

Kansas Memory



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Dickerman - Foote

Section 2, Pages 31 - 60

A series of research correspondence from the Robert Taft collection relating to frontier artists. Robert Taft (1894-1955) was a professor of chemistry and author on the subjects of photography and art. The artists included here are Sumner Dickerman, E. Didier, Maynard Dixon, William H. Dougal, William Herbert Dunton, John Durkin, Thomas Eakins, Lawrence C. Earl, Thomas Martin Easterly, Seth Eastman, Elk Eber, Frederick von Egloffstein, Henry A. Elkins, Henry W. Elliott, George H. Ellsbury, W. A. Emory, Henry F. Farny, Father Nicholas Point, Harry Fenn, and Mary Hallock Foote.

Date: 1930-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 21

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 308632

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I think something can be demonstrated — to wit: that art is something more than a fashion of "expression" — that art is not produced as Art, but is the by-product of an effort to state a truth personally perceived And from this an any attempt to explain it in words tends to end up in gibberish.

I find a mass of photos, & I'll have to send you the lot & let you pass them over. Not one I have negatives of all — but can lend you what you need.

Leaving soon for Utah, so take your time.

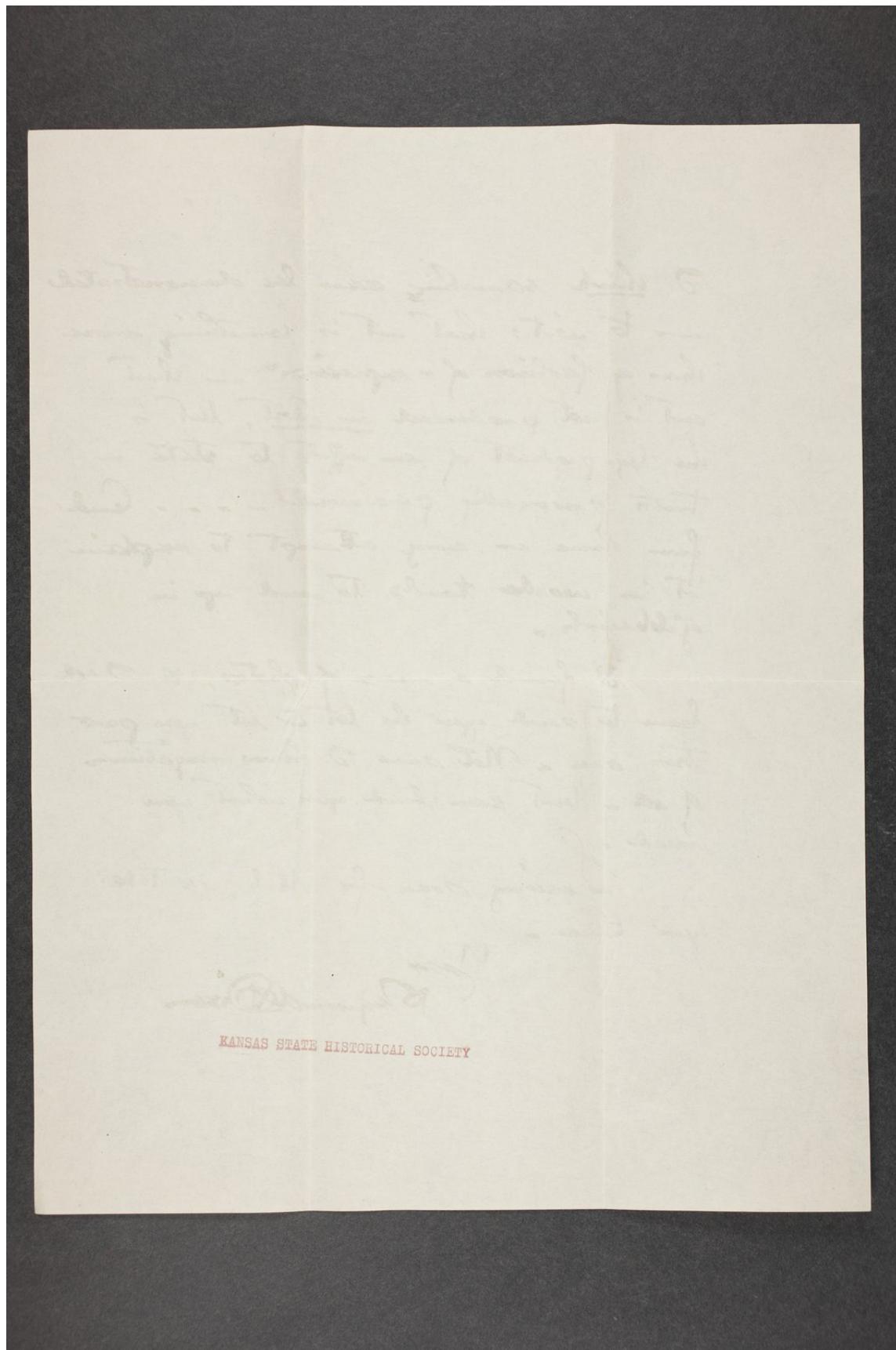
Yours
R. M. Dixon

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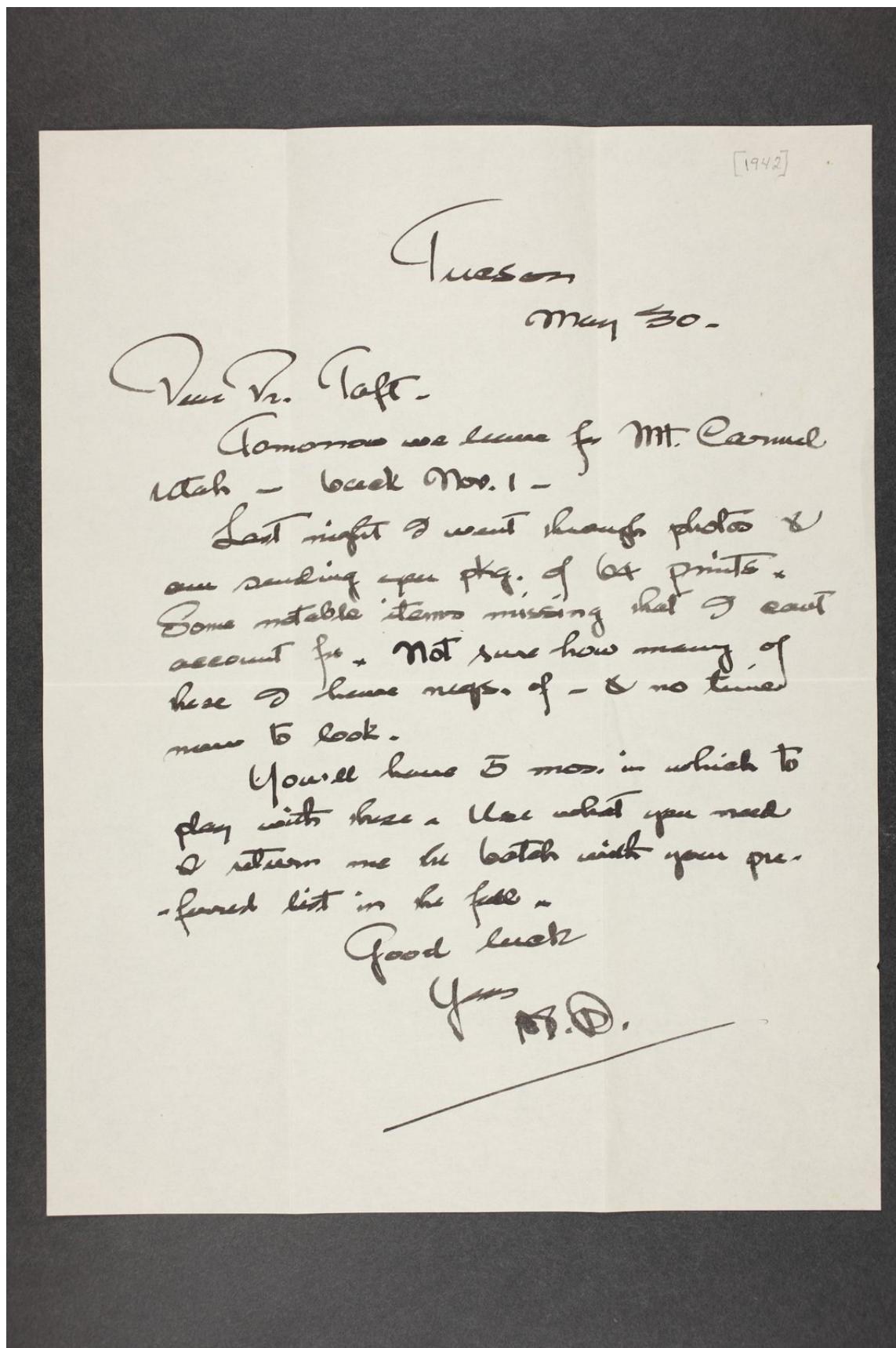


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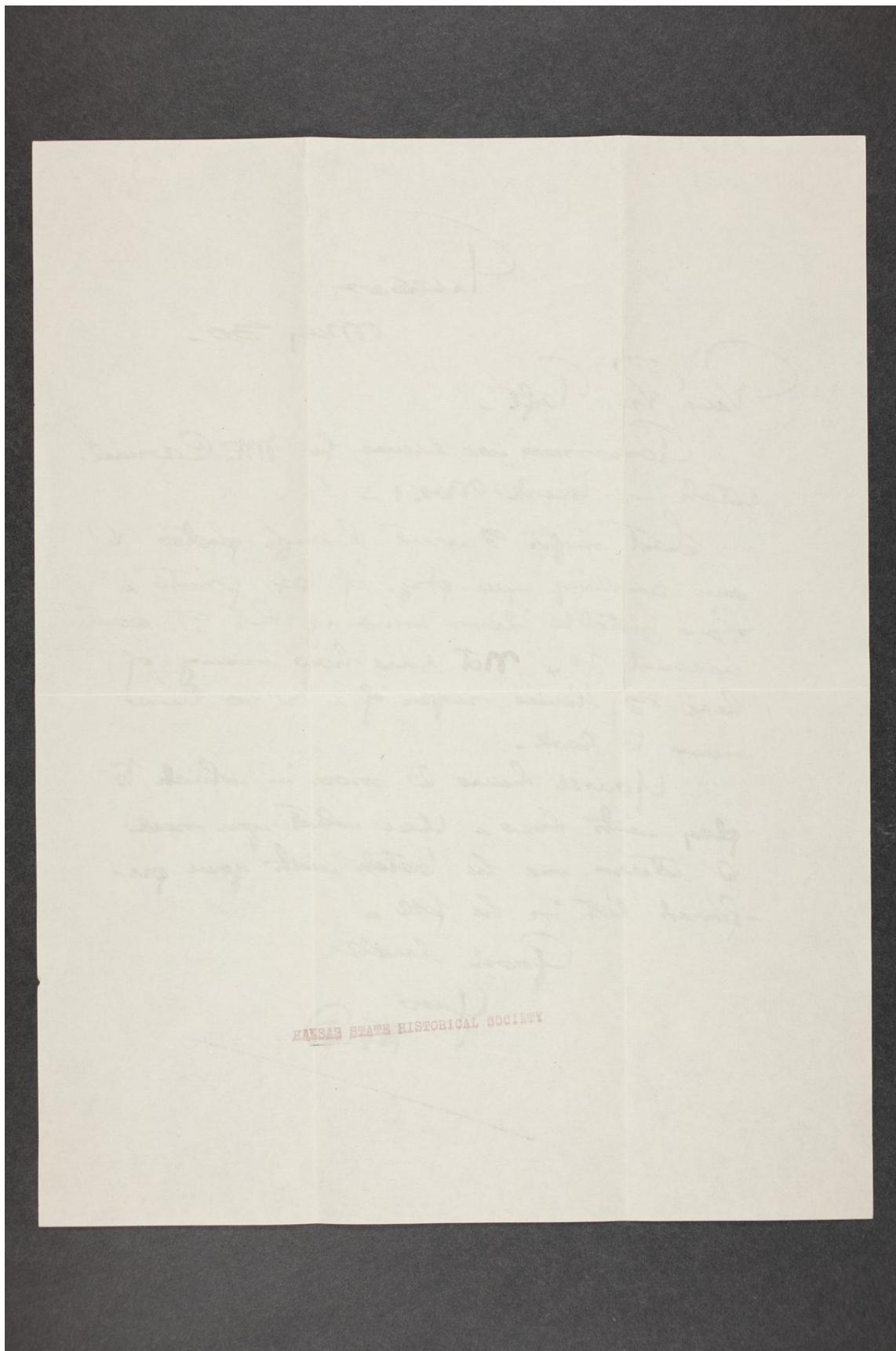


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MAYNARD DIXON



ADDRESS: MAY TO NOV.
MOUNT CARMEL, UTAH

NOV. TO MAY., RT. 5, BOX 684A
2255 E. PRINCE RD., TUCSON, ARIZ.

Oct 27 - '42

Dear R. Taft.

No, I have not forgotten — but the old health has been pretty bad lately — & my whole life is spent in a dismal attempt to catch up — & not making it.

I am sending the biog — but something has happened to my photos. A whole box of them is missing & I'm hoping only a ^{complete} ~~few~~ afternoon cleaning will uncover them.

More later —

Yours
Maynard Dixon

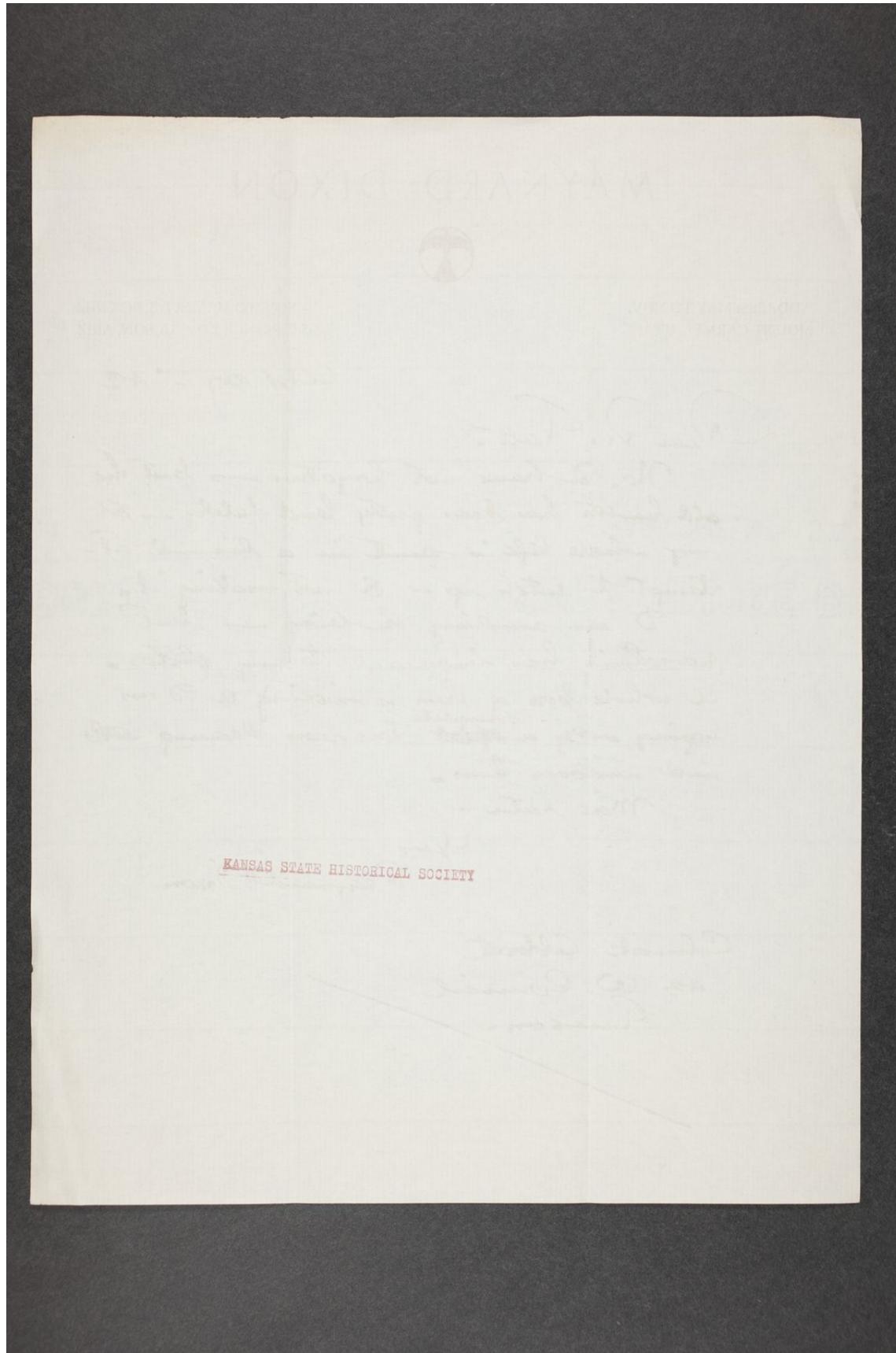
Chuck Abbott
as W. Comsic
Tucson.

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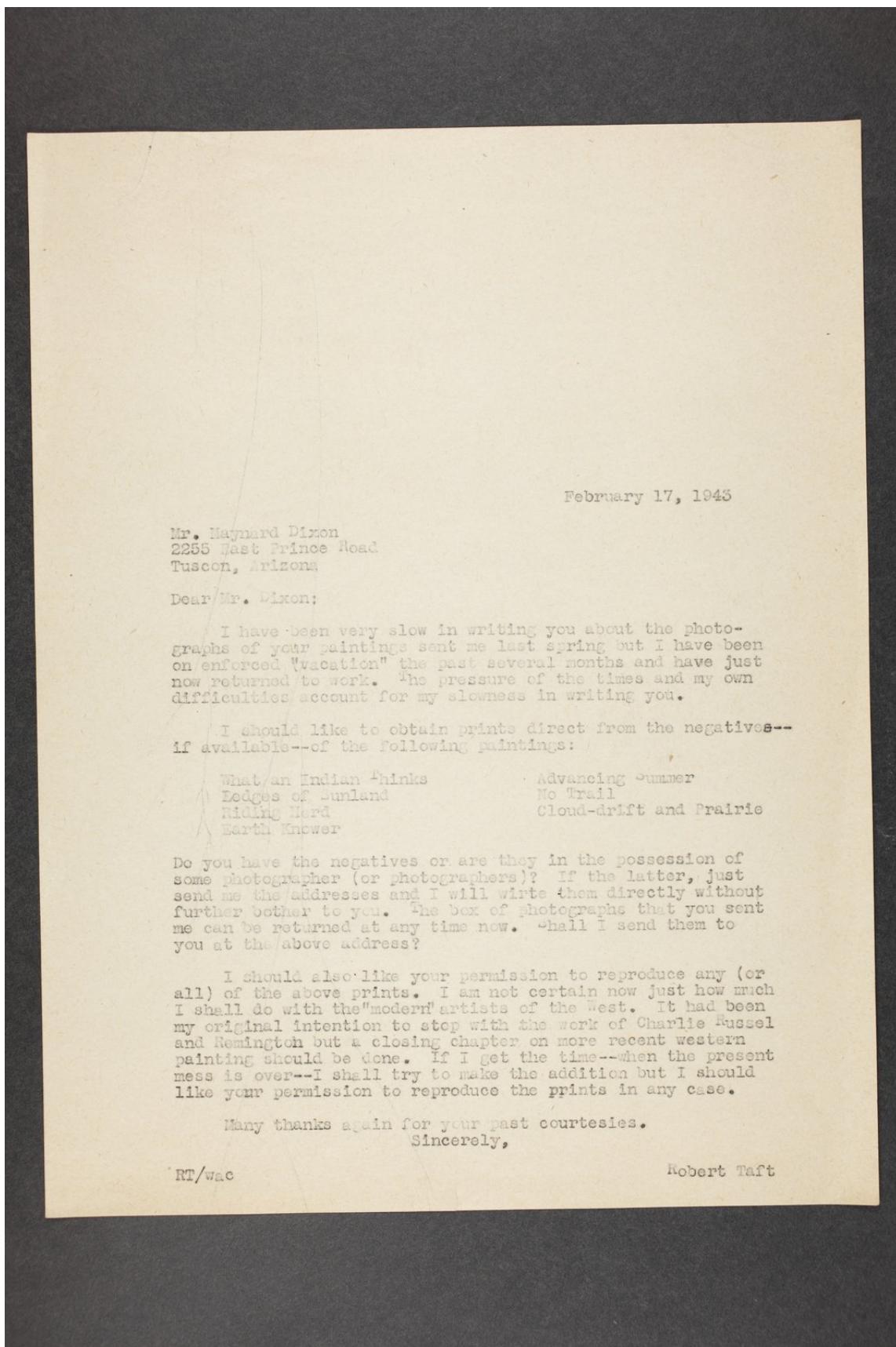


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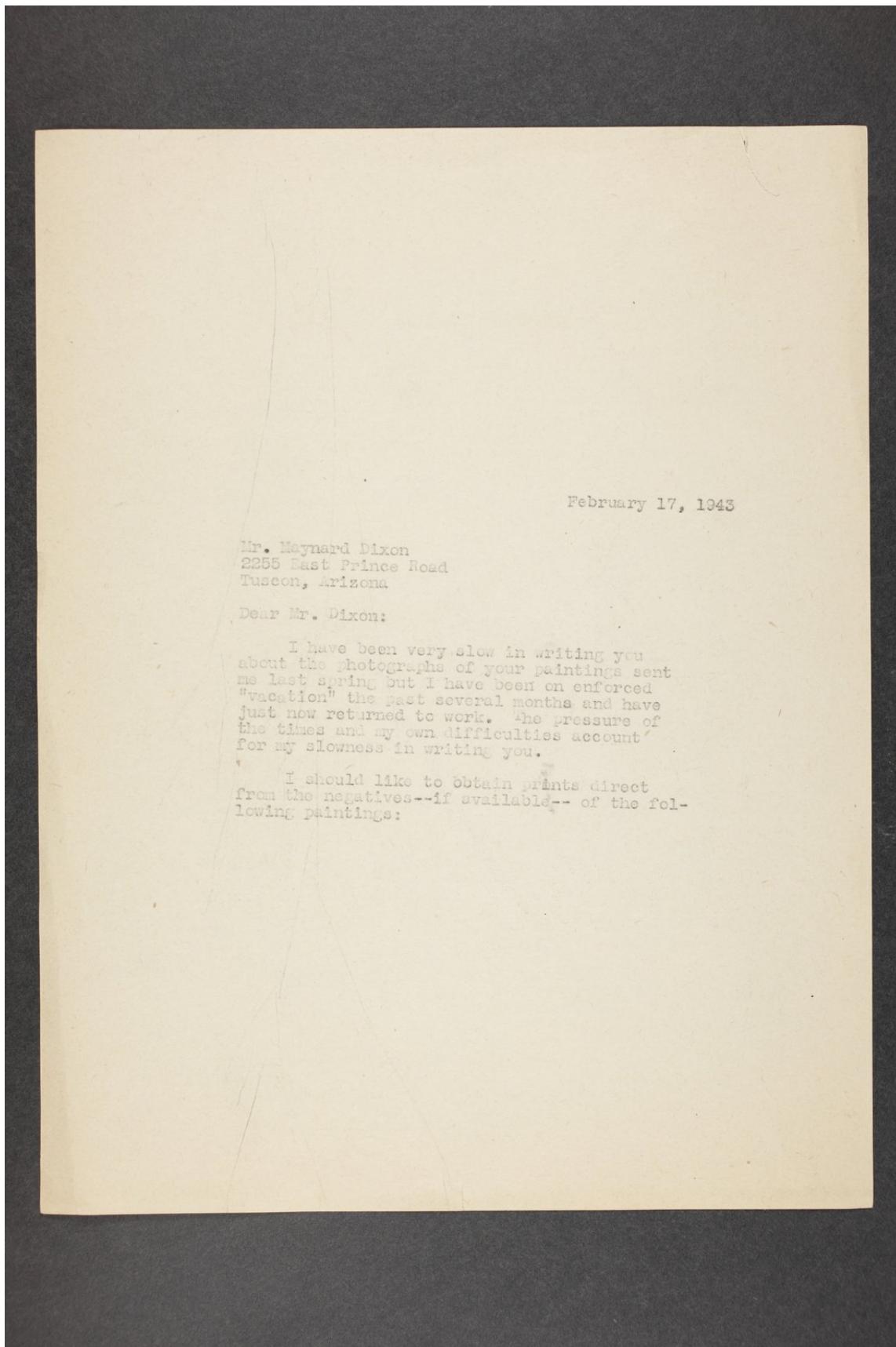


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Mr. Haynard Dixon
2255 East Prince Road
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Mr. Dixon:

I have been very slow in writing you about the photographs of your paintings sent me last spring but I have been on enforced "vacation" the past several months and have just now returned to work. The pressure of the times and my own difficulties account for my slowness in writing you.

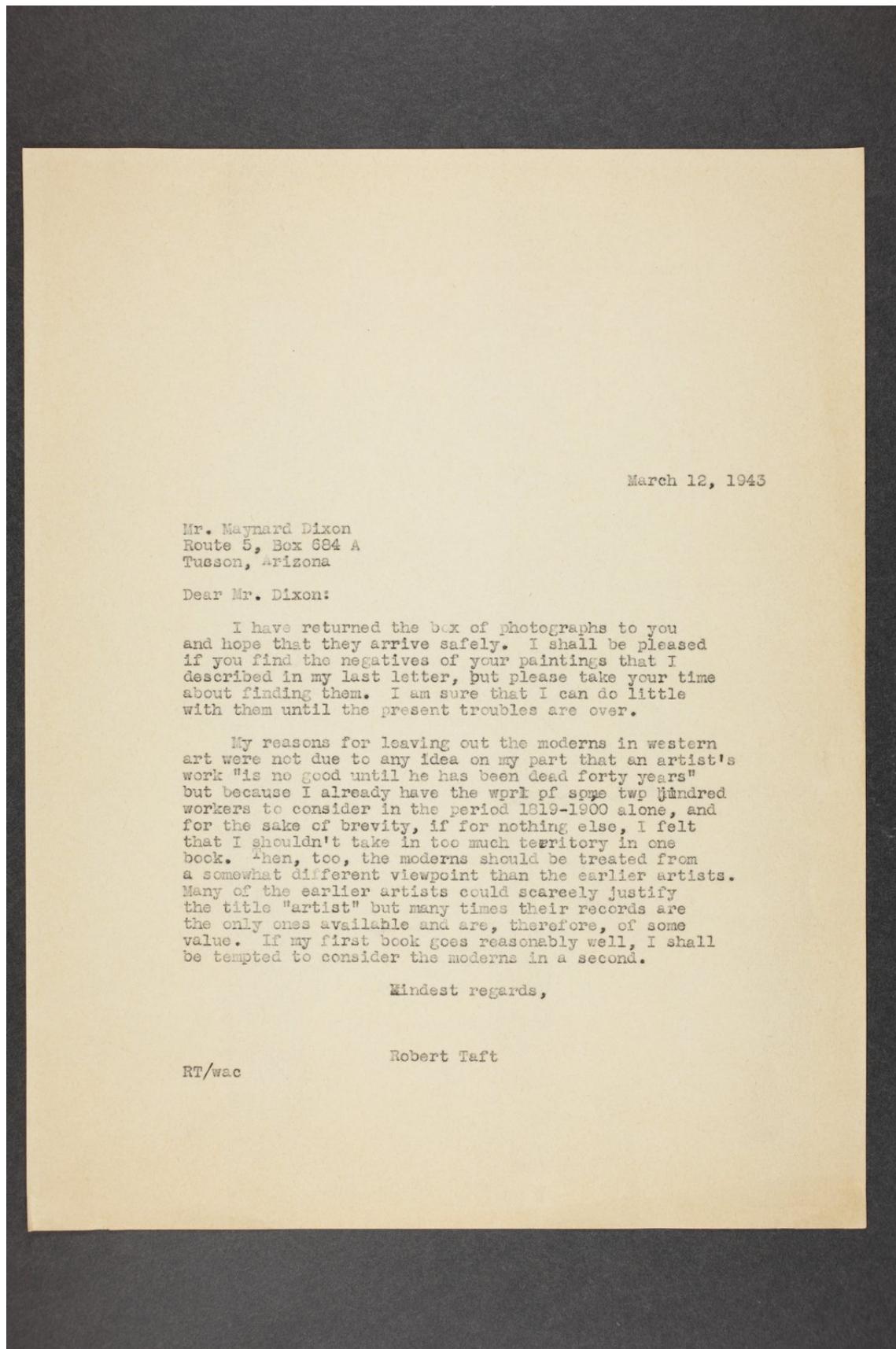
I should like to obtain prints direct from the negatives--if available--of the following paintings:

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March 12, 1943

Mr. Maynard Dixon
Route 5, Box 684 A
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Mr. Dixon:

I have returned the box of photographs to you and hope that they arrive safely. I shall be pleased if you find the negatives of your paintings that I described in my last letter, but please take your time about finding them. I am sure that I can do little with them until the present troubles are over.

My reasons for leaving out the moderns in western art were not due to any idea on my part that an artist's work "is no good until he has been dead forty years" but because I already have the work of some two hundred workers to consider in the period 1819-1900 alone, and for the sake of brevity, if for nothing else, I felt that I shouldn't take in too much territory in one book. Then, too, the moderns should be treated from a somewhat different viewpoint than the earlier artists. Many of the earlier artists could scarcely justify the title "artist" but many times their records are the only ones available and are, therefore, of some value. If my first book goes reasonably well, I shall be tempted to consider the moderns in a second.

Kindest regards,

Robert Taft

RT/wac

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May 7 - 43

Dear Mr. Taft -

At last I have dug down to the last of my negatives. Checking your list:
What an odd. Picture - no neg.

Riding Hard - no neg.

Earth Knocker -

~~x~~ Advancing Summer } R.F. McGraw
No Trail } neg. box 144
Cloud-drift & Prairie } Sierra Madre
Calif

Of these. No Trail has been partly repainted since neg. was made, as I considered entire horse poorly drawn.
I am sending small glass neg. of Ledges of Sunland.

To fill out the lack I am sending also neg. of other pts. which I believe to be good examples of my work. You might give these a second thought.

~~x~~ Defective neg. Ptg. since sold to Glazier
High School, Los Angeles.

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They are:
Negatives -

The Wine Men
Keep Moving
No Place to Go
Locoopa Runner
Pioneers

Prints -

No Place to Go
Destination Unknown
What an End. Thanks
Ledges of Semland
Cloud-drift & Prairie
No Trail
Advancing Summer

You may return these to me when I get
back home next fall.

Also I volunteer some observations
on a few western illustrators which may
(or may not) be of some interest to
you -

Yours truly
W. H. D. Dixen

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Remington - letter to M.P.

Somewhere among my many moods & dear-ups the Remington letter (1891) was lost, which I have always regretted - I last saw it about 1914.

Here are some passages from it that stay in my memory -

"Your drawings are better than mine were at the same age - (16)

"Make your drawings simple - & always from nature."

"To be a successful illustrator you have to be a man as much as an accomplished painter."

"Study the things in nature that captivate your fancy - & draw, draw, draw."

"The only advice I can give you is don't take anybody's advice -"

"Art will not make you rich but it may make you happy. "

I think there is something about this letter in the biog. I sent you. It determined my choice of profession - 1895-1943

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Charlie Russell was prominent among western illustrators (he never claimed to be an "artist") because he was a thorough student — within limits. In depicting action he knew exactly what could or should be happening at any second in a given situation. The same was true for costume & equipment. Though he was a better draughtsman than most of his tribe, he showed a far greater knowledge of horse & cow anatomy than of human ditto. Some of his broncos are weeds in this. He was limited to a few facile types & had a stock cowboy whose face gets pretty tiresome. While he could draw men & animals combined in action he never formed (or may have rejected) any idea of the fundamentals of composition — space division, dynamics or linear relation, rhythm, etc. (See diagrams attached to 3 of my photos.) In compo. a room full of Russell pgs. was a monotonous affair. But when all's said, he is far in advance, both in knowledge & presentation, of any one who has tackled the subject.

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His work will be increasingly valuable as reference & source material as time goes on.

Ramington was also a student & one of the first to insist on authenticity^{of subject} to the editors. But in drawing he was strangely incomplete. To him a form had but one side — that one nearest him. His rendering never seemed to imply that an object had weight & thickness — that it continued on around to the part out of sight. And he never mastered the drawing of a hand. He was too impatient, apparently, to sit down & study it. Old timers have said of him that while he was well informed on types, costume, equipment & periods, he sometimes made his people doing quite improbable things. However, he covered a much wider range of time, place & subject than any of us & some liberties were justified. His color & painting technique improved greatly during the last 10-15 years of his life (except at the very last when he was trying to cover too much ground) — though he

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never developed a particularly original style or point of view. I think he will be best remembered for a dramatic rather than a purely pictorial presentation of the West.

H.T. Farney was an old hand who evidently knew the northwest plains & Indians well in the '80's. I have seen but 2 or 3 of his paintings (they were undistinguished, their color poor) but I remember his illustrations vividly & with pleasure. In this line I think he did a good & valuable job. His pts. still bring a high price in his home city Cincinnati. (See some idea in Harper Weekly, 1880's.)

R.F. Zogbaum & Chas. Schreyvogel were 2 squarheads who never seemed to get the hang of it, & should now get the Razz. Though Zog. was out west in '80's & knew the subject, he always managed to make something wooden & ridiculous. Same goes for Schreyvogel, with his cheap & shiny dramatizations ("My Brunkie", etc) another

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in this class was F.S. Vellenbaugh, who knew much & could draw nothing - Old man Jackson pulled the same bones in Westward America.

C. S. Price was an Oregonian - a strange moody fellow - who worked on N.W. cow ranches in '90's, started doing good western illustrations for Pac. Monthly & Sunset, got swaddled by art colony of Carmel, Calif., went arty & ended up doing incoherent modernisms. When I last heard of him he was head of W.P.A. art project in Portland, Ore.

Ed Berein has been all over & knows an immense amount of western lore & subject. He has a wonderful memory & a quiet sense of humor, & is in consequence a hunderd queer at story telling. He is also a sharp critic from his subject matter ample - but does not know what to criticize in his own work. He is another one who has never disciplined himself in drawing & composition. In him all idea of imagination or any free

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interpretation is ruled out. Surface facts
for him & nothing else. Harrison Lewis,
Houghton Mifflin's western rep., & I have tried
to get him interested in putting his wide knowledge
in some form available to students — remem-
berances, a book of pictures or something —
but no response. Do there's some doubt
as to what he will do departing leaves upon the
face of time. — Perhaps this war, &
the long reconstruction period that must follow
it will swallow up all interest in such
things for another 50 years. Quia sub?

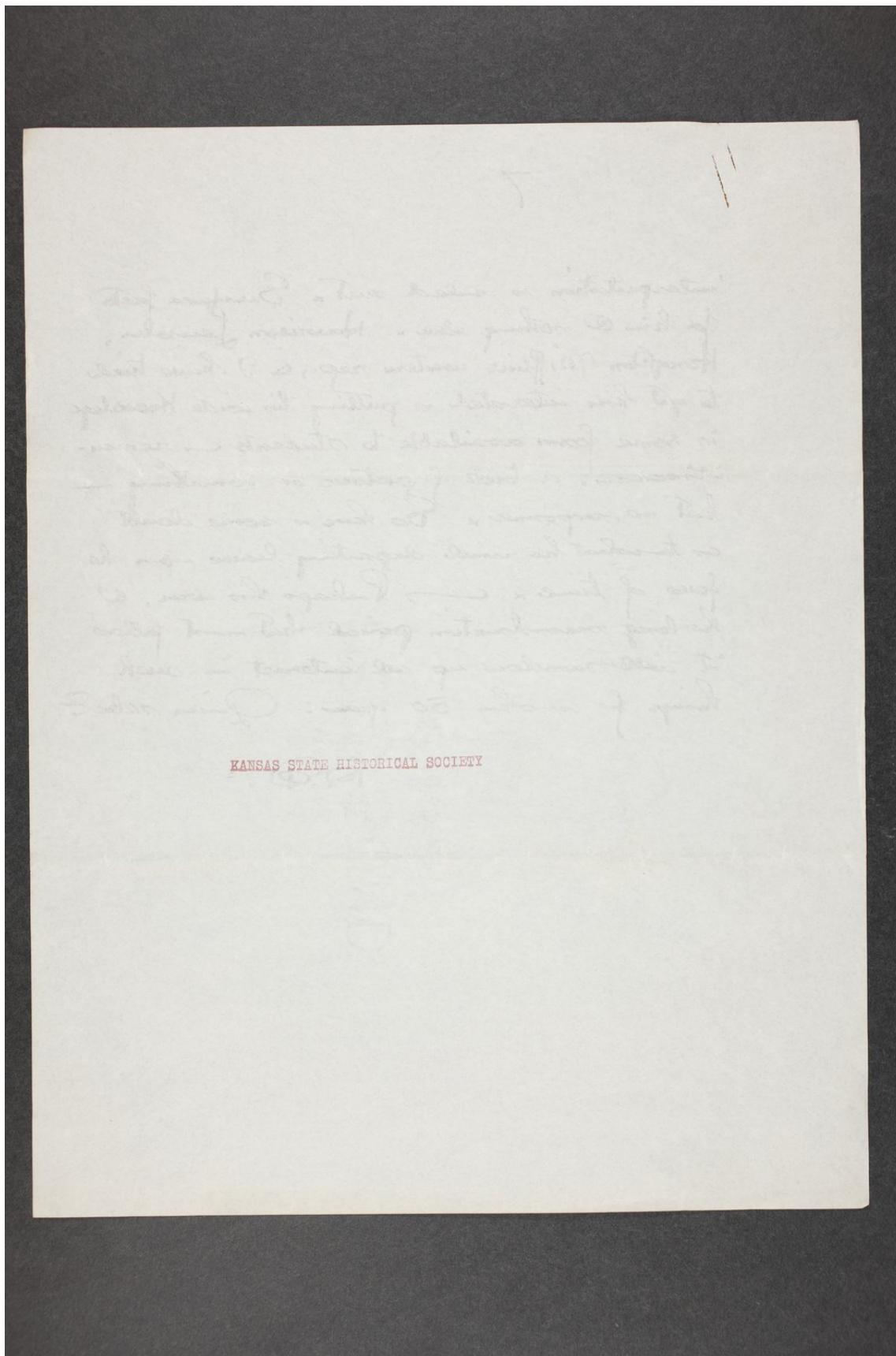
M.D.

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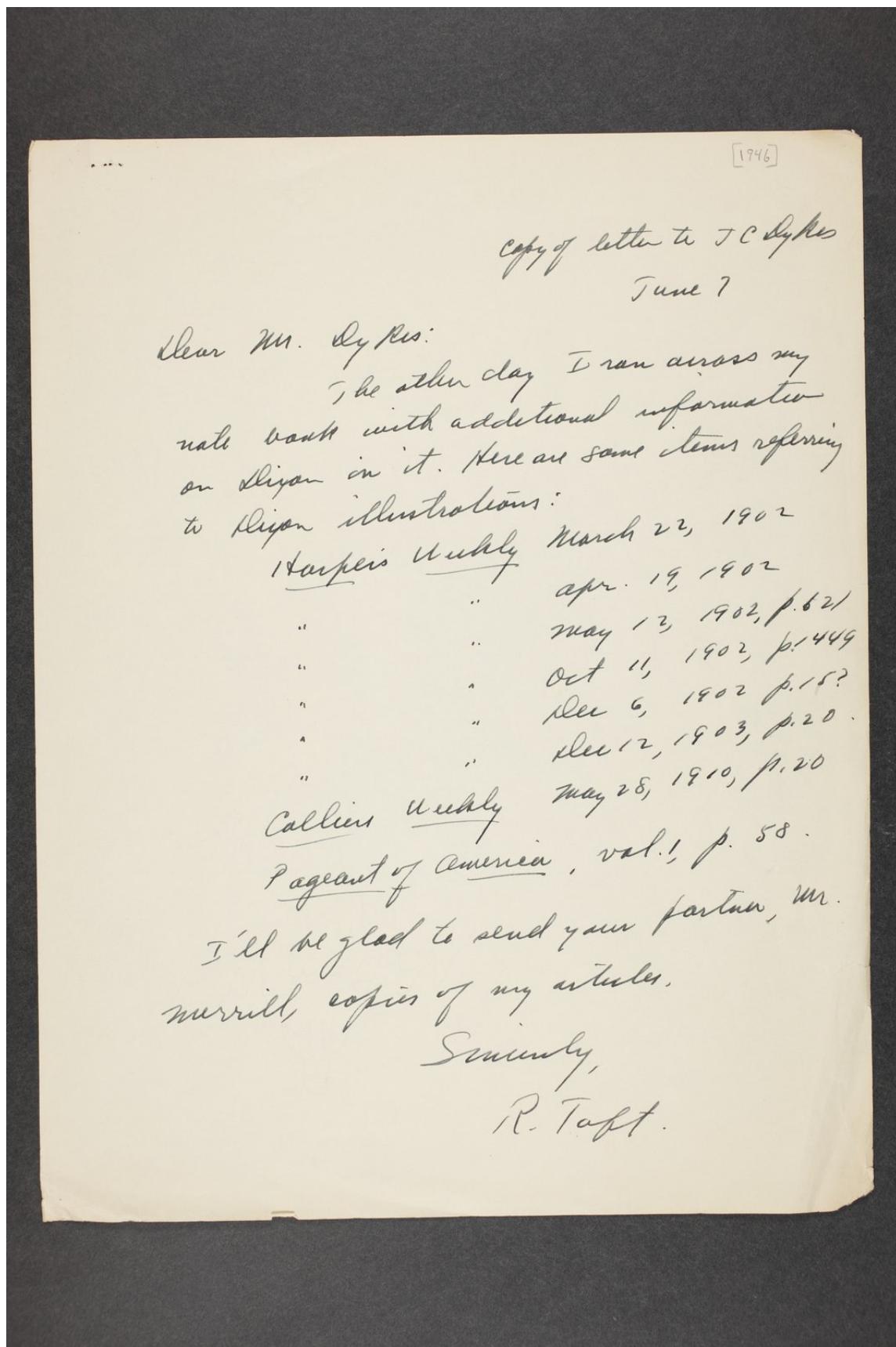
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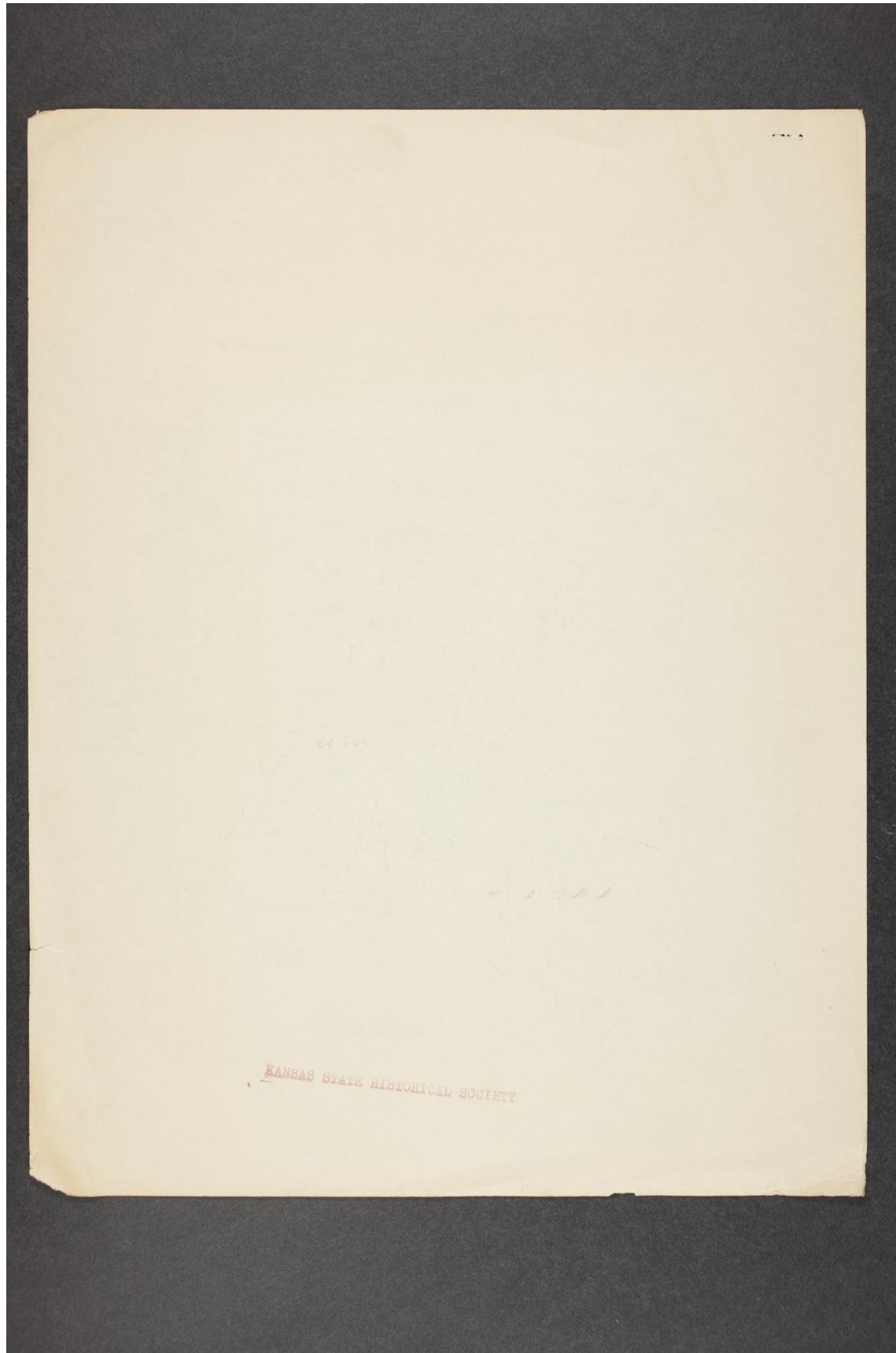


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4511 Guilford Road
College Park, Md.
Aug. 25, 1948.

Dear Dr. Taft:

I found your note of the 14th waiting for me when I returned from a trip West.

I have made a rapid survey of my Maynard Dixon material and so far as I have been able to determine he did not have a picture or mural entitled "The Santa Fe Trail".

Publication seems quite a ways off on my bibli-

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grapley of Western Illustrators. Seems as if I tackled quite a task but I'm going ahead with the job.

Recently, I finally secured a copy of "Photography and the American Scene" - at your convenience I'd like to send it out for your autograph L.

Sincerely,
R.C. Dykes

P.S. Do you have a copy of the booklet, "Maynard Dixon Painter of the West"? It has much on his work.

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*At last
I shall give myself to the desert again,
that I, in its golden dust,
may be blown from a barren peak
broadcast over the sun-lands.*

*If you should desire some news of me,
go ask the little horned toad whose home is the dust,
or seek it among the fragrant sage,
or question the mountain juniper,
and, by their silence,
they will truly inform you.*

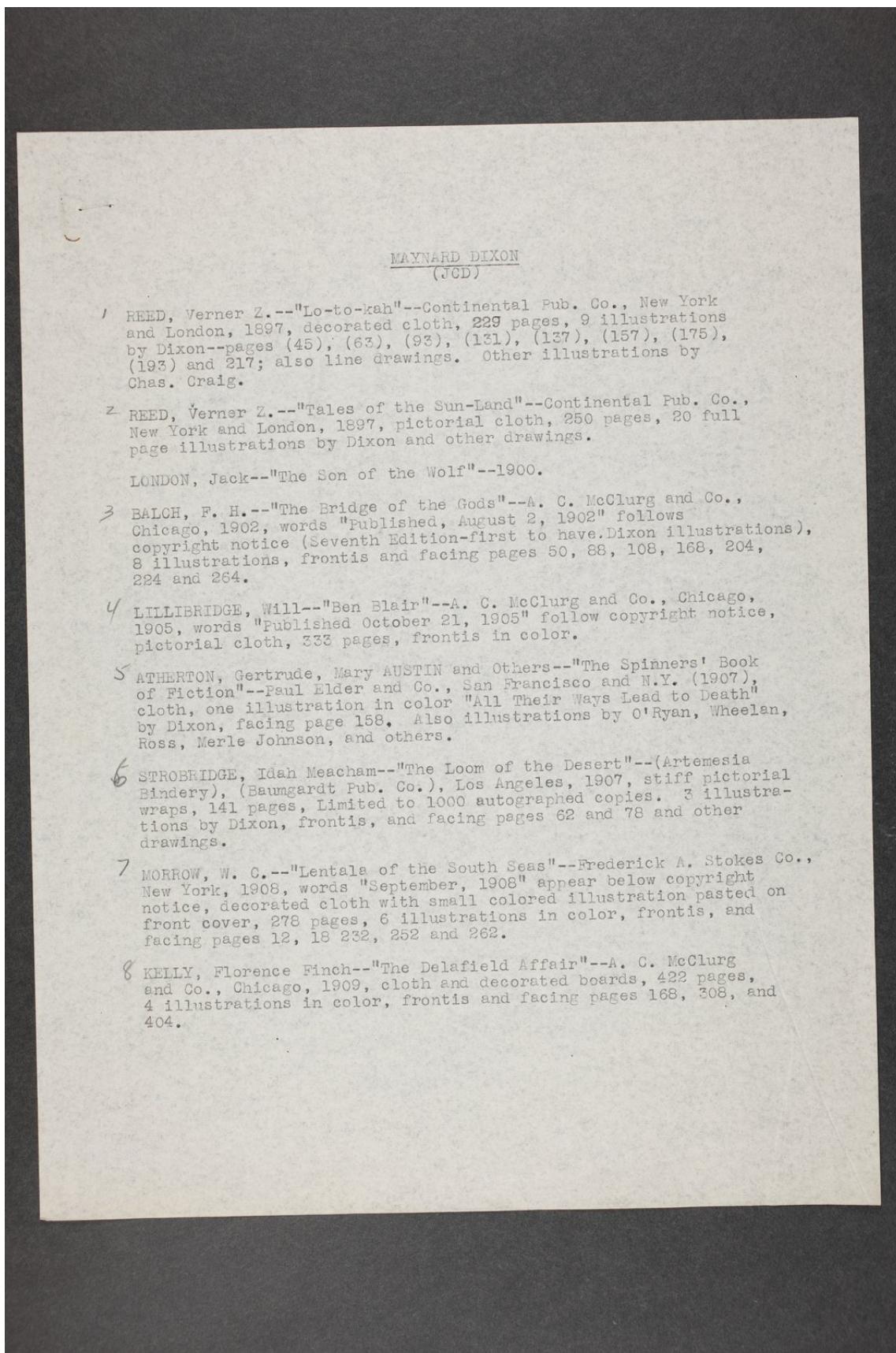
Maynard Dixon

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- 9 STROWBRIDGE, Idah Meacham--"The Land of Purple Shadows"--"The Artemesia Binery," Los Angeles, 1909, autographed editions limited to 1000 copies, pictorial wraps, 133 pages, 3 illustrations--frontis and facing pages 52 and 104.
- 10 BOYLES, Kate and Virgil D.--"The Homesteaders"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1909, words "Published September 11, 1909" follow copyright notice, cloth and pictorial boards, 345(+1) pages, 4 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 62, 154 and 326.
- 11 MULFORD, Clarence E.--"Hopalong Cassidy"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1910, words "Published March 12, 1910" follow copyright notice, cloth and pictorial boards, 392 pages, 5 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 96, 188, 270 and 370.
- 12 MAULE, Mary K.--"The Little Knight of the X Bar B"--Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Boston (1910), words "Published, April, 1910" proceed copyright notice, pictorial cloth, 461 pages, 6 illustrations--frontis and facing pages, 14, 148, 200, 300 and 352.
- 13 LYNDE, Francis--"The Taming of Red Butte Western"--Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y. 1910, words "Published April, 1910" follow copyright notice, pictorial cloth, 410 pages, 4 illustrations, frontis and facing pages 138, 176 and 400.
- 14 BRONSON, Edgar Beecher--"The Red-Blooded"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1910, words "Published September 10, 1910" follow copyright notice, pictorial cloth, 341 (+1) pages, 10 illustrations by Dixon, frontis and facing pages 6, 14, 20, 36, 42, 46, 190, 232 and 234, and other illustrations by Russell, Johnson, etc.
- 15 BRONSON, Edgar Beecher--"Reminiscences of a Ranchman"--A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, (1910), words "Published September 10, 1910" follow copyright notice (revised edition-the first to have Dixon illustrations), cloth with colored illustration pasted on front cover, 369 (+1) pages, 7 illustrations by Dixon--frontispiece and facing pages 26, 32, 48, 90, 170 and 288. Other illustrations by Dunton, Johnson, etc.
- 16 HANSON, Joseph Mills--"Frontier Ballads"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1910, words "Published October 14, 1910" follow copyright notice, pictorial boards, 92 pages, 7 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 21, 31, 40, 52, 71 and 77 and other drawings.
- 17 COOLIDGE, Dane--"Hidden Water"--A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1910, words "Published October 29, 1910" follow copyright notice, cloth and pictorial boards, 483 pages, 4 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 177, 287 and 462.
- 18 BOYLES, Kate and Virgil D.--"The Spirit Trail"--A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1910, words "Published October 29, 1910" follow copyright notice, cloth and pictorial boards, 416 pages, 4 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 144, 388 and 390.

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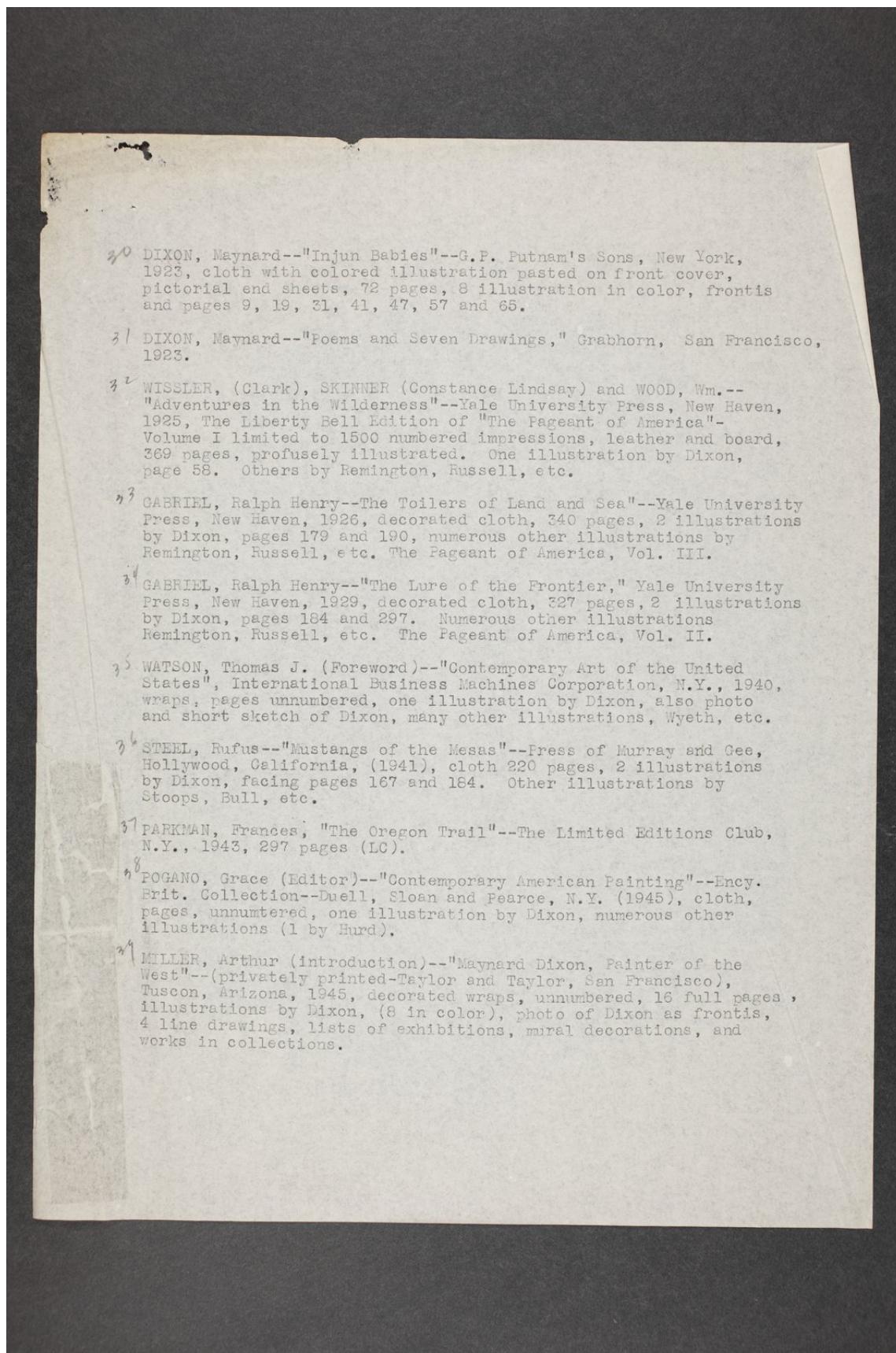
- "The Grove Plays"--Crocker, San Francisco, 1910, 3 volumes.
- ✓ SERVICE, Robt. W.--"The Trail of Ninety-Eight"--Dodd, Mead and Co., New York, 1911, cloth, 514 pages, 4 illustrations--frontis and facing pages 116, 316 and 476.
- ✓ MULFORD, Clarence E.,--"Bar-20 Days"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1911, words "Published, March, 1911" follow the copyright notice, pictorial cloth, 412 pages, 4 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 124, 270 and 346.
- ✓ COOLIDGE, Dane--"The Texican"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1911, words "Published September, 1911" follow copyright notice, pictorial cloth, 368 (+1) pages, 5 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 56, 188, 250 and 312.
- ✓ MULFORD, Clarence E. and John Wood CLAY--"Buck Peters, Ranchman"--A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1912, words "Published April, 1912" follow copyright notice, cloth, 367 pages, 4 illustrations in color--frontis and
- ✓ BRADY, Cyrus Townsend--"The West Wind"--A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1912, words "Published, September, 1912" follow copyright notice, cloth, 389 pages, 4 illustrations in color, frontis and facing pages 120, 198 and 312.
- ✓ MULLFORD, Clarence E.--"The Coming of Cassidy"--A.C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1913.
- ✓ KYNE, Peter B.--"The Three Godfathers"--George H. Doran Co., New York (1913), cloth, 95 pages, 4 tinted illustrations by Dixon, frontis, and facing page 18, (32) 64 and 80.
- ✓ WHITAKER, Herman (Editor)--"West Winds"--Paul Elder and Co., San Francisco (1914), Boards with illustration pasted on front cover, 219 pages, one illustration, facing page 120, by Dixon, other illustration by Crawford, Nohl, etc.
- ✓ MYRTLE, Frederick S. (The Music by H. F. STEWART)--"Gold-A Forest Play"--Bohemian Club, San Francisco, 1916, cloth and board with a colored illustration pasted on the front cover, 60 pages, reproductions in color of costume designs by L. Maynard Dixon facing pages 3, 9, 17, 25, 33, 41 and 49. Decorations in black and white by Sweeney.
- ✓ WHITAKER, Herman--"Over the Border"--Harper and Brothers, N.Y. and London, (1917) words "Published May, 1917" and code letters "E-R" follow copyright notice, cloth, 415 (+1) pages, tinted frontis.
- ✓ BUFFUM, George T.--"On Two Frontiers"--Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Boston, (1918), words "Published, March, 1918" proceed copyright notice, cloth, 375 pages, frontis by Dixon and pen and ink illustration by Merrill.

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"THROWING THE ROPE"

MAYNARD DIXON
Painter of the West



"CAMP VERDI APACHES"



Crayon & Pencil, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8"
Signed Camp Verdi, Ariz.
Aug. 1900.
Price \$50.00

E. W. LATENDORF

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"Peaks, canyons, mesas, and endless deserts under seemingly fathomless blue skies appear in most of his pictures."

"THE MOJAVE DESERT"



Oil in color. 30" x 25"
Signed and dated in lower left corner Maynard Dixon, 1945.
Framed. Price \$950.00

"Maynard Dixon's deepest feelings about life and the West are clearly expressed in such highly organized masterpieces as 'Earth Knower' and 'The Wise Men.' — Arthur Miller."

"THE WISE MEN"



Oil in color. 40½" x 35"
One of the artist's greatest paintings. Reproduced in "A Gallery of Western Paintings," edited by Raymond Carlson. "In Arizona Highways," and reproduced as a color print by McGraw-Hill.
Signed in lower left corner Maynard Dixon, 1923 - 26 - 30 and with his Eagle device. Framed. Price \$1,950.00

"DOWN THE BANK"



Watercolor — 15" x 20"
Signed in lower left corner Maynard Dixon.
Framed. Price \$400.00

"PROSPECTORS"



Pen & Ink Wash Drawing 15" x 22"
Signed Maynard Dixon '07.
Matted. Price \$100.00

"OLD BUFFALO DAYS"



Oil & Wax Emulsion on Canvas in Color. 36" x 21"
Signed Maynard Dixon, 1939. Price \$450.00