

Laura Gilpin

Laura Gilpin, long-time resident of the Santa Fe area and professional photographer for many years offers the following comments and provides comparative photographs of Shiprock, New Mexico. (Photos follow.)

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

"It was the magnificent skies and the great variety of landscape that drew me to New Mexico where I have made my home since 1945. As a photographer I was challenged continuously with the problems of recording on film the changing light and the far distant horizons one saw on every hand. The clarity of light which yielded luminous shadows and crisp contours is today becoming veiled with smog.

"On an early morning in September 1926, forty-five years ago, I made a trip to Mesa Verde National Park. From the North Rim of the Mesa it was an experience to see Shiprock some forty air miles to the south. I photographed it with an old telephoto lens at that great distance. (Photo #1.) Shiprock was distinctly visible as was the mountain range beyond. On November 18, 1971, also from the North Rim of Mesa Verde, one could barely see Shiprock. This photograph (Photo #2) was made with a far better lens but the rock is almost invisible. This loss of clarity is due to the air pollution from the strip coal-mining and powerplant near Farmington, New Mexico, about twenty miles east of Shiprock. The smoke from this plant also drifts east, crosses the Continental Divide and comes down the Chama

Valley. It is changing the visibility in the Santa Fe area. There are days when one cannot see Los Alamos clearly and many days one cannot see Mount Taylor which always used to be clearly visible from the Santa Fe area.

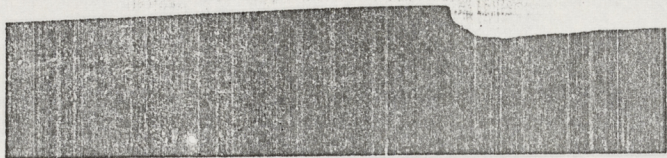
"Much closer to Shiprock than Mesa Verde, I made a picture in 1934. The rock is perhaps ten miles away. (Photo #3.) Photo #4, from this approximate site, a photograph made on November 17, 1971, clearly shows the comparative visibility.

"This Farmington coal-burning plant has now been in operation for 8 years and is creating a very definite loss in air clarity in this region. The economic value of the work provided by this plant for the native people of the area is of course a great benefit to them. But, what if there were ten such plants spewing out smoke and ash? Surely, the inventiveness and ingenuity of American science and technology can solve this pollution problem. Already there is talk of many more such plants in this general area. To meet the economic necessity for work and to create the power that seems to be needed, some solution must be found to solve such a serious problem."

Signed

Laura Gilpin

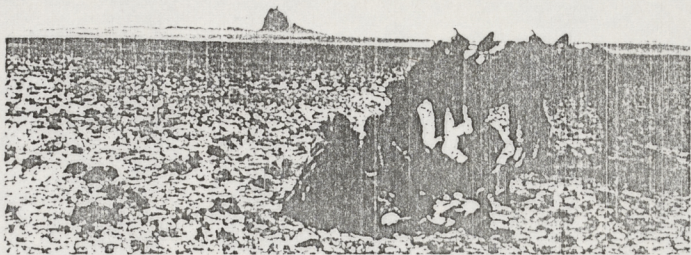
(It should be noted that the use of a "G" filter in the 1971 photos actually reduced the existing haze.)



#1 Shiprock from the North Rim of Mesa Verde --  
 photographed in 1926  
 Credit Line -- photograph by Laura Gilpin  
 5 x 7 Camera, Telephoto lens, no filter



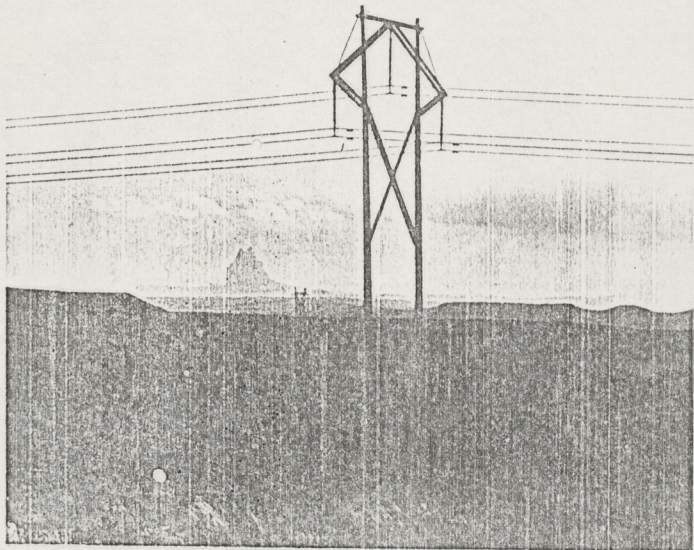
#2 From the North Rim of Mesa Verde, Shiprock is practically invisible.  
 Photographed November 19, 1971  
 Credit line - photograph by Laura Gilpin  
 5 x 7 Camera, 12" Dagor lens using single element making a 20" lens,  
 1-16, G filter



\*3 This photograph was made in 1933

Credit line -- photograph by Laura Gilpin

8 x 10 camera 9 1/4 inch Zeiss Protar, single element, making 18" lens,  
probably f. 22, no filter



\*4 October 18, 1934. This tower is approximately 10 miles away. Compare with \*3 which was made in  
1933. This one is more to the right than \*3.

Credit line -- photograph by Laura Gilpin

8 x 10 camera 9 1/4 inch Zeiss Protar, single element, making 18" lens,  
probably f. 22, no filter