

January 17, 1942

Mr. Walter Frese,
HASTINGS HOUSE,
67 West 44th St.,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Frese:-

To-day by express I have shipped you the incomplete manuscript and photographs for a possible Navaho book called DENIZENS OF THE DESERT. The text for this is by my friend Miss Elizabeth W. Forster, a trained nurse who spent two years as a field nurse in the Navaho country and to whom I owe much as you will see. When Miss Forster returned for her work down there she was put on a State Public Health Nursing Project of which she was supervisor. When that job was ended, I urged her to gather to-gether the material which is here presented. Several years ago we tried to have it published. This was without the pictures. Several prominent publishing houses were very interested, but they all made the same criticism, that it was too short. As a piece of writing this is undoubtedly true. As the text for a companion book to THE PUEBLOS it seems to me to be exactly right. I do hope you will think favorably of the whole as presented to you here.

In the dummy you will find indications for things to be added. I feel strongly that a new series of the Canyon de Chelly is of the utmost importance, as well as other additions as I have indicated in the back of the MS. I should want to add about twenty or more of the very best new work that I am capable of.

I believe that I have read about everything which has been published in recent years on the Navaho, and it seems to me that Miss Forster has hit a human interest note that no one else has done. She writes well, far better than I do, and I hope that this joint effort will appeal to you. From the purely photographic point of view, I know my work in this series is better than the Pueblo book. It should be for with the exception of the Acoma Series, it is much later work.

Should you favor this book, my plan would be to go down to the Reservation in June, (it is hardly practical from the weather or other aspects until then) and stay until I have secured all my material. I have another friend who has a trading post not far from the Canyon de Chelly and I should make headquarters there and with her help secure the other material necessary.

Then there are several experiences which Miss Forster has never put down. One our return trip for a Squaw dance when I made the three pictures up on the mountain at the back of the MSM. The one of the Family in the covered wagon, and the two preceeding ones. Then there were several funny and interesting experiences whi~~ch~~ she has never put down whi~~ch~~ could easily be inserted anywhere. Most of her manuscript is actually taken from her letters to me and to her family though a few have been added to fill out. The most unusuall and remarkable picture I ever set is the scene inside the hogan with the sick man. This was really something to have been allowed to do. Fortunately the man recovered otherwise I would be taboo with a camera in that region forever. My sceince friends marvel that we were allowed to do this.

In all probility I shall improve the Introduction, and upon your approval we will get to work on the History. It will take a bit of research and the field is very limited for the knowledge is scant, but we have access to what there is. A nice Navaho Poem would be a nice addition, and of-course the selection of ornamentation for the layout can come at a later date.

Should you consider this book favorably, it is my wish that this be a joint arrangement with the contract reading in both our names on a 50-50 basis.

I am sending the MS. with a good insurance value for we seem to have mislaid the carbon copy and this is our all.

I hope this reaches you on the publication day of THE PUEBLOS and that your opinion of this will be a favorable one.

If other stores do as well by THE PUEBLOS as Edith Farnsworth's Book Shop, it is off to a good start.

With best wishes for all things for 1942, I am

Very sincerely yours,