here to be done, and I am more convinced than ever, since this trip, that it will be only a short time before most traces of the old life are gone.

I know that you, Wally, are concerned about the text. Right now I am deep in reading of research material to have a better knowledge of the old religion and customs, and all the things I need to know before going out again. I want Betsy to get a share in this somehow, either as collaborationist, or whatever you suggest, for if it handht bee for her taking that field nursing job, I would never have gotten my early pictures, and many of her experiences were of great interest. I feel sure that they can be worked in. Much that is of particular interest is our personal contacts with these people, the funny as well as often serious things we encounter. What concerns me is how to bring this in without a complete break in style. This may solve itslef as it shapes up.

Since this trip, I feel much more confident that I could have this ready for you by March 15th, 1951. With the exception of some winter scenes and other winter or late fall ceremonies, I should get the major part done this summer.

If you are waiting for this letter before drawing up the contract, I hope that all the above information will answer any questions you may have.

I shall need an advance again in as much that I will not have any return on RIO GRANDE before May. And speaking of it, I saw Jerry Clemens on the street yesterday, in a very friendly frame of mind. Said they had sold five books last week. (There are hardly any tourists in town). He seemed pleased over this.

I worried over your drive East, Wally. Did you hit a dust storm in Texas? It has been frightful here for several days and it looks like a very dry year.

As to my car, the reservation roads are very good. If I need to get way off the beaten track there is always a Navaho wagon which has two benefits. One getting there, the other that the hiring of same, will increase friendliness.

My best wishes to one and all,

Most sincerely

P.S. Would you ask Dorothy Farr to send me some of by ring binders?