

My dear Miss Speiser:

I have been out of town during the month of October and have not had an earlier opportunity to consider your letter.

In the letter which I wrote you from Maine, I tried to state my position fully, and it would be a waste of your time and mine to take up the matter again. I have really nothing more to say. I can understand that you wish to make photographs of Nebraska, but I do not see how you can reasonably expect me to assist you in this. "My Antonia", the book to which you refer, was written twenty-five years ago, and was an attempt to recall the impressions of childhood. The scene was presented in the kindly light of memory. The characters were types rather than individuals: some were entirely imaginary, some were composites, and some were affectionate portraits of people who had long been dead when I wrote the book. Please accept this as a definite and final refusal of your enthusiastic invitation.

Evidently, Miss Speiser, you wish very much to make photographs of Nebraska, and you wish to make something rather picturesque. I wonder why you have not selected Mari Sandoz' book, "Old Jules"? Miss Sandoz comes from a more picturesque part of the State than was the little farming community in which I grew up, and her book deals with a pioneer stage of development in the State. I have never met Miss Sandoz, but if she would collaborate with you, I think her book would make a good background for photographs of western Nebraska.

With kinest personal regards, believe me

Very cordially yours,

Willa Cather

P.S. Photographs are being returned under separate cover.

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