Robert Taft photography correspondence

Section 38, Pages 1111 - 1140

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

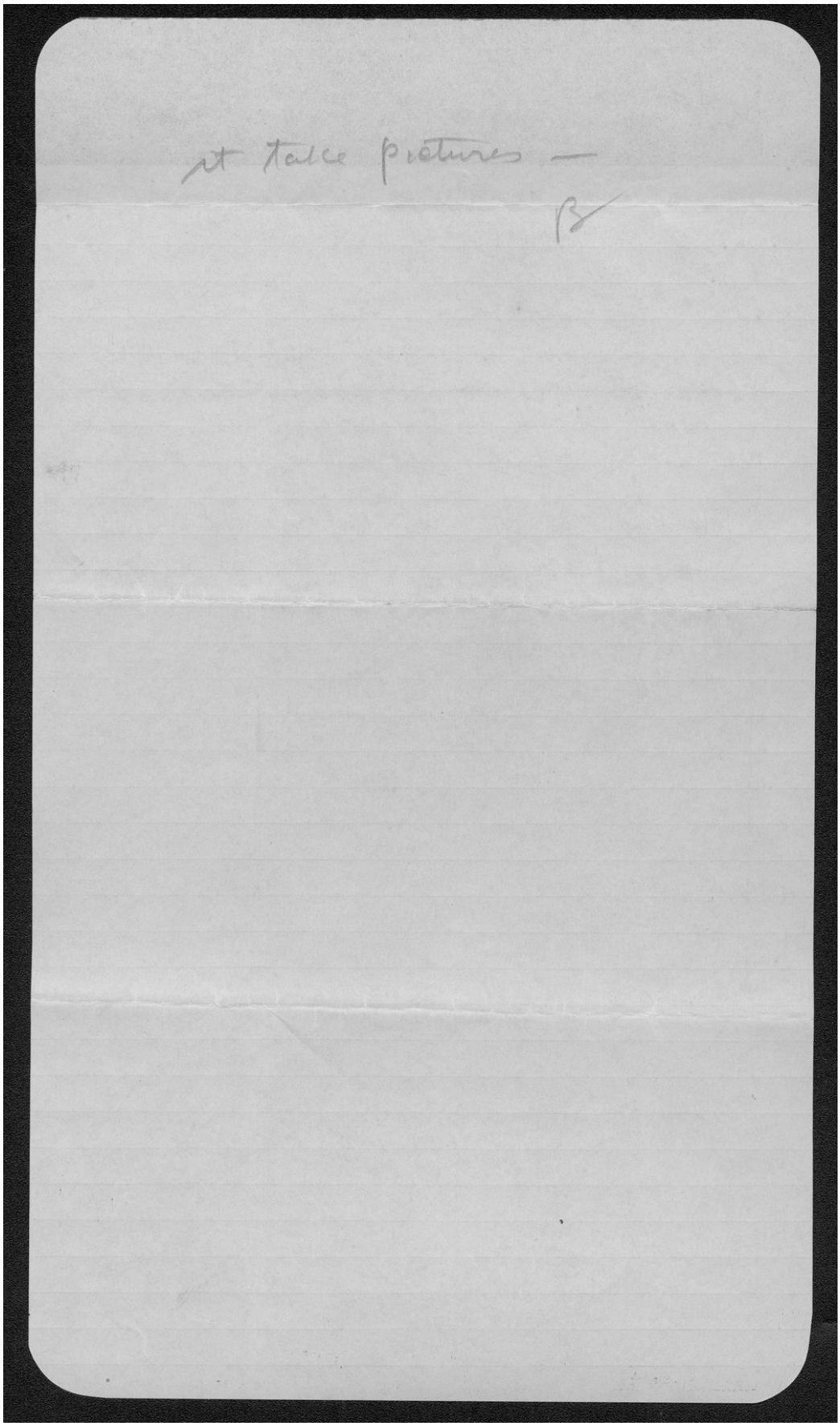
Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 11-12, Photography-Correspondence

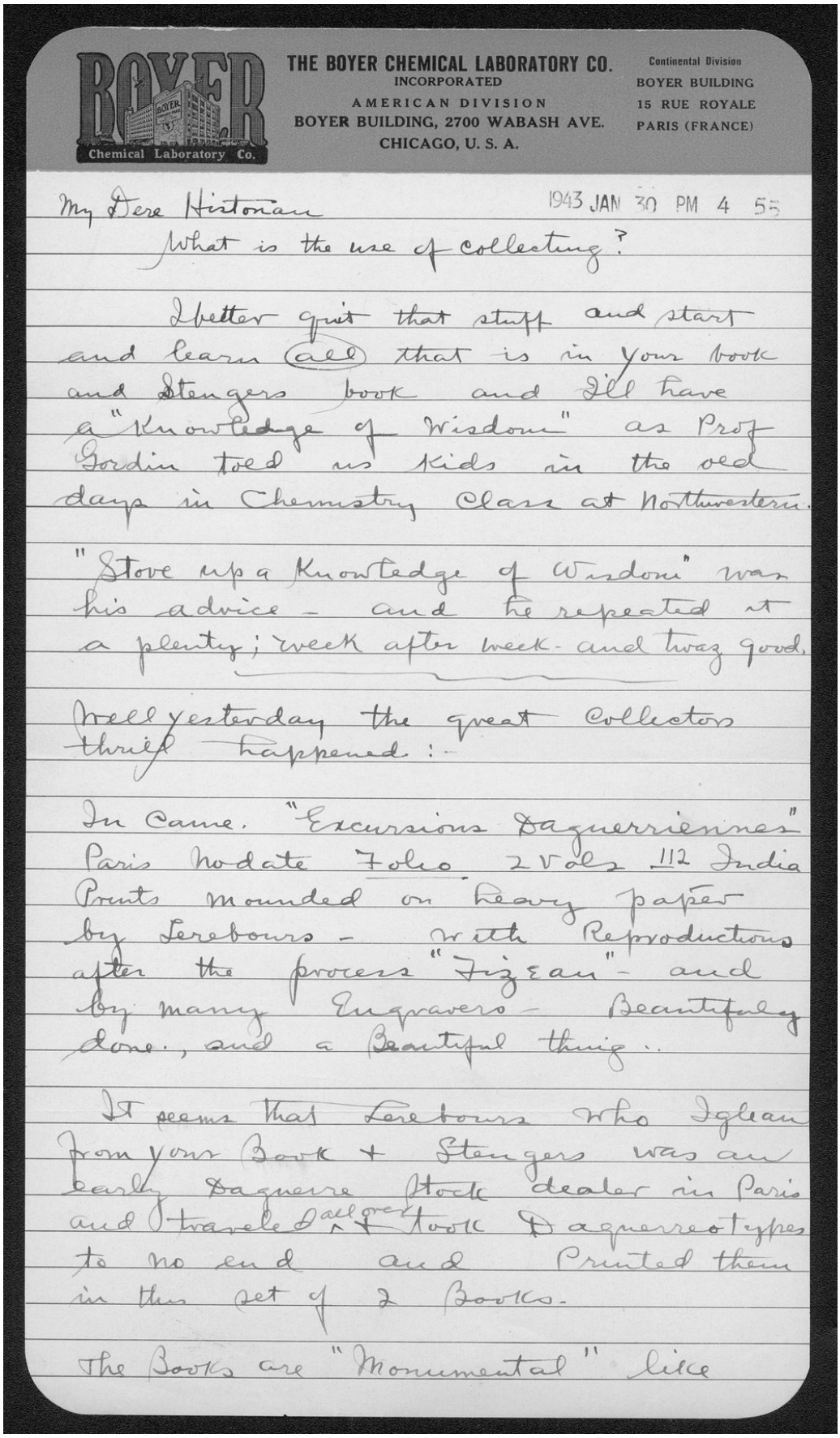
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Robert Taft photography correspondence





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CHICAGO, U. S. A.

Continental Division
BOYER BUILDING
15 RUE ROYALE
PARIS (FRANCE)

1943 JAN 30 PM 4 55

My Dere Historian

What is the use of collecting?

I better quit that stuff and start and learn (all) that is in your book and Stengers book and I'll have a "Knowledge of Wisdom" as Prof Gordin told us kids in the ole days in Chemistry Class at Northwestern.

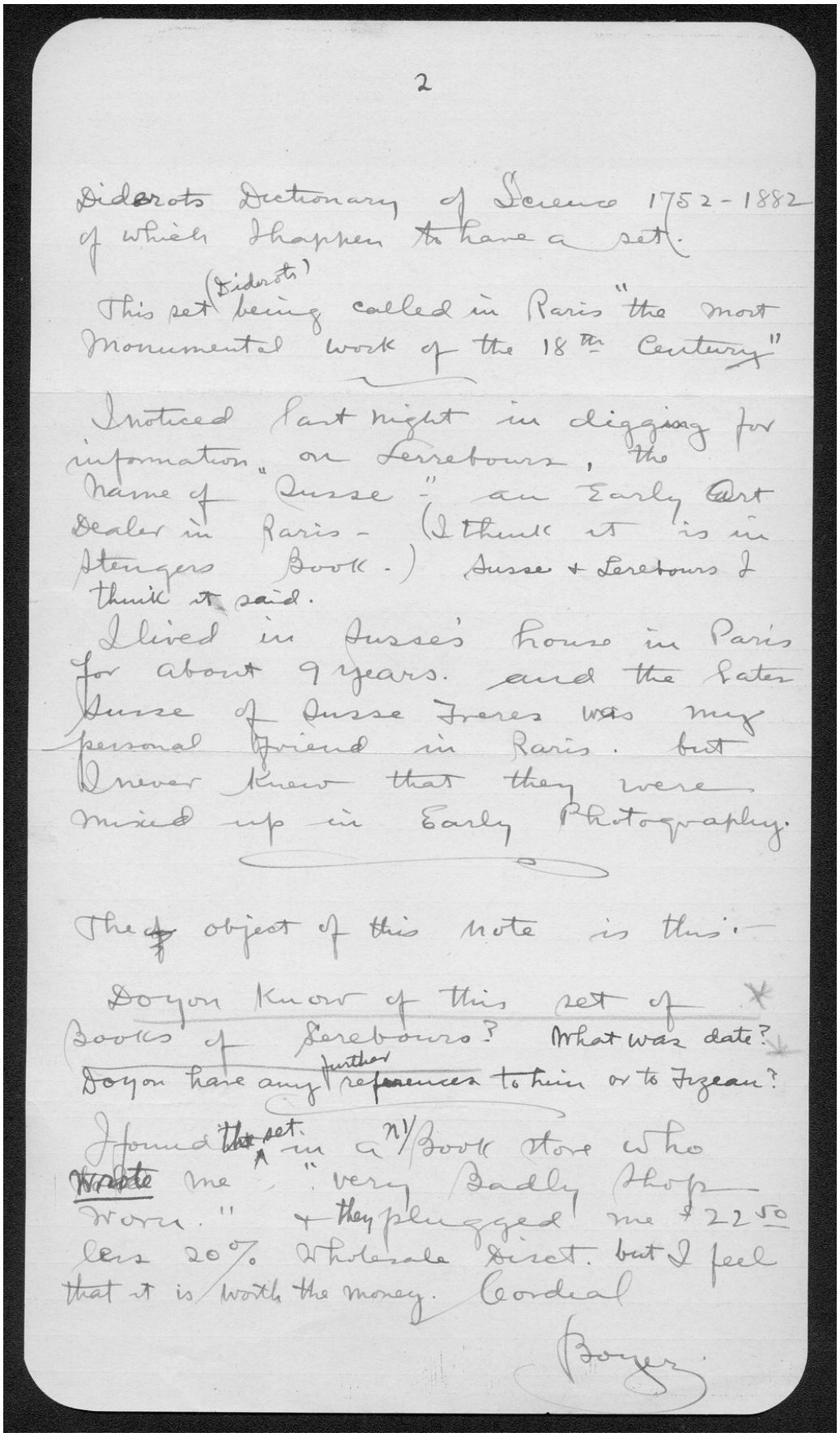
"Stove up a Knowledge of Wisdom" was his advice - and he repeated it a plenty; week after week - and twaz good.

Well yesterday the great Collectors thrill happened :-

In came. "Excursions Daguerriennes" Paris No date Folio 2 Vols 112 India Prints mounded on heavy paper by Lerebours - with Reproductions after the process "Fizeau" - and by many Engravers - Beautifully done., and a Beautiful thing..

It seems that Lerebours who I glean from your Book + Stengers was an early Daguerre Stock dealer in Paris and I travele d all ^ over took Daguerreotypes to no end and Printed them in this set of 2 Books.

The Books are "Monumental" like



2

Diderots Dictionary of Science 1752-1882
of which I happen to have a set.

This set (Diderots) being called in Paris "the most
Monumental work of the 18th Century"

I noticed last night in digging for
information on Leretours, the
name of "Susse" an Early Art
Dealer in Paris - (I think it is in
Stengers Book.) Susse + Leretours I
think it said.
I lived in Susse's House in Paris
for about 9 years. and the Later
Susse of Susse Freres was my
personal friend in Paris. but
I never knew that they were
mixed up in Early Photography.

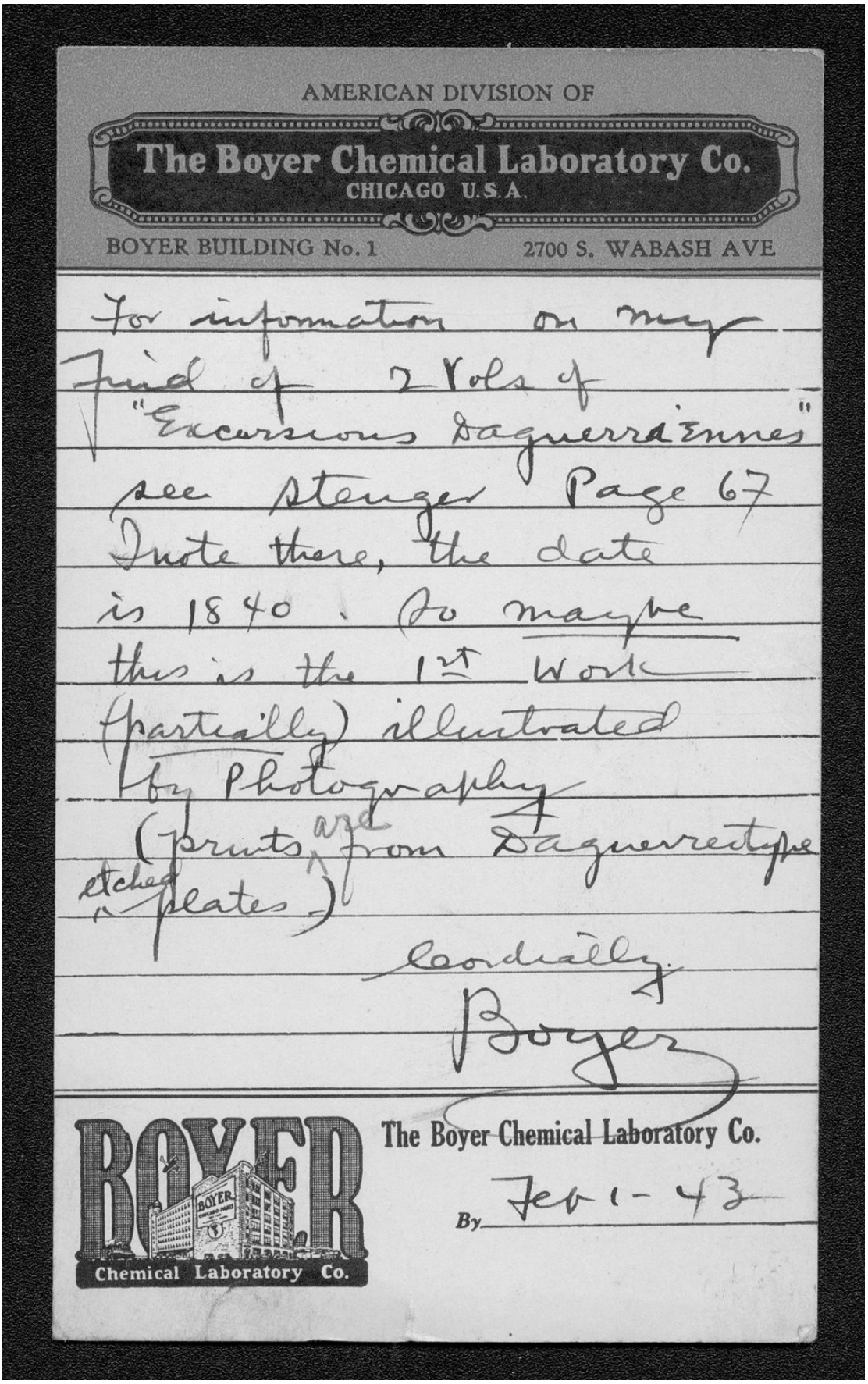
The ~~of~~ objest of this note is this:-

Do you know of this set of *
Books of Lerebours? What was date?
Do you have any further references to him or to Fizeau?

I found ~~that~~ set. in a N.Y. Book store who
~~wrote~~ me "very badly shop
worn." + they plugged me $22.50
less 20% Wholesale Discet. but I feel
that it is worth the money. Cordeal

Boyer

Robert Taft photography correspondence



AMERICAN DIVISION OF

The Boyer Chemical Laboratory Co.
CHICAGO U.S.A.

BOYER BUILDING No. 1 2700 S. WABASH AVE

For information on my find of 2 Vols of "Excursions Daguerriennes" see Steuger Page 67 I note there, the date is 1840. So maybe this is the 1st Work (partially) illustrated by Photography (prints and from Daguerreotype etched plates)

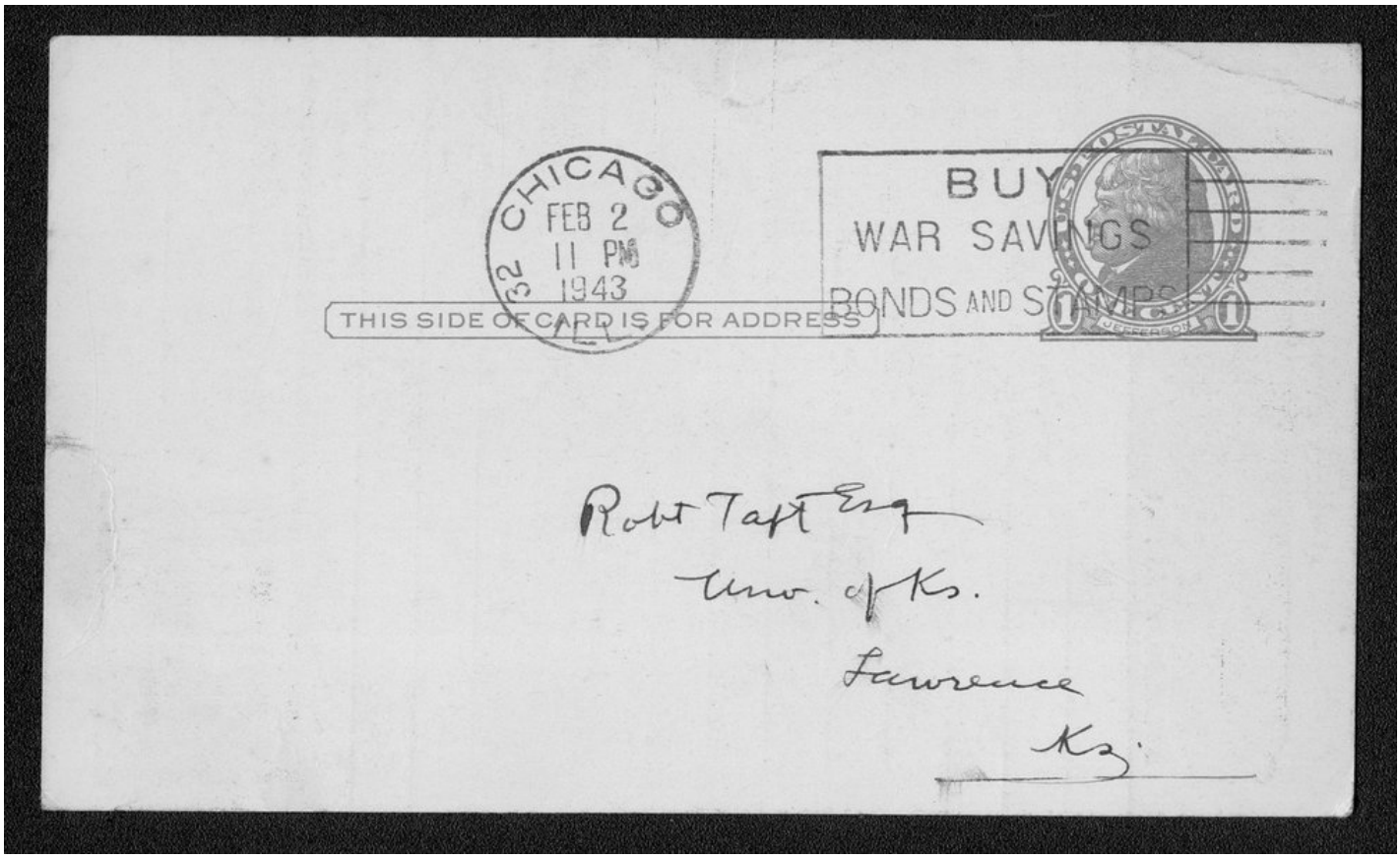
Cordially
Boyer

BOYER Chemical Laboratory Co.

The Boyer Chemical Laboratory Co.

By Feb 1-43

Robert Taft photography correspondence



February 3, 1943

Mr. Alden Scott Boyer
Chicago

Dear Mr. Boyer:

I believe that you have a real find in Lerebours' Excursions Daguerriennes. I have never seen a copy in any of the libraries with which I am familiar but have seen references to it several times. Lerebours was, by profession, an optician but very much interested in photography. He wrote a treatise on the subject which was published in 1843 and was subsequently translated into English. You will find reference to his treatise in Note 437, page 511 of my book. Fizeau's method of reproducing a daguerreotype "the process Fizeau", was described in Lerebours' book. I have referred to the process on page 412 of my book. Fizeau also introduced the "gilding" of daguerreotypes (see p.43 of my book).

According to the Grand Dictionnaire Universel (vol.10, p. 394) Nicolas Marie Paymal Lerebours published the Excursions Daguerriennes in Paris in 1844. If you are interested, there is also some additional biographical information on Lerebours in this reference.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT/wac

BOYER — 2700 Wabash Ave., Chicago, U. S. A.

BOYER Chemical Laboratory Co.

alden Scott

Feb 13 '47

Dear Mr Taft:

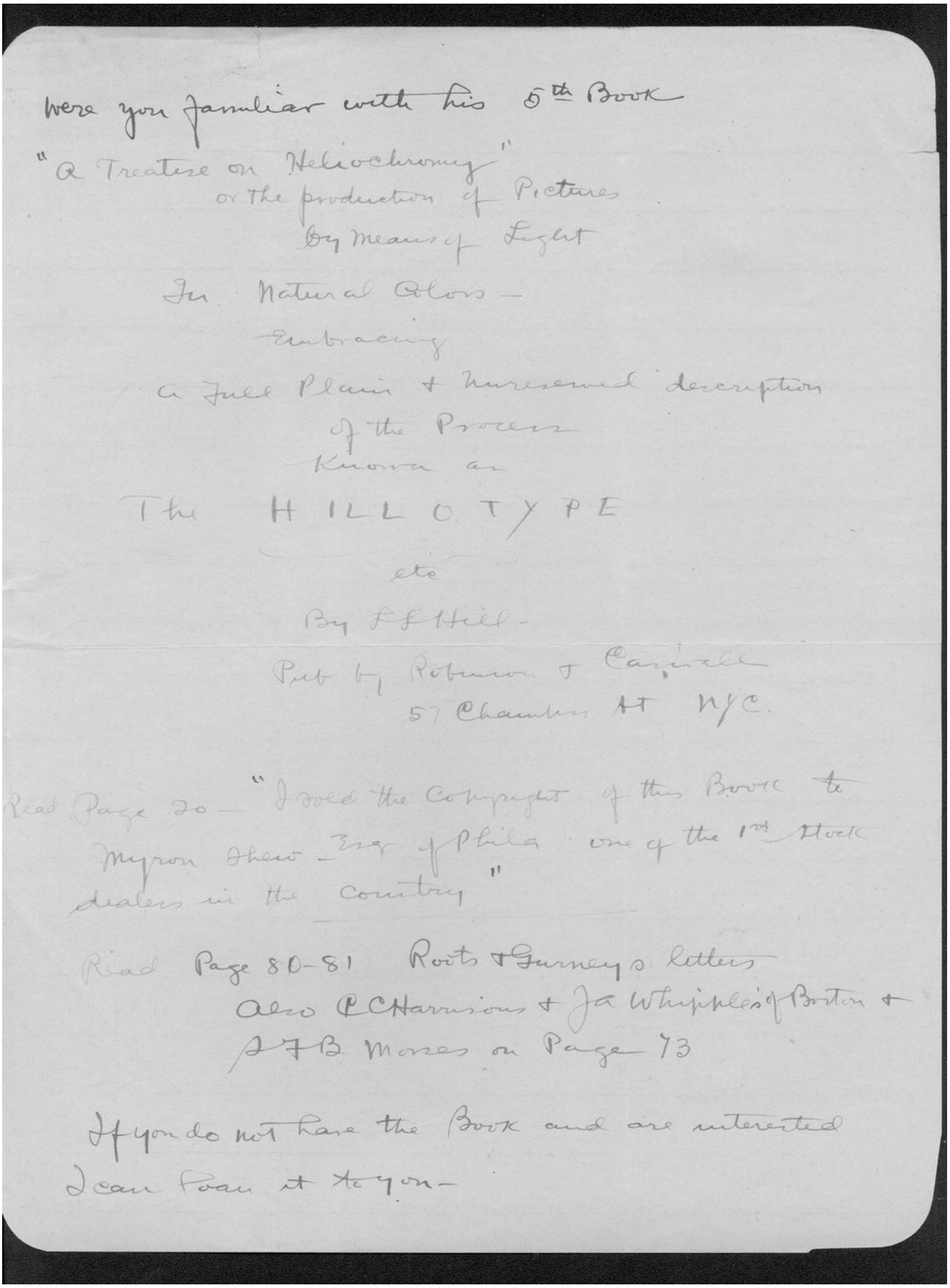
I interviewed Mr Dick for you on Remington & Russell & he told me that there were many fakes made by an artist here and sold by a dealer here on Mich Ave - I had some contact with this dealer years ago — I figured him out as shady — He got a Currier & Ives "Zephaces" away from me & never paid for it. and I had an awful time finding another copy — I know the fellow well — and can give you his name — but he is still alive & active — He sold what are reputed to be fakes of Lincoln, Burns? etc also. The Lincolns were startling — too good to be true — The interview card is at the office & I will mail it to you later.

I will also call on Mrs Young & get what I can also for you —

If you have definate information you want tell me & I'll try & help you there.

When you were writing your story of L I Hill

Robert Taft photography correspondence



were you familiar with his 5th Book

"A Treatise on Heliochromy"
or the production of Pictures
by Means of Light

In Natural Colors —
Embracing
a Full Plain & Unreserved description
of the Process
Known as
The HILLOTYPE
etc
By F F Hill —
Pub by Robinson & Caswell
57 Chambers St N/C.

Read Page 20 — "I sold the Copyright of this Book to
Myron Stow — Esq of Phila one of the 1st Stock
dealers in the Country"

Read Page 80-81 Roots & Gurney's Letters
Also P C Harrisons & Ja Whipples of Boston &
A T B Moses on Page 73

If you do not have the Book and are interested
I can loan it to you —

BOYER — 2700 Wabash Ave., Chicago, U. S. A.

BOYER Chemical Laboratory Co.

3

In this book "Hills Autobiography" gives me the best insight I have read into the Epoch of the life of a Daguerreotype shooter in the 50's

I found a Daguerreotype Case with Myron Shaw Label in it - Frapric is gathering a story of the old Daguerreotype Case Makers - I am sending him the Case for his collection -

Cordial

Boyer

I personaly feel from what I have read That Hill had some sort of a Color Process that only he coned do - on Page 155 He describes it but only he no doubt coned comprehend it - I sure cant - I believe he had some pictures in Color - otherwise all the old Daguerre Gallery Boys of the day could have been fooled so far -

In the Book he tells of 3 ~~pictures~~ "Photographs" that came

4

with the book

Eastmans, Frapries & My Copy Pack
these pictures — but the descriptions is there
on Page 174

Fraprie found his ~~copies~~ 2 Vols of
"Excursions Daguerriennes" and says
they are magnificent in workmanship
(the illustrations -)

B

Its Saturday Night - My night to work in my
new Library - but Ive had my nose in
Hills Book -

I think your description of him in your
Book is very well done - but I do not
feel that you saw this Book I am
describing when you wrote it.

I am anxious to know.

I am on the (3rd) reading of your book &
I am getting more thrill than ever out of
it - because certain facts are becoming more familiar
to me - and in every Page or so I discover something

EASTMAN KODAK STORES, INC.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES

38 BROMFIELD STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

BRANCH STORE
HOTEL STATLER

March 27, 1943

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

Dear Professor Taft:

Several years ago I purchased a copy of your book, "Photography And The American Scene" and naturally was much interested in the story of Southworth & Hawes, old Boston photographers.

Thought you would be interested in some of the enclosed statements pertaining to the old Hawes Studio. Found some of this material in Holman's Print Shop, Inc., on Park street, Boston.

The old photographer, Hawes, died in 1901 and his son, Dr. Hawes died comparatively recently well over 90 years of age.

In talking with Mr. Holman, he states that Southworth was the originator of the studio and induced Mr. Hawes to take up photography.

In looking through the old material in the print shop, I noticed the first daguerreotype made by Mr. Hawes in 1841 and a print from it. It was a scene in or around Fairlee, Vermont where, I think, Mr. Hawes came from originally. Fairlee is a small town directly north of Dartmouth College on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River.

The invoice dated July 31, 1866 shows the old building at 159 Washington street. The numbers on Washington street were afterwards changed and what was once 159 was later 319. It was in this building, and for the Benjamin French Company that I started to work as errand boy in September, 1900. As you will note, 1/2 lb. Glacial Acetic Acid is billed at $1.13. Our present price is 44 cents per lb. or 5-lb. bottle: $1.60.

If you care to copy any of this material, you are at liberty to do so, but will you kindly return it to me as I am collecting a series of invoices and statements from this house which was founded in 1842 by Benjamin French.

On our office wall I have an invoice dated 1847, which I found in an old studio in Calais, Maine, across the river from St. Stephens, New Brunswick.

Mr. Holman told me the New York Museum had purchased all the worthwhile material from the Hawes family although it had been offered to the Boston Museum who turned it down, and after they found New York was interested they, too, woke up, but too late.

Holman also has a huge old Voightlander lens owned by Mr. Hawes. It must be at least 40-inch focus. I am trying to obtain this for the Museum at Rochester, New York.

Sincerely,

W. G. Homeyer

WGHomeyer:ELR

3rd a.A.F. Photo Int. Det.
A.P.O. 616 % Postmaster
New York, NY

9 June 43

Dear Taft,

Thank you very much for your good letter of 4 May, which arrived the other day. I appreciate your writing me in the midst of a busy life: letters mean more to us than I had ever imagined before.

I am most interested to learn that you are preparing a life of Frederic Remington, for I have long thought that he was an important figure and deserving of more attention than he is usually given. That Nancy has been able to give you some help pleases me. She is getting on at the job most beautifully, and I intend to retire on my return to write a definitive history of European photography! Well not exactly, but seriously things at the Museum are shaping up in such a way that I shall be able to spend more time on historical research and share the routine with her.

Indeed I have; greatly to my own surprise, been able to continue my historical studies to a certain degree. On a visit to Cairo

2.

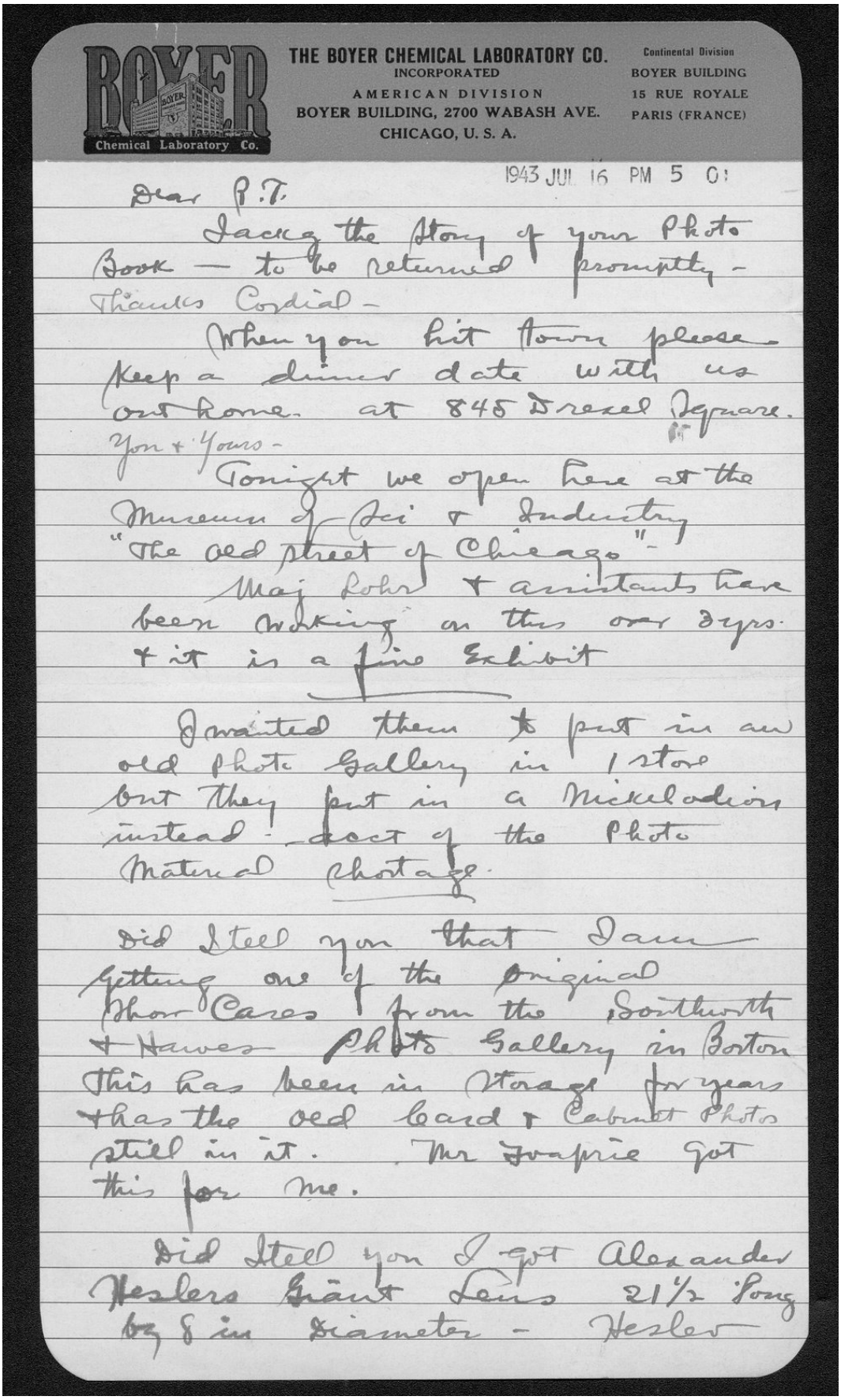
I found, in the library of the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology a number of books of the 19th century illustrated with actual photographs. Further I located in a bookshop an excellent copy of Ducamp's 1852 album, one plate of which is illustrated in my book. The album is too big to carry or to send home by the army Postal Service, so I have been forced to leave it with the bookseller, who has promised to send it on when happier times return.

Thanks again for writing. and every success to you in the important teaching job which ~~was~~ you are doing. The part science is playing in the war is amazing, and the work which you & your colleagues are doing in training personnel is just as important a part in beating those devils as the work of those of us who are overseas.

All my best,

Beaumont Newhall

Robert Taft photography correspondence



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Continental Division
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15 RUE ROYALE
PARIS (FRANCE)

1943 JUL 16 PM 5 0:

Dear R.T.

Jacks the Story of your Photo Book — to be returned promptly — Thanks Cordial —

When you hit Town please keep a dinner date with us out Home at 845 Drexel Square. You + Yours —

Tonight we open here at the Museum of Sci + Industry "The old street of Chicago" — Maj Lohr + assistants have been working on this over 3yrs. + it is a fine Exhibit

I wanted them to put in an old Photo Gallery in 1 store but they put in a Nickelodeon instead! - Fact of the Photo Material shortage.

Did I tell you that I am getting one of the original Thor Cases from the Southworth + Hawes Photo Gallery in Boston This has been in storage for years + has the old Card + Cabinet Photos still in it. Mr Swaine got this for me.

Did I tell you I got Alexander Heslers Giant Lens 21½ long by 8 in diameter - Hesler

sold it to Mr Deardorf in 1892 + got it of Deardorf. It is a Holmes Booth & Haydens so is very early. as they faded long ago.

Whether or not it is the one he used to photograph Lincoln with — of Course we will never Know.

Cordial

Boyer

dont bother to acknowledge.

Got an idea out of your Book at the Breakfast table this morning —

I am calling my old Photo Place: —

Boyer's Great Photographing Gallery of the West

I ordered the signs made this afternoon.

On every page of your book; I can safely say there is a Thrill for me — There sure is.

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Continental Division
BOYER BUILDING
15 RUE ROYALE
PARIS (FRANCE)

yesterday Mr Frank Drapie sent out to me -

A Daguerreotype Badge of Daniel Webster hung on a Black ribbon - probably worn at his funeral.

1 Tin Type Button - The First actual dress Button that I, Mr Lightner or Miss Reeder of Hobbies Mag. have seen.

1 Gold Watch Case with 4 Daguerreotypes there in - The Watch case of the oeddays.

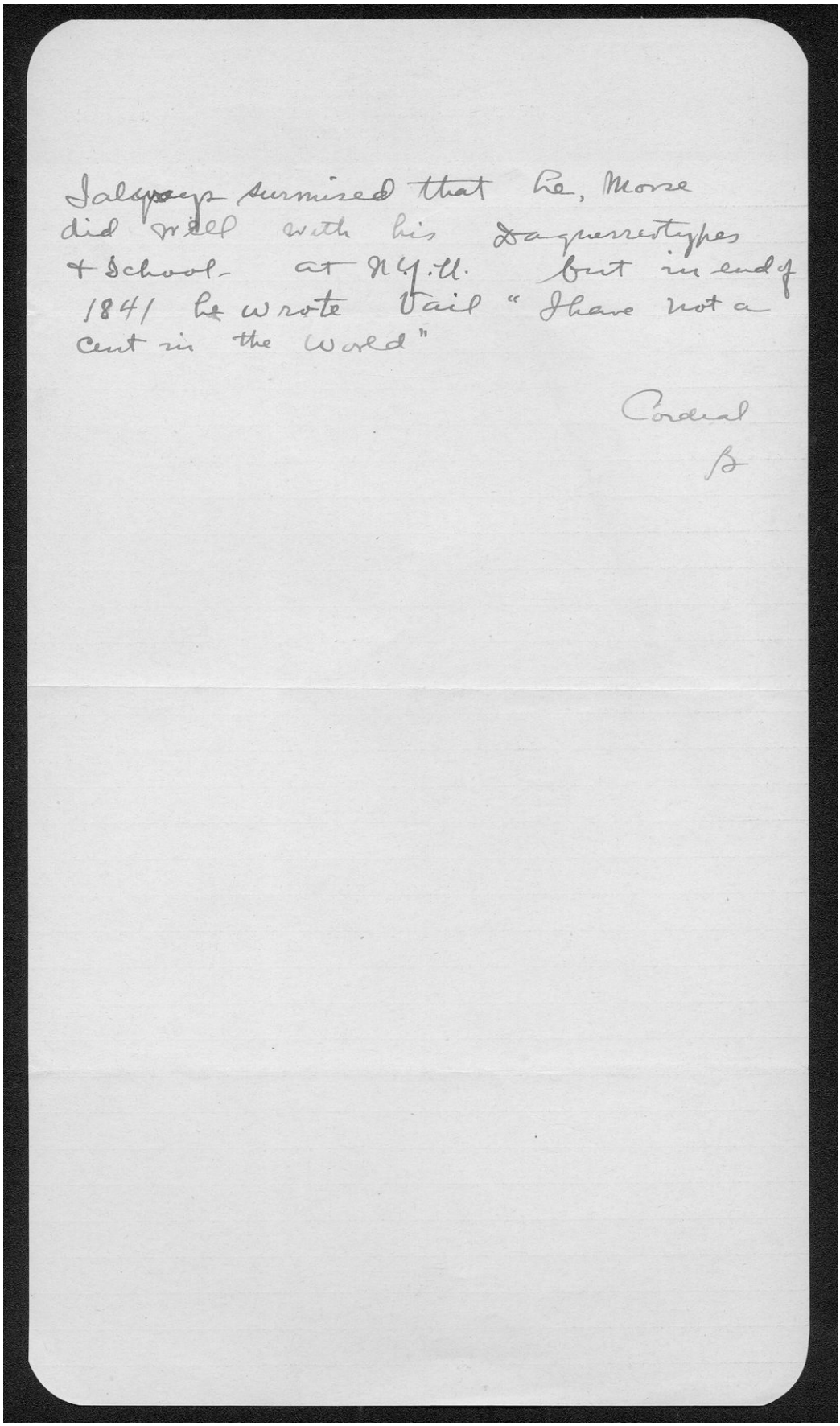
Mr Drapie says he will write the story for me to give to Hobbies & I am shooting the items for the cuts for Lightner - (My neighbor 1 block away)

Agfa have written me twice to do a story of Mr Anthony for them.

I can do one OK - but I lack material of & on his tutoring by Morse in his Daguerreotype classes.

I have some very good stuff on Moses poverty after he came back from France on the Great Western Apr 15. 1839.

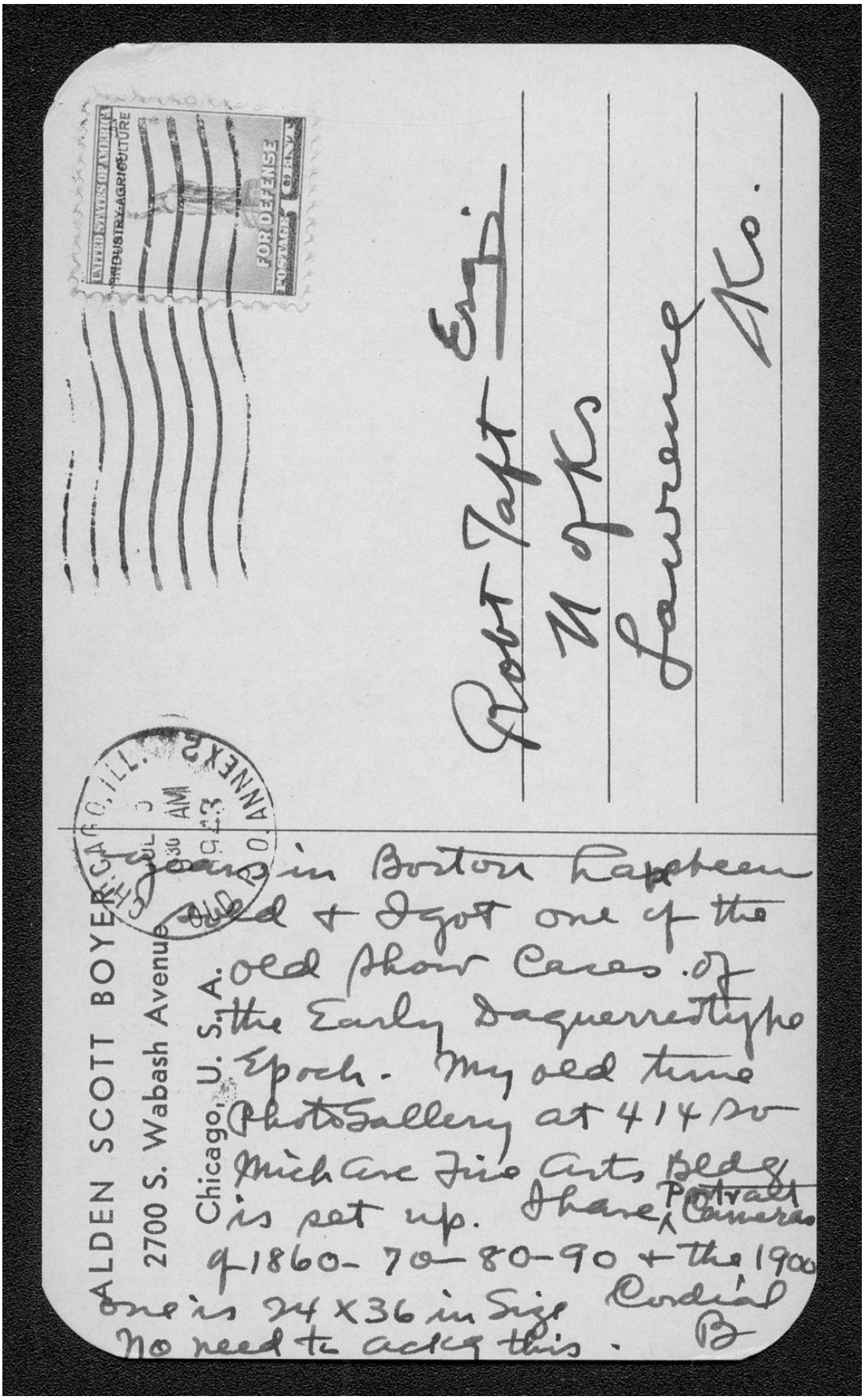
Robert Taft photography correspondence

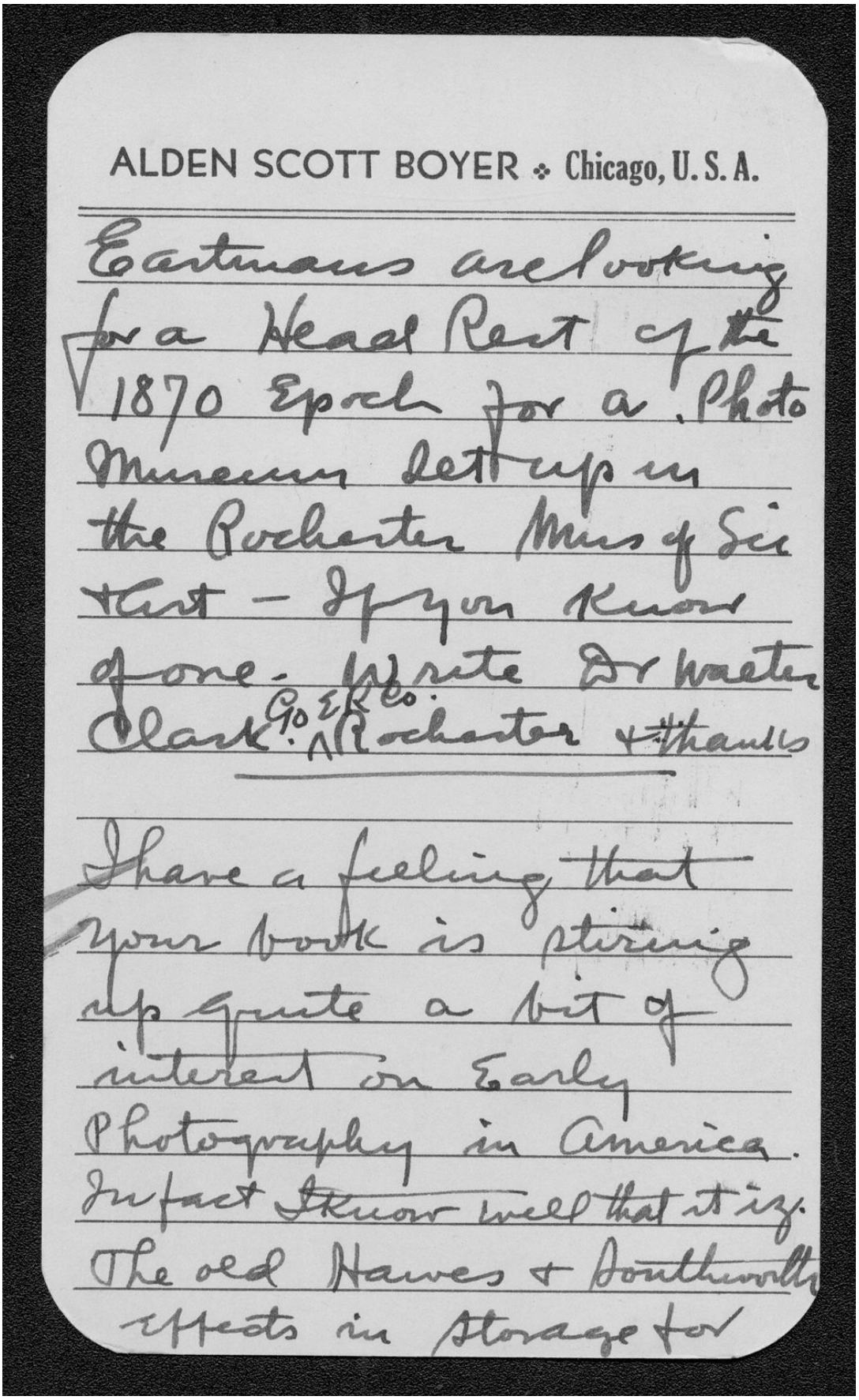


I always surmised that Pr. Morse did well with his Daguerreotypes + School at N.Y.U. but in end of 1841 he wrote Vail "I have not a cent in the World"

Cordial
S

Robert Taft photography correspondence





ALDEN SCOTT BOYER ✣ Chicago, U. S. A.

Eastmans are looking for a Head Rest of the 1870 Epoch for a Photo Museum set up in the Rochester Mus of Sci tist - If you know of one - Write Dr Wheeler Clark Geo E Co. Rochester + thanks

I have a feeling that your book is stirring up quite a bit of interest on Early Photography in America. In fact I know well that it is. The old Hawes + Southworth effects in storage for

Room 400
National Archives,
Washington, D.C.

January 24, 1944

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

Dear Dr. Taft;

There has recently come into my possession a daguerreotype made by my great-grandfather, John Kerr Vallance, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who was located in business at 117 Spruce St. of that city. He was born June 26th, 1818, the 8th child of a Scottish immigrant, died June 10th, 1862. Enclosed is a print of the label attached to the back of the case. This was unusual, as I understand the general custom was to attach the label to the back of the daguerreotype itself. The imageis in very poor condition.

An interesting note is the fact that some member of the family has been a photographer in every generation since, but it has only been since the discovery of this daguerreotype that we have known of his work in this field. It is my pleasure to be carrying on the family tradition.

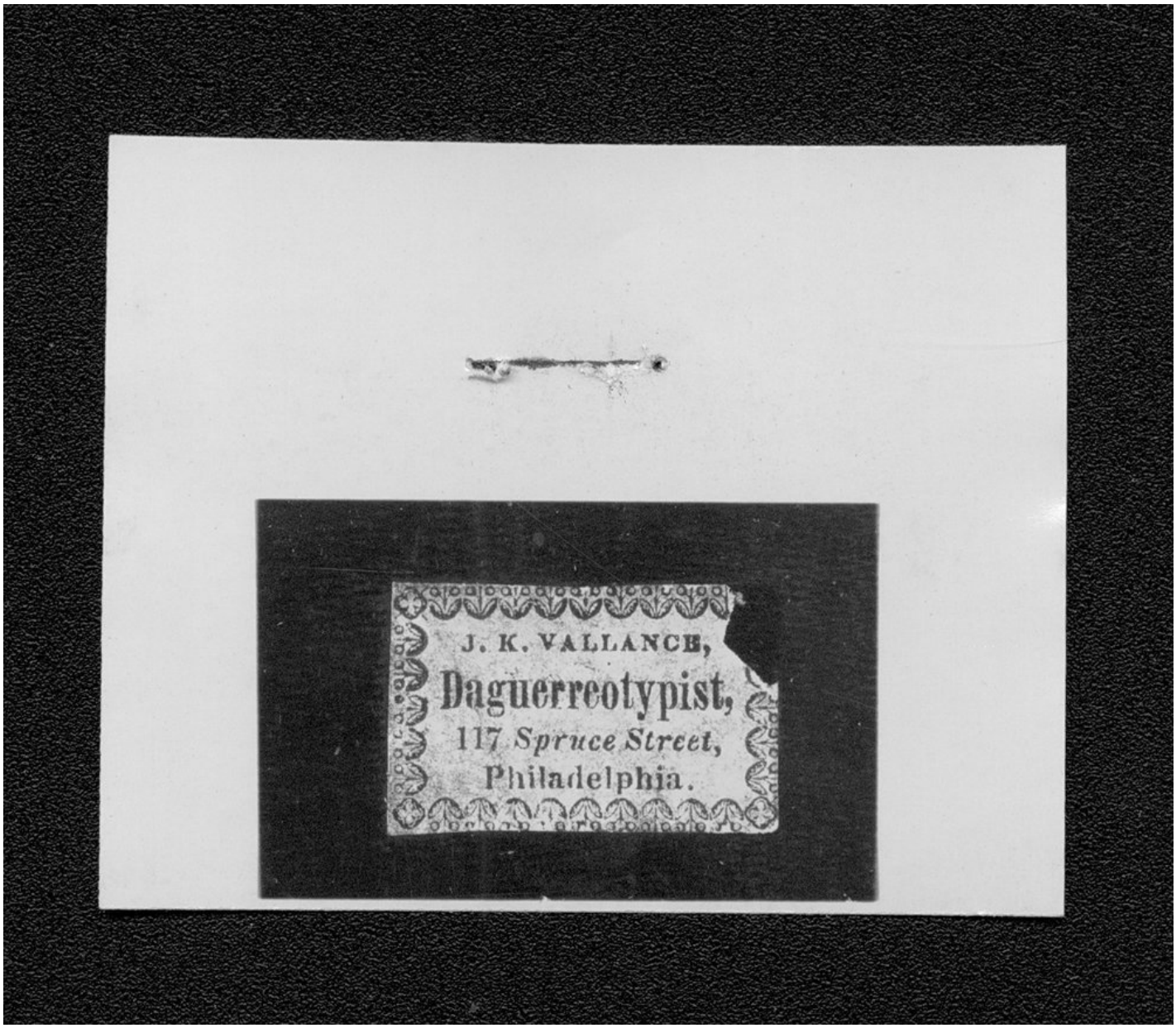
Do you have in your collection any daguerreotypes made by him and can you supply me with any data pertaining to his work, when he practiced his art, how well his work compared with others ?

Any information you may be able to supply would be gratefully appreciated by

Yours sincerely
Dale Vallance
Dale Vallance

phila newspapers
Photo Journal
1851-1867
Humphreys Journal
1850-1867
Vol 102, p 169

Robert Taft photography correspondence



Robert Taft photography correspondence

"100 YEARS OF PHOTOGRAPHY"

We have the Cameras, Lenses, "Props" and Oldtime Gallery Equipment to take pictures as they were taken from the 1840's on down to date.

Our Modern Photographs are taken with Equipment; (Cameras, Lenses and Hollywood Lighting) that is the Most Costly and Most Modern Known to Science.

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ALDEN SCOTT BOYER

PHONE WEBSTER 414
Almost the same as the addr

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1/26/44

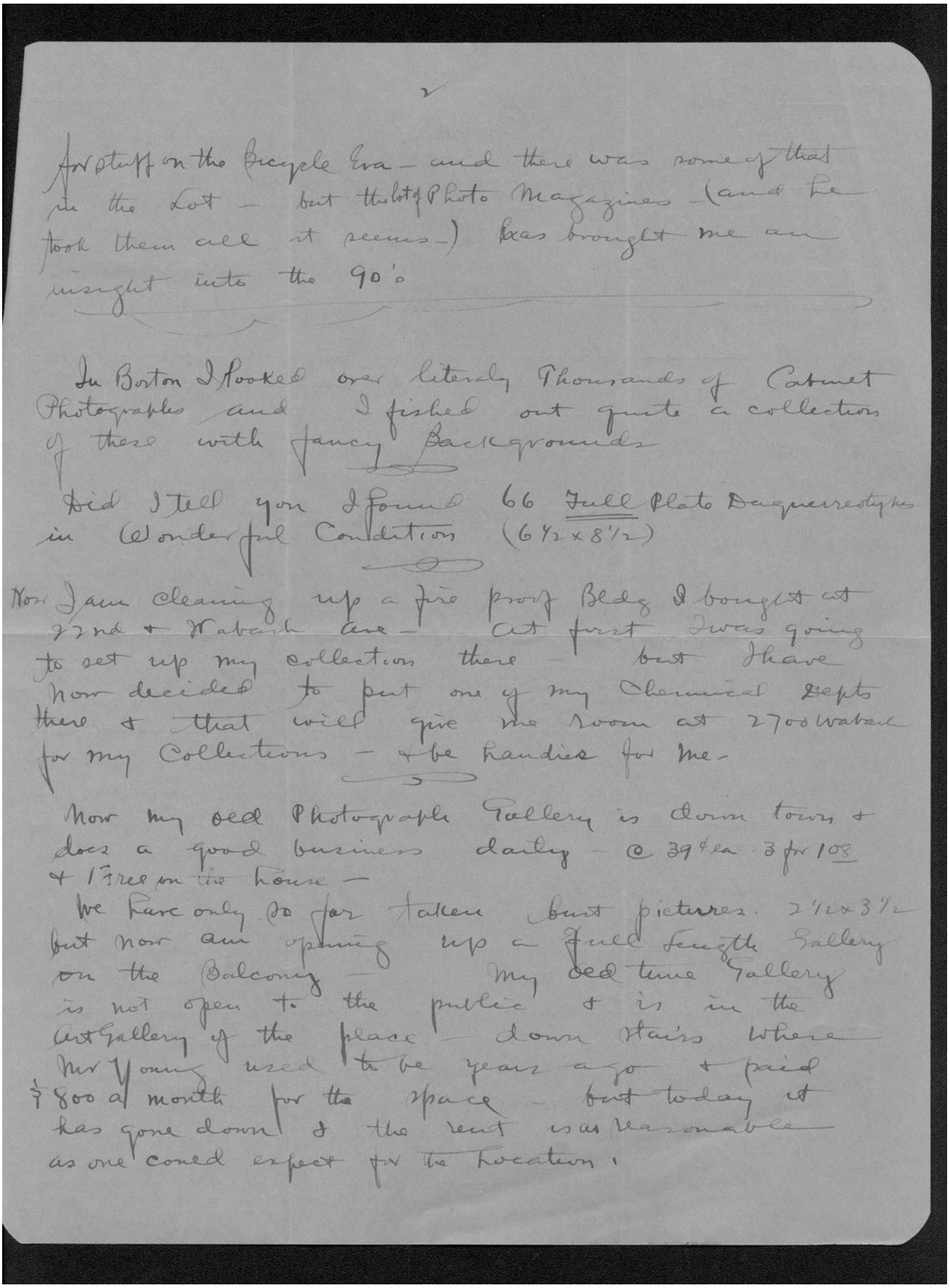
Dear Collector

I sort of thought that you had had the fun of digging out the story of Photography but were now "off" on something else.

However if you are still "in the interest" I will send you from time to time notes that come to me — Mr Frapric & I keep a correspondence up and I went down to see him in Nov. & spent a month digging up stuff & I sure found it — Of course compared with your research — I am a "Hamm"

I realize that "Hill" was a sharp boy — but I have much regard for his work — He & Snelling wrote the 1st Manuals in America on Daguerreotyping & gave out the truth as they knew it — before that Formula & Process sellers ran the show. Ryder in his "Vought Sander & Wheels of Some of this — & rich too. Some 2 or 10 years back I ran into a Board of Photographic Magazines in one of the old "Swell" Galleries here — under the stairs & got the lot at 2¢ a lb — I tried to sell the lot by adv in the Want List but it was "no go" — So it laid in my laboratory under the table — and later when I got interested in Photos I pulled the cartons out & it was a real haul — When I bought it I was digging

When Daguerre discovered Photography in Paris in 1839 — Chicago was "the West". The Design of our Movable Black Mystery Camera Booth dates from 1840 and is Historically Correct. Copied after a Design in the Boyer Collection of Old Time Photography. Daguerreotypes (on Silver Plates with a Glare) date from 1839 — Ambrotypes (on Glass Plates in Cases like Daguerreotypes) date from 1855. Tin Types date from 1855. Paper Photographs date from 1839, didn't get going "strong" until the 1860's.



for stuff on the Bicycle Era – and there was some of that in the Lot – but the lot of Photo Magazines – (and he took them all it seems –) has brought me an insight into the 90's

In Boston I looked over literaly Thousands of Cabinet Photographs and I fished out quite a collection of these with fancy Backgrounds

Did I tell you I found 66 Full Plate Daguerreotypes in Wonderful Condition (6½ × 8½)

Now I am cleaning up a fire proof Bldg I bought at 22nd & Wabash Ave – At first I was going to set up my collection there – but I have now decided to put one of my Chemical Depts there & that will give me room at 2700 Wabash for my Collections – & be handier for me –

Now my old Photograph Gallery is down town & does a good business daily – @ 39¢ ea 3 for 10¢ & 1 free on the house –

We have only so far taken bust pictures. 2½ × 3½ but now am opening up a Full length Gallery on the Balcony – My old time Gallery is not open to the public & is in the Art Gallery of the place – down stairs where Mr Young used to be years ago & paid $800 a month for the space – but today it has gone down & the rent is as reasonable as one could expect for the location.

Robert Taft photography correspondence

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Almost the same as the address

Boyer

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OF THE WEST
414 South Michigan Avenue
At Van Buren Street - Next to Auditorium Hotel
(FIRST FLOOR) FINE ARTS BUILDING
CHICAGO

3

Iam tonight looking over 12 of the "Camera Notes" put by Alf. Stieglitz — (Note his story in Sat Eve post last week —) — There were 24 of these issued & I found 12 — Ihave 36 or 40 of Camera Work" — Would like to locate the rest — Ihave about 600 odd — Photographic Books & Volumes — Now Iam cataloguing them & Iread on them all the time Iget —

Mr Frapric Ioed his 4600 Vol Library to Mr Varden of Museo — (personaly) — for Ibelieve $7000. or about $1.50 a vol — a gift It was — I photographed Mr Frapric in the Library before it was shipped — Mr F. is a great Writer & a world of Knowledge is at his command —

My pictures of Westkill all came out good — & Ihave not had time to write the story or print a complete set — Mr Frapric & Igo back there in April & we will do the "Real Amateur" trip that you wrote up — in Pike Co Pa — The Dawkill falls are on Gifford Pinchots Estate & he is interested in the Re-do.

Cordial & more later

(over) Boyer

Thanks for the letter & for the reference of the fellow to me

When Daguerre discovered Photography in Paris in 1839 — Chicago was "the West". The Design of our Movable Black Mystery Camera Booth dates from 1840 and is Historically Correct. Copied after a Design in the Boyer Collection of Old Time Photography. Daguerreotypes (on Silver Plates with a Glare) date from 1839 — Ambrotypes (on Glass Plates in Cases like Daguerreotypes) date from 1855. Tin Types date from 1855. Paper Photographs date from 1839, didn't get going "strong" until the 1860's.

4

Photo history seems to be waking up — Pop photog for Jan has a story — + Minicams [illegible] some on Talbot a few mo back —

I only have 1 Daguerre manual but I found a Translation in Repretory of Arts Sci + Mfrs — for 1839-40-41 I believe it Do — I found the run for $7.50 bound as new (Lot)

The Cromer Collection is wonderful at Eastmans — Cromer was my Neighbor in Paris across the Tracks I lived at Passy + he had a Gallery in Clamart

Cromer of course had Daguerres own Collection & E K Co has it. Nov 4 Eastmans will build a building soon as Condition permit to house the Collection —

I Went to Phila to see the Photographic Museum but these boys have a long ways to go but it is good — The Langenheim items are wonderful —

I have 4 Langenheim Paper Negatives + 2 Circulars of theirs of 1849 + some other items of theirs. I knew Fred Langheim well he was a Coin Collector when I was President of the Am. Numismatic Assn

RB

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK 28

DEPARTMENT OF PRINTS

11 February, 1944

Dear Mr. Taft:

Mrs. Newhall has forwarded your letter about the Detaille painting, which I have not yet had a chance to look up. I have been doing a bit of work on the camera and painting, and spent this morning in the Public Library looking up La Nature for 1877-8. In '77 there is an article by Marey attempting to analyse a horse's action by registering the hoof beats as transmitted through rubber tubes, by air pressure, to a revovling smoked cylinder held by the rider. He then tried to reconstruct the horse action from that data, badly, I should say. The next year Gaston Tissandier published Muybridge photos of horse action, for the first time, according to the article. In the next issue, 28 Dec. 1878 Marey has an open letter to Muybridge saying "Quant aux artistes, c'est une revolution chez eux, puisqu'on leur fournit les vraies attitudes du mouvement, ces positions du corps en equilibre instable qu'un modele ne peut pas poser." I'm having negative stats made of the two articles. Would you like to borrow them for printing when I have had them printed? I'd be glad to send them. If Marey had no instantaneous photos or true knowledge of horse action in 1877, I'm sure Detaille had none in 1870. Detaille was of course an accurate painter, who knew horses very well, and made almost a monopoly of Franco-Prussian war subjects. I doubt if he had a quick enough eye to analyse the action of a horse, though Goya did remarkably well for bulls, so well, indeed, that the bull ring aficionados of his day told him he was crazy. It took the camera to prove him right.

Very sincerely

A. Hyatt Mayor

A. Hyatt Mayor

Prof. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK 28
DEPARTMENT OF PRINTS

16 Februaary, 1944

Dear Professor Taft:

Since writing you I have gone over about 300 reproductions of Detaille drawings and paintings looking for horse action. He seems to have understood it pretty well, but not to have gone into the real difficulties, as one might expect since so much of his work was done after Muybridge published his work. I would say that Degas achieved much more remarkable results. His dated horse pictures are from 1866 to 1874, so I suppose the mass of undated horse sketches are of the same period. He certainly had a clearer idea of the correct horse action than anyone before Muybridge, and was way ahead of the great horse painters like Leonardo, Stubbs, Marshall, or Gericault. Degas seems deliberately to have taken the hardest subjects he could find, such as the race horse in action. I went through a mass of Degas' horse pictures with the Muybridges in La Nature in hand, but couldnt find one Degas that might have been copied from a photo. On the other hand, I've come across a portrait of Meissonnier, published in his wife's little brochure on him of 1893 which shows him as an old man modeling a horse trotting in the exact position shown in one of the photos in La Nature. Which is as one might expect from Meissonnier's admiration for Muybridge and friendship with Leland Stanford. I wish it were easier to pin things down exactly. I suppose the most one can say is that an examination of horse action was in the air, like calculus in the age of Newton and Leibniz.

Very sincerely

A. Hyatt Mayor

February 16, 1944

Mr. A. Hyatt Mayor
Department of Prints
Metropolitan Museum of Arts
New York 28, New York

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Thank you greatly for your kindness in writing me about the "horse in motion". As you probably know, I have made some discussion of this subject in my book Photography and the American Scene (Chapter 20). The problem in which I am now interested is somewhat different than the effect of photography on the depiction of the horse. Even before Muybridge's photographs, a few painters were beginning to break away from the conventional method of showing the horse in rapid motion which was, as you know, "the rocking-horse gallop". "Who were these painters and how close did they come to the realistic method of showing the horse in motion as recorded by the camera?" is the question I am now attempting to answer. The one painting of Detaille that I noted in my letter to Mrs. Newhall did show a more realistic presentation of the horse than was customary for his period and I wondered if other Detaille paintings continued this practice. If you have any collection of prints from Detaille paintings, would it be asking too much of you to examine them for me? I would be especially interested if any of his paintings attempted to show horses in very rapid motion (a cavalry charge, etc.)

I do not believe it will be necessary to send the negative

stats kindly offered in your letter. I would however, appreciate having the bibliographic citation to the Tissandier reproduction of the Muybridge photographs. I am not familiar with it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT/wac

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

THE MEDILL SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Febnaery 21,1944

Dr. Robert Taft,
Department of Chemistry,
University of Kansas,
Lawrence,Kan.

Dear Dr. Taft:

I am most appreciative of your kindness in sending me your collection of Pine Ridge photographs for study. They and the manuscript notes accompanying some of them are a veritable gold mine of information for me amd provide some extremely valuable clues to follow up in determining who took what photographs when during those days. I am writing to Mrs. Trager to learn what was the connection, if any, between Morledge, S.D.Butcher and H.C.Orvis and the Northwest Photo Co. (which was Trager and Kuhn's sales outfit, according to a previous letter from her). It so happens that I am going to Lincoln,Neb. in about two weeks to talk at the Nebraska Press meeting. I expect to spend some time in the State Historical Society there and I can probably get more information on these photographers then. I know that the Society has a large collection of Butcher's photographs and it probably has some information on the others.

Your sending me the pictures was most opportune in another respect. Friday night I am having a meeting of a group of men,who call themselves "Westerners,Uninc.", at my home in Winnetka. It's a gang who have a common interest in frontier history and meet semi-occasionally to swap yarns on that subject. I know they'll be very much interested in seeing these pictures.

Do you have any objection to my making photographic copies of some of them? If not, I shall have the copying done next week and can then return the pictures since I've already made many notes about them. Yes, I have a copy of the hearings on H.R.2535, sent me by Congressman Case who is a friend of mine, but I appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending it just the same.

No, I don't know anything about Mary Irwin Wright whose work appears in the Mooney account of the Ghost Dance but I may learn something about her soon. I recently addressed an inquiry to Miss Mae Tucker of the Bureau of Ethnology about those Ghost Dance pictures, one of which is evidently a reproduction of a photograph. I'm trying to run down somem of the Ghost Dance photographs taken by one of my correspondents, Sam T. Clover, at Sitting Bull's camp before the old chief was killed and I'm asking Miss Tucker about the origin of the pictures in the Mooney book. I'll let you know the result --- also what I find out about the other photographers after my visit to Lincoln.

Did you happen to see any of the publicity about the one-man exhibition of paitings by William R. Leigh in the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York recently? I wrote for an illustrated catalogue, if they had one, and have just received several