

**To:** harlan@msu.hist.com  
**From:** akovach@rds.com  
**Subject:** Letter to Professor Harlan, History Dept., Massachusetts State University

Dear Professor Harlan,

My name is Ana Kovach, and I work for an organization that coordinates exchange programs for young people in Yugoslavia who want to study for a while at American schools or obtain specialized business training from American companies. Most of these young people speak English quite well, but they would like to know more about contemporary American culture before they go. I have been given the task of writing a book that will give them this introduction to the United States.

I am very excited about this project, but I am also somewhat in doubt about how to begin such an enormous task. As I only have a year to do my research and write the book, I would like to request your help. Your name was given to me as a specialist in American history and culture, so I believe you must know about all the recent publications and books on the subject. Would it be possible for you to send me a list of these books?

I thank you for your attention.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ana Kovach

**To:** akovach@rds.com  
**From:** harlan@msu.hist.com  
**Subject: re:** Letter to Professor Harlan, History Dept., Massachusetts State University

Dear Ms. Kovach,

I would be most happy to send you a reading list on American culture; however, may I make another suggestion?

As you yourself have said, your job will not be an easy one. The subject of American culture is quite vast, given the size and diversity of the land and its people. Any list I send would have to be quite extensive to give you a real feeling of what we are all about, and you would truly spend your year with your "nose in a book."

I wonder, though, if your year wouldn't be better spent if, for at least part of it, you took your nose out of the books and brought it here to the United States, to see for yourself who we are and how we live. I feel that by traveling through the country, talking to the people and experiencing the land for yourself, you will be better able to share American culture with your students. (You'll probably have a lot more fun too!)

I realize that a trip of this sort could be quite expensive, but I would be glad to help you find ways to cut some of the costs. I know a number of people in different parts of the country with whom you could stay, and who would enjoy showing you their cities.

If you agree to this proposal, I will be glad to begin contacting people and making a plan of the places for you to visit. Of course, we will also keep in touch along the way.

I certainly hope you will also visit me here in Massachusetts, but I think we should leave that for the end. I will be curious about what you have seen, and after your trip, we can discuss some of your conclusions about the American way of life.

Please consider this suggestion and let me know how I can best help you.

Yours,  
Jack Harlan