

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Section 15, Pages 421 - 450

This correspondence documents the research Robert Taft undertook in writing his works on the history of American photography. It includes letters he wrote and responses. Correspondents include staff in historical and other collecting institutions, family members of early photographers and expedition members, publishers, and other people researching early U. S. photographers. It also documents some preservation work he did on early photographs. See Taft's photography research notes as Kansas Memory unit 228066.

Creator: Taft, Robert, 1894-1955

Date: 1926-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 11-12, Photography-Correspondence

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Robert Taft photography correspondence

Jan. 30, 1935

Miss M. T. Talbot
Speddoch, Damfried
Scotland

Dear Miss Talbot:

Thank you for your very kind letter of January 14.

I will be glad to obtain the transcript of the Herschel letter and the print from the Fox-Talbot negative of 1835. In case that the prints from this negative are weak and would suffer further reduction in intensity when reproduced, would it be possible to obtain a print of greater contrast from some other negative? I am not especially desirous of showing Fox-Talbot's earliest work, but should like to obtain an excellent illustrative example of his work made by his own hands.

I am very much interested in what you have to say concerning the Langenheim's. Your grandfather patented his process in this country on June 26, 1847, and shortly thereafter, I believe, the Langenheim's became his agents in this country. Do you know if there is any correspondence between your grandfather and either of the Langenheim's, probably Frederick, as he was the business man of the firm? If so, I should very much like to obtain transcripts of it. I would also like to obtain either the originals or photographic copies of the Talbotypes made by the Langenheim's which you mention in your letter, when you return to Lacock Abbey in April. If you could lend them to me I would have copies made in our photographic laboratory, which is especially equipped for this kind of work, and return them promptly to you.

Thank you again for your aid. I am sure that it will add greatly to my chapter which deals with the Talbotype in this country.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS



Robert Taft photography correspondence

Jan. 30, 1935

Mr. F. R. Fraprie
423 Newbury Street
Boston 17, Mass.

Dear Mr. Fraprie:

Thank you for your letter of Jan. 22. It was kind of you to write me at such length, and I was much interested in its contents.

I am glad to find some one who doesn't swallow whole everything that is seen in print. I am referring to your statement concerning Brady's trip to Europe with Morse. The story was started by Lanier, who in turn got it from Fairman of Washington, neither of whom had any actual facts concerning the stated trip. I have a biographical sketch of Brady prepared in 1851 and another one, written forty years later, presumably in his own words, neither of which mentions any such trip. The facts in the two agree, but there is information which could be twisted into the form Lanier has given it. Brady, moreover, was born in the Lake George region of New York, and not in Ireland, as Lanier says. I have also gone through Morse's original letters at the Library of Congress and find no mention, either contemporary or later, that would even suggest that Brady accompanied Morse to Europe in '38 and '39.

I am also quite sure that Daguerre did not reveal the nature of his process to Morse on Morse's visit to Daguerre on March 7, 1839, although the biographies of Morse written by Prime and by E. L. Morse both so state. Among the letters in the Library of Congress is one by Morse to Daguerre written late in the fall of 1839 which shows quite definitely that Morse was unfamiliar with Daguerre's process until after it had been publicly announced on August 18, 1839. The letter of Morse published in the New York Observer on April 20, 1839, does not contain any description of Daguerre's method, but contents itself with descriptions of the product of Daguerre's labors.

The name of the Englishmen whom Morse forgot was D. W. Seager, and I am sure that he, publicly at least, showed American made daguerreotypes before Morse did. All of these matters, however, I have treated at some length in my manuscript, including mention of a long and windy exchange of uncomplimentary remarks between Morse and Gouraud, whom you mention in your letter.

I have the first five chapters of my manuscript complete, which takes the history of American photography up to about 1870. As soon as I can get it typed I will have it sent on to you, since you have so kindly volunteered to read it for me. Mr. Nebllette of the Eastman Kodak Company and Dr. Olmstead of the National

M

Robert Taft photography correspondence

2 - F.R.F. - 1/30/35

Museum have also offered their help in this connection.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC PUBLISHING CO.

CABLE ADDRESS, AMPHOCO, BOSTON

428 NEWBURY STREET

BOSTON 17, MASS.

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY
PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY
AMERICAN ANNUAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

February 4, 1935.

Professor Robert Taft,
The University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas.

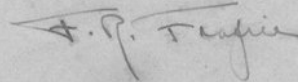
Dear Professor Taft:

I shall be very glad indeed to have the opportunity to look at your historical manuscript when ready. I enclose herewith a copy of the broadcast which I gave last week upon Brady. I must confess I am not sure of all the facts in regard to the other photographers, as these names were taken from the "Photographic History of the Civil War", which, from the few pages I have read, is an extremely unreliable historical authority.

Incidentally, may I ask if you have negatives of some of the Brady presidential daguerreotypes from which you made your lantern slides? I thought of having an article on Brady with some pictures in an early issue of the magazine. Perhaps you could write a historical sketch of the man and we could get someone else to add a paragraph or two about the artistic value of his work, if you would not care to undertake this. We pay, as a rule, only \$3.00 per printed page for text and illustrations, which is not a very heavy compensation, but about as much as we can afford with our limited advertising field.

Yours very truly,

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC PUBLISHING CO.



F. R. Fraprie/McC

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Copy of broadcast made by Frank R. Fraprie on January 28, 1935.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, one of the most popular and fashionable photographers in the United States was Mathew B. Brady of New York. He was born in Warren County, N. Y., about 1823, of Irish descent. Though he received but a meagre schooling, he contrived by earnest effort to acquire a respectable education. He met in Syracuse the portrait painter William Page, who encouraged him to draw and introduced him to Samuel F. B. Morse, an excellent painter and president of the National Academy of Design, who was at that time struggling to make a commercial success of his invention of the electric telegraph. A pleasing legend, which I fear lacks historical foundation, asserts that Brady's employer, the great New York merchant, A. T. Stewart, sent him to Europe with Morse in 1838, and that he visited Daguerre's studio with Morse on the day, in March 1839, when Daguerre disclosed his invention of the daguerreotype to Morse, nearly six months before it was made public. Be this as it may, Morse was one of the first makers of daguerreotypes, amateur or professional, in America, and Brady not only learned the art from him, but saw its commercial possibilities. He opened a daguerreotype saloon, to use the word of the day, in 1842 or '3, became successful and famous, and in 1851 received the prize medal at the World's Fair in London for a collection of 48 daguerreotypes.

It has been stated that before the invention of the daguerreotype fifteen thousand portrait painters were making a living in the world. By the middle of the 40's these men had to a large extent lost their occupation, and in place of them thirty thousand daguerreotypers were picturing the populace in America alone. A daguerreotype could not be printed; each sitting produced but a single picture, so that prices were high, from five dollars up for each picture, until the usual price cutting began. Then,

Robert Taft photography correspondence

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in the early fifties, came the invention of the wet-plate negative, from which any number of prints could be made. Brady, who took advantage of every new invention, brought over from London about 1855 Alexander Gardner, an expert in wet-plate work, and thereafter abandoned the making of daguerreotypes. In 1858 he opened a photographic saloon in Washington, and in 1859 moved uptown in New York. His fame became so great that he is mentioned in one of Bret Harte's poems as the photographer of society.

In 1860 the fashion of pasting one's photograph on a calling card arose in Paris, and from this sprang the small size of photograph called carte de visite, the cheapness of which made it universally popular during the days of the Civil War and long afterward. Photography flourished as never before. Every soldier departing for the war left his photograph with his friends and took with him pictures of his family. The family photograph album was introduced, and rested on every parlor table, inevitably to be shown to every visitor, and for a generation a great aid in bringing a bashful beau to close quarters and fluent conversation. In the Civil War albums we usually find not only the family portraits, but those of famous generals and early war heroes, whose pictures were sold by thousands. Most popular of all was that of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, of the New York Zouaves, the first Union officer who was killed, shot down by an innkeeper in Alexandria, Virginia, while tearing down a Confederate flag.

Brady hastened to Washington at the outbreak of hostilities, interested Lincoln, Stanton and Allan Pinkerton, and secured permission from the Secret Service to photograph events at the front. He was present at the first battle of Bull Run, became involved in the rout of the Union army, escaped capture by the Confederates through falling in with the New York Zouaves, who had been almost entirely recruited from New

Robert Taft photography correspondence

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York City firemen and policemen, and finally arrived in Washington three days later, attired in his famous linen duster, and girded with a Zouave broadsword for defence.

The photographer of today has no conception of the difficulties involved in producing wet-plate photographs in the field. Brady constructed a travelling photographic darkroom, which was conspicuous on battlefields throughout the war, and was universally known as the "What is it?" This van was built somewhat like a butcher's cart, with a deep boxed-in step or well at the back, in which the photographer stood, with all his apparatus on shelves in front of him. In these cramped quarters he had to sensitize his plates, usually eight by ten in size, with chemical solutions which required the utmost delicacy in manipulation. All sorts of mishaps were likely to occur, but if all went well, the plate had to be exposed wet within five minutes of its making, and developed within five minutes more. Under these handicaps Brady and his operators made about seven thousand photographs during the war, in most cases producing two negatives of each subject, to obviate the possibility of loss by mischance. He spent on this work a hundred thousand dollars and ruined himself, for the sales by no means came up to his expectations. There were few illustrated periodicals to publish the pictures, for the only means of reproduction was the slow and costly method of engraving on wood. After many vicissitudes, one set of Brady's negatives was purchased by the United States in 1875 for twenty five thousand dollars, but they are not allowed to be used commercially, while another set, taken by his stockhouse for his debts, came into private ownership and is the source of most of the published war pictures. Brady died, poor and forgotten, in a New York hospital in 1896.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

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Not only Brady, but other devoted photographers followed the fortunes of the armies on both sides. Alexander Gardner made three quarters of the pictures of the Army of the Potomac. Thomas G. Roche and Captain A. J. Russell, official camera man of the War Department, made invaluable pictures of the northern campaigns. Sam A. Cooley was attached to the Tenth Army Corps, and photographed operations in the Carolinas and southward, as did George M. Barnard and S. T. Siebert. Cook of Charleston, Edwards of New Orleans, A. D. Lytle of Baton Rouge, and various unknown men made valuable photographs for the South. They did their work under enormous difficulties, for all their materials came from New York. Some smuggled them through on blockade runners, but in the wouthwest they were admitted on "Orders to trade" which Lincoln signed in great numbers, often against the advice and without the signature of his Secretary of War.

As a result of the work of these men we have today a collection of photographs of the Civil War which depict all phases of that conflict in a way which was not duplicated for fifty years. Few if any photographers followed the Franco-Prussian War, and the Japanese completely prevented work by the numerous skilled war correspondents who flocked to the Russo-Japanese War. Thus the record of military operations, devastation and carnage, which was the work of the heroic photographers of the Civil War, remained, until the Great War of 1914-18, the only complete representation of a great military struggle.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

February 5, 1935

Director, U.S. Patent Office
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Inclosed find payment for copies of the following U.S.
Letters Patent.

No.	Date	Patentee
23257	Mar. 15, 1859	W. Lloyd
22838	Feb. 1, 1859	J. Lee
26525	Dec. 20, 1859	T. C. Roche
23543	April 12, 1859	A. Beckers
24855	July 26, 1859	A. Beckers
24115	May 24, 1859	H. Glosser
22695	Jan. 25, 1859	J. Beckel
23438	Apr. 5, 1859	A. Beckers
16962	Apr. 7, 1857	A. Beckers
29652	Aug. 14, 1860	D. F. Maltby

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft
Asso. Professor of Chemistry

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Littleton N.H.
Feb. 6. 1935

Dr. Robt Taft -
University of Kansas -
Lawrence, Kans.

Dear Sir -

The Kilburn Bros have long been dead but because of long associations when mail comes to that name, it is turned over by postal authorities, to my husband for disposal.

I will endeavor to give you the information you ask.

They were descendants of Thomas Kilburn of Wood Ditton, Eng. Thomas came to this country about 1635.

Benjamin West Kilburn was born in Littleton Dec 10. 1827 and died here Jan. 1. 1909.

Edward Kilburn was born here Feb. 27, 1830. and died Feb. 25, 1884.

Each of them had but one child, a daughter and both of them deceased.

Edward K. began business in a small way in 1855, Thro' him, Benjamin became interested especially in landscape photography and became very skilled in the use of the camera.

About 1867 they formed a partnership. The camera work was done entirely by B. W. and Edward gave his attention to ^{the} manufacturing.

In those days they confined their work to White

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Mountains with a few locals and groups. After years of this Benjamin journeyed the world over in search of whatever was attractive.

In 1875 Benjamin purchased the interests of his brother and a new firm B. W. Kilburn & Co., was established, the members of the Co., being his daughter and son-in-law D. C. Remick.

In 1905 the Company owned about one hundred thousand negatives and had agents in all parts of the world. After Mr. Kilburn's death these negatives were sold to the Keystone View Co.,

I hope you may be able to gather from this the information you are seeking but if we can be of more service will be glad to see what more we could find.

Yours Very Truly
Mrs John Lytle
Lytle Lodge,
Littleton,
N.H.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

COLEMAN SELLERS, 3RD
1600 HAMILTON STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

February 11, 1935

Mr. Robert Taft
Assoc. Professor of Chemistry
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kans.

Dear Sir:

I was much interested in your letter of January 30 regarding your history of photography and the information you desire regarding my grandfather. I do not know of any model of his patent of 1861. The Franklin Institute Museum of Philadelphia has one of his original moving picture machines, wherein he mounted a series of stereoptican photographs around a wheel. By looking thru the aperture on the top and revolving the crank it is possible to observe my grandmother sewing with a very smooth motion. This is claimed by many people to be the first invention of the moving picture as he grasped the principle of the present movies by having the image hidden and only giving a slit in the wheel for observation so that the picture is not blurred at all.

My aunt, Mrs. H.W. Sellers, Ardmore, Pa. has a number of grandfather's early stereoptican photos which I am sure she would be glad to loan you if you write to her. Her late husband was the family archive collector and geneologist.

I remember my father telling me of grandfather's early photographic work. I believe he discovered some chemical combination that enabled him to keep exposed plates without the necessity of developing them immediately. Another point I remember was that he was frequently called upon to photograph dead babies. I suppose infant mortality was high in those days and there were few if any professional photographers. Consequently people imposed upon his great good nature to obtain photographs of their children before they buried them.

Were my father living I am sure he could give you much of the information you seek. Grandfather used to exchange stereoptican photographs with people all over the world. We gave away several bushels of them after his death in 1905.

Hoping the above will be of some assistance to you, I remain

Sincerely,

Coleman Sellers 3rd

CS3rd-bp

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Feb. 14, 1935

Mrs. M. Handy Evans
494 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Evans:

You may recall that I obtained from you some time ago prints of Brady and his studio. I have several manuscripts dealing with the early history of photography in this country nearly ready for publication and wish to fill in several gaps in my information which possibly you can furnish.

1. Can you tell me the maiden name of M. B. Brady's wife, the date of his marriage, and of the wife's death? Were there any children?

2. Do you know if Brady photographed the following presidents: Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley? Not necessarily while in office, but at any time? Of course, he could not have photographed McKinley while he was in office.

3. Would you care to have me mention your collection of Brady material? If so, will you please give me a description of it, i.e., number of negatives and prints, whether originals or copies, dates covered by collection, etc.

Thank you for your aid. If there are any charges for the information covered by the first two requests, please send it to me.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

PHONE METROPOLITAN 0730

L. C. HANDY STUDIOS

494 MARYLAND AVENUE, S. W.

LEVIN G. HANDY
M. HANDY EVANS
ALICE H. COX

Photography

WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 25, 1935.

Mr. Robert Taft,
Dept. of Chemistry,
University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Mr. Taft:

I was out of town when your letter of the 14th arrived, and it has taken some little time since my return in searching through our files etc. in order to answer your several questions.

We have found several clippings relating to Mrs. Brady, and have copied and are mailing you two which we believe will be of interest to you. They are undoubtedly from Washington newspapers. Although we have spent much time, we cannot find exactly when Brady was married, but fix the date about 1845. Brady was born in 1822 and died January 15, 1896 according to tombstone in the "Handy" lot in Congressional Cemetery, this City, where he is buried. He entered business in 1840, and was successful from the first. Mrs. Brady died May 21, 1887, and was buried in the "Handy" lot in Congressional Cemetery. We have no record of Mrs. Brady's birth, but my uncle, who is associated in business with us and who remembers both Mr. and Mrs. Brady very well, says they were near the same age. There were no children.

I am sending you copy of a very fine daguerreotype, which I believe will be of interest to you, showing Brady, Mrs. Brady, and Brady's sister, (who was afterwards Mrs. Haggerty.) This was made about 1845 shortly after Brady's marriage. We have this original daguerreotype in our collection. You might be interested in its purchase for your museum. It is a very fine example of the art and of the style of the time, and also a fine likeness of Mr. and Mrs. Brady at the time. We know of no other picture of Mrs. Brady. Also, Mr. Taft, this picture has never been published. It was discovered within the last year among some old effects of my father's. The daguerreotype is still in the original velvet lined

Robert Taft photography correspondence

PHONE METROPOLITAN 0730

L. C. HANDY STUDIOS

494 MARYLAND AVENUE, S. W.

LEVIN G. HANDY
M. HANDY EVANS
ALICE H. COX

Photography

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1/2.

case, measuring about four x five inches. We are asking \$250. for the daguerreotype.

We have no record of Brady ever making a photograph of Grover Cleveland. He did make Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley, however. We are mailing you prints of these two negatives. The one of McKinley is very rare and was made when McKinley was in Congress in 1877. Harrison's was made in the late seventies in Washington, D.C.

We are also mailing for your inspection and approval print from original negative of Samuel F.B. Morse. This is enlarged from a small card de visite negative made in the early fifties.

We would be pleased to have our collection of Brady material mentioned in your history. Our collection covers Brady photography from 1840 and includes several thousand original negatives and several hundred rare copies, a small but rare collection of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes etc. There are several hundred original prints of Civil War views. Of course, we do not have the entire Brady collection.

Mr. Taft, we have four or five very fine original negatives of John J. Ingalls, Senator from Kansas in the sixties. They were made about 1866 and also 1875. Would you be interested in prints from these, or probably your museum would be interested in the purchase of one or more of the old wet plate negatives. They are \$50. each, size about 6 x 8 1/2 inches. Prints from these would be \$3.00 each.

We are also sending for your inspection and approval print of Post Master General John A.J. Cresswell and assistants made in the sixties. This is sent as an example of methods used in Brady's studio re background, reflectors, accessories etc. It is printed straight out to show old and new numbers, notations, etc, and general condition of negative today.

You asked about Brady and Morse.. It has always been my belief, and the understanding of our family, that Brady went abroad with Morse when a mere boy, and met ~~daguerreotype~~ Deguerre, but I cannot find anything to prove this at the present time. I feel sure I have seen it in a clipping somewhere. Also I have heard

Robert Taft photography correspondence

PHONE METROPOLITAN 0730

L. C. HANDY STUDIOS

494 MARYLAND AVENUE, S. W.

LEVIN G. HANDY
M. HANDY EVANS
ALICE H. COX

Photography

WASHINGTON, D. C.

#3

my father speak of it many many times.

Bill is enclosed.

We have record of ~~sending~~ you print of President Pierce considerable time ago, but believe that a bill was never rendered for this print. We are including it in the present bill.

Please feel at liberty to return any of the prints sent which you cannot use. We have culled them out believing they would be of especial interest to you.

With best wishes for the success of your
book

Yours very truly,

L. Handy Evans

M. Handy Evans.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

The New York Public Library
Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
FIFTH AVENUE & 42ND STREET

New York, February 25, 1935

Mr. Robert Taft
The University of Kansas
Department of Chemistry
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Professor Taft:

In reply to your letter of February 14th:

Our information division reports that M. B. Brady appears in the New York directory for the first time in the 1843/44 issue. The listing reads:

Brady Math. B. jewel case man. 164 Fulton, h. 27 John

In the next issue, 1844/45, his listing reads:

Brady Matthew B. jewel, miniature and surgical case manufacturer, 187 B'way, opposite John: Also Daguerrian miniature gallery, 207 B'way, C. Fulton, entrance 162 Fulton, h. 63 Barclay.

There is no record of the Brady pamphlet in the New York Public Library. The Library of Congress catalogue contains the following:

Brady, Matthew B.
Brady's national photographic collection of war views, and portraits of representative men, New York and Washington, D. C. New York, C. A. Alvord, 1869. 139 p.

The Library has a copy of Gardner's "Rays of Sunlight." Our catalogue card for it reads:

Gardner, Alexander, 1821-1882
Rays of sunlight from South America. Photographed by Alexander Gardner. Washington, D. C.: Philip & Solomons, cop. 1865. 2e, 70 pl. fo.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Feb. 28, 1935

Mr. Alfred Rigling, Librarian
The Franklin Institute
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Rigling:

You may recall our correspondence in the past concerning the history of photography in this country. My history is nearing completion, but I am seeking for some illustrative material in connection with Coleman Sellers. His grandson, Coleman Sellers, 3rd, informs me that The Franklin Institute has a model of Mr. Sellers' device for exhibiting stereoscopic pictures in motion. Would it be possible to obtain a photograph of this device, and photographic copies of the stereoscopic views contained in it? According to the patent there should be three different views (two copies of each, however) in the device. I should like to obtain copies of each of these three, if possible.

If they can be obtained, will you please inform me as to expense, so that an order can be made and directions sent for finishing the prints.

Thank you for your aid. I appreciate it highly.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft
Assoc. Professor of Chemistry

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Feb. 28, 1935

Mr. Coleman Sellers, 3rd
1600 Hamilton St.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your letter of Feb. 11. I have written both Mrs. Sellers of Ardmore and the Franklin Institute for further information concerning your grandfather, as you suggested.

The substance your grandfather added to collodion plates in order to preserve them was glycerine. I had read his article describing the process just a few days before your letter arrived. You probably knew that Coleman Sellers was mentioned by Oliver Wendell Holmes in one of his Atlantic Monthly articles as one of the leading amateurs of the country.

Thank you again for your aid. I appreciate it highly.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Telephone Number—KENSINGTON 6371.



All communications should
be addressed to—

~~THE DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY.~~

Reference No.....



THE SCIENCE MUSEUM,

SOUTH KENSINGTON,

LONDON, S.W.7.

5th. March, 1935.

Professor Robert Taft,
The University of Kansas,
Lawrence, U.S.A.

Dear Professor Taft,

With further reference to my letter of the 29th. January I now have pleasure in appending a transcript of the portion of the letter from Herschel to Fox Talbot in which the use of the word "photographic" occurs. I regret the delay in forwarding this information which has been due to several causes.

You will notice that in the following transcript the use of "photographic" for "photogenic" is suggested in a footnote at the bottom of the sheet of notepaper—

Slough Feb 28/39

'My dear Sir,

You are quite welcome to make such mention as you may think proper to M. Biot of my process for washing out by the Hyposulphite of Soda and perhaps it may be as well to send him a few specimens for which purpose I annex a few - with remarks.

No.1. is a specimen Washed out with pure water. It appears to be very effectually preserved - tho in other respects a very bad specimen.

No.2. Is the same subject more successfully photographed* - washed with Hyposul Soda Feb. 19. Afterwards I mixed the two washes - they answered tolerably well but I have not yet been able to use the muriate alone with success.

*Your word photogenic recalls van ? *Iman's* exploded theories,



Robert Taft photography correspondence

of thermogen and photogen - It also lends itself to no inflexions and is out of analogy with Litho & Chaliography.¹?

Chirography

I am afraid that it is very difficult to make out the words which I have written, or underlined, in ink, but I have no doubt that you will be able to elucidate their meaning.

May I say that we should be very interested to have the opportunity of seeing your work on American Photography when it is ready - our Library, the National Science Library, would be particularly interested,

I hope you will let me know if there is anything further which I can do to assist you,

Yours sincerely,

Alex. Barclay

Chalcography

Robert Taft photography correspondence

[March 10, 1935]

MRS. HORACE WELLS SELLERS - 210 GLENN ROAD - ARDMORE - PENNA.

My dear Mr. Taft:

My nephew, Leberman Sellers spoke to me of his correspondence with you regarding his grandfather's early photographs, so that I was prepared for your letter and shall be very glad if I can be of any assistance to you.

I am sending under separate cover twenty-eight pictures from which you may choose. There are a great many more, mostly of family - such a few street scenes - (absolutely devoid of people)

Robert Taft photography correspondence

which might interest you. I
have also all the plates from
which these prints were made,
and I should be delighted
to let you have prints made.
But as these are marked by
my husband and his father
Leoman Sellers, I should like
them returned, whenever possible.
The original kinematoscope
— the first moving picture
machine — is in the Franklin
Institute, and my son

Robert Taft photography correspondence

MRS. HORACE WELLS SELLERS - 210 GLENN ROAD - ARDMORE - PENNA.

Charles Coleman Sellers - of the
Pacy Book Shop - 60 Meridian
St. New London Conn, has I
think some letters regarding
the early photographic Society
from Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes -
as he has all his father's &
grandfather's collection of Peale
& Sellers data, he might have
something which would be of help
to you -

I enclose some pictures of

Robert Taft photography correspondence

Nephew of Pease, who ~~was~~
an uncle of Coleman Sellers, his
mother having been Sophistic Pease
daughter of Charles Willson Pease.

I am enclosing a list of
the photographs, & hoping you
will let me know if I can
be of any further help —

Yours very sincerely —

Cora Mrs Sellers —

March 10 - 1935

Robert Taft photography correspondence

March 11, 1935

Mr. F. H. Meserve
79 Leonard Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Meserve:

You may remember our correspondence in the past concerning your photographic collection. I am writing at present to inquire if you have an original negative showing Brady in the field during Civil War days. There is one in particular that I am interested in. It is reproduced in the Photographic History of the War on page 17 of Vol. 8. It shows Brady the central figure in a field battery before Petersburg, and is said to have been taken June 21, 1864. If you have this, may I obtain an 8 x 10 ferrotype print from it?

I have a series of three articles dealing with Brady which are to appear shortly in American Photography, and wish the above as one of the illustrations.

Were the War views in your collection at one time the so-called Ordway-Rand collection? If not, can you tell me the whereabouts of the Ordway-Rand negatives?

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft
Assoc. Professor of Chemistry

RT:AS

Robert Taft photography correspondence

79 Leonard Street
NEW YORK

March 10, 1935

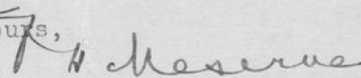
Dr. Robert Taft,
Dept. of Chemistry,
University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Professor Taft:

I haven't got the picture of Brady that you mention. I have one showing him standing alone resting his foot on a rail fence looking over a field which is said to be part of the Gettysburg battlefield. It is rather good, but shows only his side face. I also have two showing the light wagon which he or his assistants used in the field, but Brady is not in these pictures.

I have no idea what became of the Ordway-Rand Collection. If the Rand was Col. Rand who before he died was an official of the John Hancock Life Insurance Company in Boston, then the prints from the negatives are at the Loyal Legion headquarters there mounted in many ponderous volumes.

Truly yours,



F. H. Meserve.

FHM-q

Robert Taft photography correspondence

1710 35th Street
Washington D.C. March 21st 1935

Dear Doctor Taft:

Replying to your letter of the 18th, my collection was made from the negatives of the Ordway & Rand collection and was inherited by me from my father, Gen. Albert Ordway.

This collection was my father's hobby but I do not know when he commenced it nor how or when he obtained the negatives. As a boy, say about 1885, I remember him working over the photographs at our home in Washington and that Col. Arnold Rand of Boston had some part or interest ~~ex-interest~~ in the collection though just what I do not know.

My father died in 1897 while I was away from home. Some time prior to that he had disposed of his negatives but to whom and for what I do not know. The photographs remained in storage in Washington until 1930 when I brought them to my home here after my retirement from the army.

A few years ago the Review of Reviews published "Photographic History of the Civil War". Many of the pictures therein are the same as those in my collection. I was informed by the Review of Reviews that "we still have a majority of the photographs which were reproduced for the 'Photographic History of the Civil War'". It seems to me possible that my father's negatives may have gone ultimately to the Review of Reviews though I do not know.

The majority of the photographs of my collection were made by Brady and Gardner. I do not know what other photographers are represented.

My father spent considerable time collecting portraits of Union and Confederate generals. Many of them having been killed in action or died later their pictures were obtained through relatives or a photographic copy made of an old daguerrotype. This feature of the collection comprises 2140 portraits of Union generals and 507 Confederate generals. Only a portion of these are from Brady or Gardner negatives.

A brief biography of my father, Albert Ordway is as follows:-

Born in Boston 1843, he left Harvard College where he was a student to join the 24th Mass. Inf. as 1st lieut. at the age of 18. Served through various campaigns of the war and intermediate grades until he reached the grade of colonel, commanding

Robert Taft photography correspondence

the 24th Mass. Brevetted brigadier general in the closing days of the war was Provost Marshal General of Virginia with headquarters in Richmond at the age of 22. Settled in Richmond after the war ~~where~~ where he was married. Moved to Washington in 1876 and there made his home until his death in 1897. Was appointed Brigadier General, D.C. National Guard by President Cleveland. Organized that body and was its first commander.

I do not know the biography of Col. Rand but assume that he was an officer in the Civil War and lived in Boston.

Yes my collection is catalogued.

Sorry my information is not more definite but if I can serve you further in the premises I shall be glad to do so.

I thank you for the names you sent me of possible purchasers and shall communicate with them.

Sincerely yours

Hodwin Ordway

Col. U.S.A. Retired.



Robert Taft photography correspondence

PHONE METROPOLITAN 0730

L. C. HANDY STUDIOS

494 MARYLAND AVENUE, S. W.

LEVIN G. HANDY
M. HANDY EVANS
ALICE H. COX

Photography

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 30, 1935.

Mr. Robert Taft,
The University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Mr. Taft:

I am sending you prints as follows:

1. Chester A. Arthur. This negative is in our Brady Collection. Though it is copy of an original print I feel sure it is a Brady portrait. I have made inquiry at the Library of Congress and the War Department and can get no further light on the subject. I did not wish to hold up my letter to you any longer, but will search a little more and write you if I learn anything more of the origin of this portrait.

2. A copy of print of Brady in the field before Petersburg June 21, 1864. This is the best we have on this subject. It will reproduce well and will probably fill your needs.

Bill is enclosed.

You ask about lecture on the War prepared by Brady. This lecture covers description etc. of 135 lantern slides. We have most of these original wet plate slides. They are in an old hand made wooden box such a Brady carried plates about in when making these war views. This lecture was given all around this part of the country by Mr. Brady a number of years after the war. On the flyleaf is a little notation "Jotted down for the use of Mr. Brady as an outline for his lecture." This is in my father's handwriting. Some of the descriptions are rather lengthy; others are brief. We would copy this lecture for you for \$15.00; or would be willing to send the little book to you--you to copy the material therein for the same amount \$15. We would be willing to ship the entire lecture to you, including book and plates (we have about 120 or 125 of the original wet plate slides) for your use and inspection, for \$25. If you should wish to retain all, including the book, plates, and original box the price would be \$150.

I will quote one description ---