

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

Section 3, Pages 61 - 90

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 William H. Jackson, Eastman Johnson, Christian Jorgensen, Edward Jump, Paul Kane, William Keith, John Frederick Kensett, Richard and Edward Kern, Kicking Bear, Charles Koppel, Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, Remington W. Lane, Thomas LeClear, and William R. Leigh.

Date: 1930-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 24

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Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

PHONE, CALEDONIA 5-8300

FIREPROOF

HOTEL LATHAM

28TH ST. AT 5TH AVE.

NEW YORK

Oct. 21, 1933

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Dr. Taft:

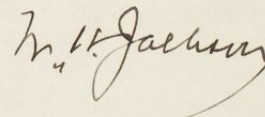
Regarding your slides for coloring:
They should be rather thin but not flat,
that is, no veiling of the high lights
due to over exposure- good for projection
either plain or colored.

It is my intention to have slides made
from my paintings for coloring as soon
as I get some present work off my hands
and, if you wish, can prepare some of them for you
for you. I have negatives of all my pictures.

Reproductions of Russell's pictures
may tax my ability to accurately follow all
color detail and may involve a little more
time for the work than in the estimates I
have given you. The best way is to experiment.

I am sending Mr. Bingham my P. P.
Thanks very much for the clipping. The price
I have put on my small paintings is \$25. each
as, I think, I mentioned when showing them
to you.

Sincerely,



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

November 9, 1933

Mr. W. H. Jackson
Hotel Latham
Fifth Ave. and 28th St.
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I sent you yesterday some five lantern slides to examine and color if you think they are of the proper density. The one of Old Faithful is considerably lighter than the others, and Mr. Bingham thinks that it should be done over. Let us know which type of printing will show up best. Of course, they are from an amateur's negatives; so the final prints won't be perfect. The view down the mountain road has faint outlines of mountains in the far distance. I thought they could probably be brought out a little more distinctly in the coloring. Am I right?

If the four positives are of approximately the right density, let us know, and I'll send the remainder on to you as soon as they are made up.

I wonder if you remember your first experience with gelatin dry plates--when and where, etc. If so, could you write me a paragraph about it? Do you recall your first experience with shutters?

Yours,

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. Jackson
4, East 38th St
New York, N.Y.
Nov. 13, 1833.

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Dr. Taft:

I have your letters of the 6th and 9th the first with check for \$25. for which I thank you; and the latter, accompanying the five slides, which I have colored and send along with this letter.

The slides, generally speaking, lack a proper degree of contrast, that is- I would have liked a little more clear glass in the high lights and more density in the the dark parts. However, the water-falls are not so open to this objection and the two geyser pictures, evidently from quite thin negatives, lack contrast in the subject itself and are prehaps as good as could be made-with the exception of the Old Faithful. At first I thought it too thin to color but have done so nevertheless. I have no lantern for trying them out on the screen and the light I am working by in coloring is quite different from what I have been used to; so, as the proof of the proff of the pudding is in the eating, put these sides on your screen and see how you like them. I presume the convenience of printing by contact is why you have not enlarged them to full lantern-slide size.

When I left the Survey and went to Denver in '79 to go into business for my self I took with me most of the wet-plate outfit I had been using and employed it there for the first two years. But in the Fall and Winter of 80-81 commercially made dry plates began to appear and of course I tried them out in my gallery for portrait work. I still have the first dry plate, of commercial make, that I ever developed which is a portrait of myself. The plates, if I remember rightly, were made by a man named Cross of Desmoins, Iowa. There, several small manufacturers before the big ones, like Cramer, Carbutt and others got established.

Until the Prosch shutters appeared I used home made drop shutters of home make almost entirely, so far as I recollect- some of them with rubber bands to accelerate movement. On my foreign trip I had a focal-plane Thornton-Ficard used on front of the lens, which, after all, was nothing more than my old drop shutter. I found the Prosch quite efficient but naturally, in later years used several of the between lens shutters. "Fast lenses and super sensitive films of course require fine mechanism for correct timing.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

I have gone through my letter files again looking for that letter from Mr Benecke's daughter, thinking I might have overlooked it on my first search, but do find it. Sorry I cannot remember her name. Perhaps you may get some information about Benecke himself by addressing Miss Leila Strumm, Secretary of the Missouri Historical Society at St. Louis.

I have no other knowledge of Leonaard Reedy than a recollection of his name and of having seen some of his work, nothing more.

You may charge yourself 40¢ each for coloring the five slides including Old Faithful done over if this one proves too light.

Yours sincerely,

M. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

November 16, 1933

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 38th St.
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Your letter of the thirteenth and the colored slides came yesterday. I tried out the slides immediately and was quite pleased with them. The colors look quite natural and are not violent in tone as is usually the case with most colored slides I have seen. Mr. Bingham is making up the remainder, about twenty-five, and they will be along in a few days. The one of Old Faithful shows up surprisingly well, and we are printing the remainder somewhat less dense. I agree with you that the highlights are a little dull, but that is due to the negatives from which the slides were made. I am a little at a loss to account for it, as I was using Verichrome film. I am sure that they were not underexposed, the usual fault of amateurs, as I gave them several times the exposure stated in the Haynes guide. As you may recall from our experiments which you saw here last summer, it is virtually impossible to overexpose Verichrome; so I do not believe that the fault is overexposure. More probably it is due to overdevelopment. Anyhow, even if they are not perfect, they have given us a lot of pleasure in going over them, and I am sure the slides will increase the pleasure considerably.

Talking about the highlights makes me think of a question I have been wanting to ask you for some time which has kept slipping my mind. A good many of the collodion negatives I have examined have the sky blocked out with opaque paper. Still others in which this is not done give prints with very murky skies. Can you recall the reason for this? Was it due to a difference in the light sensitivity of the collodion film as compared to a difference in the light sensitivity of the collodion film as compared to the gelatin? I have noticed, too, that many of these collodion negatives bear evidence of mercury intensification. Possibly the intensifier reduced the high lights?

Thanks for the paragraphs concerning your early experiences with the gelatin dry plate. I should like a print from your self-portrait some time when it is convenient to have one made. Probably I could use it in connection with my history.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft
A

RTAAW



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

Nov. 25, 1933

Mr. W. H. Jackson
Hotel Latham
Fifth Ave. at 28th
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Yesterday I mailed you some twenty-eight lantern slides for coloring. Included in these you will find copies of two maps. The principal highways are the points of particular interest in these maps, which might be marked in red, as are the originals. In order to aid you, I am inclosing the maps. Will you return them when the slides are completed? There are several of the slides which show the children which show the children. I believe in all of these the boy's trousers are tan, and the shirt is light blue; the spots on the girl's dress are green.

In one of your early letters to me you stated that Alex. Gardner accompanied the Indian Treaty Expedition of 1868. I have combed all the reports concerning the Treaty and Council at Fort Laramie, but have found no reference to Gardner's name. Do you recall the source of your information? I should appreciate receiving it if you do.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

Robert Taft

RT:AW



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

November 28, 1933

Mr. W. H. Jackson
Hotel Latham
Fifth Ave. at 28th
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Yesterday I returned to you by insured parcel post your diary of 1870. I have apologized several times for the delay in returning it, and I must do so again. I have been very dilatory in getting it back. I have appreciated the opportunity of examining it, however, and have found it of considerable use. In several places you mention that "the bath gave out" before you were through with your work. I presume that this refers to the silver nitrate bath, rather than the developing or fixing bath, does it not? In the back of the diary is a list of your equipment. I was able to make out all of these items save the description of the lenses, for example, "1 1/3 Willard lens." What does the symbol following the 1 refer to?

I am still accumulating data on my history. Just now I am engaged in going through the patent literature between 1840 and 1880 and have found a number of interesting items in that apparently dry source.

Thank you again for the privilege of using the diary.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AW

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. Jackson
4, East 28th St
New York, N.Y.
Nov. 30, 1933.

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence Kansas

Dear Dr. Taft:

I have your letters of the 16th and 25th covering your receipt, approval of and payment of the first lot of slides tried out with the receipt here of twenty-eight more for coloring. This last lot, in the main, is all right with some allowance for a few subjects lacking contrast in the negative. I fear, however, I cannot do much with the larger map, some of the highway lines are entirely too faint to follow, but I shall experiment a little with it

Regarding blocked out sky#s of the old negatives: The wet plate, as you know, was unduly sensitive to blue and violet rays with the result that our skys were either blank white, or in the case of a thin negative, too smudgy; also the surface of the plate was more subject to scratches or other injury than a gelatine plate. Instead of spotting out it was found more convenient to block out the sky completely and print in another from a cloud negative or shade down the blank white to a graduated tint by exposure to light. These operations lent themselves more readily to "printing out" rather than developing papers. Once in a while, as you may have noticed, passably good cloud effects were obtained on the wet plate due to favorable light conditions, but more particularly to conditions in collodion and silver bath. These things were, in a way, "temperamental," and did not work together the same way all the time.

Having only one grade of paper as to sensitiveness to light, whether Albumen, Platinum or the later Aristo, the negative had to fit the paper and if on development it was found too thin to make a good print recourse was had to intensification. Sometimes this was done by re-development with silver, but also, as a convenient short cut, by blackening the film with sulphurette of potassium; these two methods more frequently than with mercuric-iodide.

My information about Gardner was obtained while living in Washington during Survey days. I have no documented proof of it. As I am about writing Olmstead on another matter I shall ask him about it

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

In one of your letters recently you mentioned going to some department in Washington, of Army records, to look for Hines' Yellowstone photographs of 1871. Did you find them? I have never seen a print or any kind of a reproduction, any of his Yellowstone negatives

Since I began this letter I have received yours of the 28th returning the 1870 diary. Looking over it now I fear there are other things than the reference to the Willard lenses you may not understand or be able to make out. The line you mention stands for a pair of 1/3 Willard Lenses (for stereoscopic work) Lenses were sometimes classed with the size of plate they were used for- whole, half, third and quarter, a survival of daguerreotype and ambrotype terms.

I have become interested myself in this 1870 diary and will make an intelligible copy of it as I find time from my other occupations. When, and if, I do so I will send it to you to check your own copy.

Herewith a print from that first gelatine dry-plate employed in my Denver business in 1880, a portrait of myself.

Sincerely,

W. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. Jackson
4, East 28th St
New York, N.Y.

Dec. 10, 1933

Dear Mr. Taft:

I have just finished packing for shipment the twenty-eight slides received from you recently for coloring.

As they are all, with two or three exceptions, rather thin in the densities of the image the coloring must also be on the light side, giving soft rather than brilliant effects. Just how far I have succeeded in meeting your expectations will not be known until after you have put them on the screen and will then tell me about it.

In the ^{slide} ~~one~~ of the Hayden meadows I had trouble with a speck in the emulsion, in the sky near the horizon; the more I tried to doctor it the worse it looked. If you think it too much of a blemish send me another slide.

The general map showing through highway routes has been a hard proposition for me, as I intimated it might be. With either pen or brush I found very difficult to follow the almost invisible lines of the highways, the red of the map being reproduced very faintly. My attempts to follow them has resulted in more or less of a mess. If you don't like it soak the slide in cold water over night and the color will wash out.

Thief go with slides

In a former letter I forgot to answer your question as to what happened when I reported on several occasions that I had to stop work because my "bath played out". The silver bath is in perfect condition only once and that is when the first collodionized plate is taken from it. Every plate thereafter takes something from or adds to its composition, which you as a chemist will recognize. The principal troubles were the weakening of the bath by the loss of silver that went into the plates resulting in thin, flat negatives, or an excess of iodides in the solution, that have been dissolved from the collodionised plate, which ~~the~~ crystallise on its surface causing innumerable "pin holes" ^{in development.} The only thing to do in either case is to make a new bath or doctor the old one by one of several methods for that purpose, neither of which could be done, on short notice, when working afield.

Ten dollars for the 28 slides will suit me,
at your convenience

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. Jackson
4, East 28th St
New York, N.Y.

December 21, 1933

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Dr. Taft:

Pardon the delay in acknowledging your letter of Dec. 15th with ten dollars in payment for slide coloring. The various activities of the holiday season are mainly responsible for it.

You must have, already, enough illustrative matter in old photographs to make a good picture story of the Old West. I am glad you are pursuing this line of collecting so industriously for I know that whatever you find will be put to good use and not filed away and forgotten. There must be a lot of this old stuff among the descendants of old pioneer families but the trouble is to find them. I wonder sometime what becomes of the millions of photographs that have been made, whether they may not be treated like news papers or periodicals - serving a temporary purpose and then discarded. Recently, I wished very much to get one of my old 11 x 14 photos of Grays Peak. The negative was in constant use for many years and a large number of prints absorbed by the trade and the public but search and enquiry now fails to discover a single copy.

article
No, I have not seen Olmstead's on Snelling in Camera but the next time I am at Willoughby's, our largest photo supply shop, I will get the Dec. No.

Plumbe
I do not recall Plumbe altho' the name seems familiar. Hesler was one of the best known of Chicago's. I met him, as well as a number of other photographers of the city at conventions or like meetings, but I never had much in common with the portraitists. I never met Towler and it is a fine thing to bring him to life again, as it were, through your correspondence with his granddaughter.

I expect to be in Detroit during holiday week visiting with a daughter's family but expect to be back on my job here after the first.

With thanks your remittance and with best wishes for yourself and family, I remain

Yours sincerely *W. H. Jackson*



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

Jan. 8, 1934

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 E. 28th St.
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Thank you for the very interesting Christmas card you sent us. We all admired it and are glad to be numbered among your friends fortunate enough to receive one. Mrs. Taft has ^{been} planning to write you herself, but has been ill for nearly two weeks now with a bad cold. She improves very slowly for some reason, and has to spend most of her time in bed. We are hoping that the worst is over now, however.

I am planning to send you, in a few days, some six or eight slides for coloring and will send under separate cover all of the copy from which they were taken, except the one of your own (View East from Independence Rock) and the one of the buffalo on the plains. The last is a water color made by some Kansas settler in '71 and has just been obtained by the Historical Society--very good for an amateur, is it not? The prevailing tones in the original are the greens of the plains and the browns of the buffalo. The row of stakes down the foreground mark the survey for the Santa Fe, according to the notation accompanying the original. Unfortunately, we cannot borrow the original, as I believe you would be interested in examining it. If you come this way next summer we will run over and see it.

Of course, in none of the slides am I expecting exact reproduction of color. As a matter of fact, in the lithographic copies of the Russel pictures, for example, one will probably find considerable differences in color when compared with the originals. By the way, I recently found an original Russel in one of the Topeka hotels not long ago.

Will it be possible to obtain colored slides of your paintings as follows? 1. Old Fort Bridger--the one on the cover of Ellison's history of Fort Bridger. 2. Scott's Bluff on Oregon Trail (on p. 13 of Ellison's "Independence Rock.") 3. Chimney Rock (p. 18 of "Independence Rock.") 4. Emigrants' Train Crossing South Platte (p. 23 of "Independence Rock.") 5. A close-up of the Sweetwater Station. I believe this showed the changing of the riders on the pony express.

I expect you have had negatives made of all of these paintings. We could make the slides if you cared for us to do it, or you can have them made there, whichever is more convenient for you. If you do not have negatives and do not have the originals, we could of course copy the half-tone reproductions, but this, as you know, would not be as satisfactory for slides.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

4 East 28th St.
New York, N. Y.
January 13, 1934

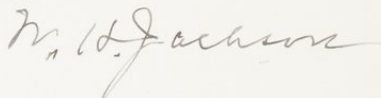
Dear Dr. Taft:

Replying to your letter of the 8th and anticipating the arrival of the slides for coloring I will say that I have the negatives of all my recent paintings any one of which, or all, are at your service for slide making.

In addition to those on the enclosed list are: Virginia Dale (Robbers Roost), Fort Mitchell, Deer Creek, Sweetwater Station, Sweetwater Valley, Three Crossings, St. Marys, Burnt Ranch, all Pony Express or Stage Stations. Also Another Echo Canyon, Salt Lake Valley of 1847, Buffalo Stampede, Before and after the Pony Express, with others that are likely to be soon available.

Regarding the Russell paintings I have a collection of about 70 color prints of them, and, as you say, I know from my own observation, that they are not always true to the original. The differences, however, are comparatively slight and do not misrepresent, materially, the general color effect of the paintings,

Sincerely,



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

4 East 23th St
New York, N.Y.
January 30, 1934

Dear Dr. Taft:

I am returning your slides to-day by Parcel Post along with the seven negatives of mine from which you wish to make slides for yourself. It just occurs to me that there are no titles on the negatives but I presume you will have no difficulty in identifying them. As I already have slides of them there is no use in making duplicates

You will note that I return the view from Independence Rock uncolored. It is entirely too thin and impossible to make it presentable by coloring.

Your slide of "When Sioux Meet Blackfeet" was also so thin or underdeveloped in some of the details that I had it made over from my picture, in connection with some other work of the same kind being done for me, just as an experiment to see for my own satisfaction how well detail could be brought out in copying these color prints. No charge, of course, all for my own information.

I know you will be interested in the "Trail and Timberline" herewith and Dr. Fryxell's story of the Mount of the Holy Cross.

The 1839 camera you mention is an interesting relic of daguerreotype days, much more so if equipped with original lense

Sincerely yours

R. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

March 19, 1934

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Dr. Taft:

Sorry to learn of your continued illness,
at the time of your writing, but hope you have recovered from it by this time.

Am sending on the seven slides that you wished to have colored. Frankly, I was a bit discouraged about attempting because of their excessive thinness, only two Chimney Rock and the Blue Mts being satisfactory; the latter the only one entirely so, according to my practice and experience.

But, taking it for granted that you have taken into consideration what I said about the previous (the Russell's) that I colored for you, I came to the conclusion that these were the kind you preferred so have done the best I could in coloring them. The lack of depth in the darker parts as well as of detail in the high lights has made it difficult to get full color effects.

The Russell's as well as these last ones from my negatives, all subjects of much small detail, have taken more time than ordinarily for the coloring so I am charging you 50¢ each for the work although I must acknowledge it is not as good as I wish it was.

Five of the Russell's and seven now make twelve in all.

I am not familiar with the story of Hesler's daguerreotype of Minnehaha Falls and Hiawatha but would like to know more about it if it resembles in any way Longfellow's mention of the Holy Cross Mtn.

Hoping you are up and about with your usual university work and wishing to be remembered to Mrs Taft and the kids, I remain

Sincerely

J. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

March 28, 1934

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 28th St.
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

The lantern slides have been received and are quite satisfactory. Inclosed find payment for them. I should like one more, if possible. I believe when you were here last summer that you had a painting of a pony express station showing the rider exchanging horses. Would it be possible to get a colored slide of that? If so, will you have the slide made and charge me for it?

I am inclosing the item about Hesler. Will you please return it at your convenience? I am corresponding with a daughter of Hesler's at present. My recent bits of information include a number of unpublished letters of S. F. B. Morse on early daguerreotype and a reference to some photographic work of Bierstadt (the painter) who was west in the summer of 1859 and took apparently a large number of views. The New York Public Library has become interested in these and is trying to obtain some of them for me.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AW

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

April 5, 1934.

Dr. Robert Taft
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas.

Dear Dr. Taft:

The slide you wished to have of a Pony express rider changing his mochila from one horse to another goes to you to-day. I am not satisfied with the action, or with the figures themselves, as expressed in this picture, and hope sometime to do it over again more to my liking.

Thanks for the opportunity to see the Hessler article- an interesting reminder of old-time Chicago. Hessler was about the most enterprising and popular photographer, not only in Chicago, but the Middle West generally. I do not remember meeting him but may have seen him at some of the conventions.

It would have been quite natural, or a matter of course, for Bierstadt to have undertaken photography on his '59 trip to the Rockies, for two of his brothers were in the business professionally. I would like to share with you whatever information you may acquire. It does not seem likely that he attempted to work the wet-collodion process- possibly a slow dry-plate of that period.

of Denver

The Rocky Mountain News/asked me for an article on old-time photography for their 75th Anniversary number to appear April 22d. In contributing such an article I called attention to the coincidence that it is also just 75 years since I began, as a youth of 16, to work for the photographers of Troy, N. Y. as a retoucher of prints.

The making and coloring of the slide is \$1.00.

Sincerely,

M. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

April 13, 1934

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 28th St.
New York City

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Your letter of April 5, card of the ninth, and the lantern slide have been received. Inclosed find payment for the slide. The extra slides may be returned so that I shall have a replacement in case the others break.

I am always glad to share my accumulation of notes with you. Just now I am working on the early period of photography in this country. I have examined myself or have had examined the early newspapers of 1839 and 1840 of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington for items concerning daguerreotypy and hope shortly to write up this phase of it. I have also acquired copies of a number of S. F. B. Morse's letters relating to the same subject which have never been published. I am also working up my notes on the development of photo-mechanical printing and have been corresponding with S. H. Morgan and F. R. Ives, pioneers in that field. Very frequently I run across references to your work: for example, Wilson's Photographic Magazine for 1889 has an article on your work, and the volume for 1890 reproduces one of your negatives as a print.

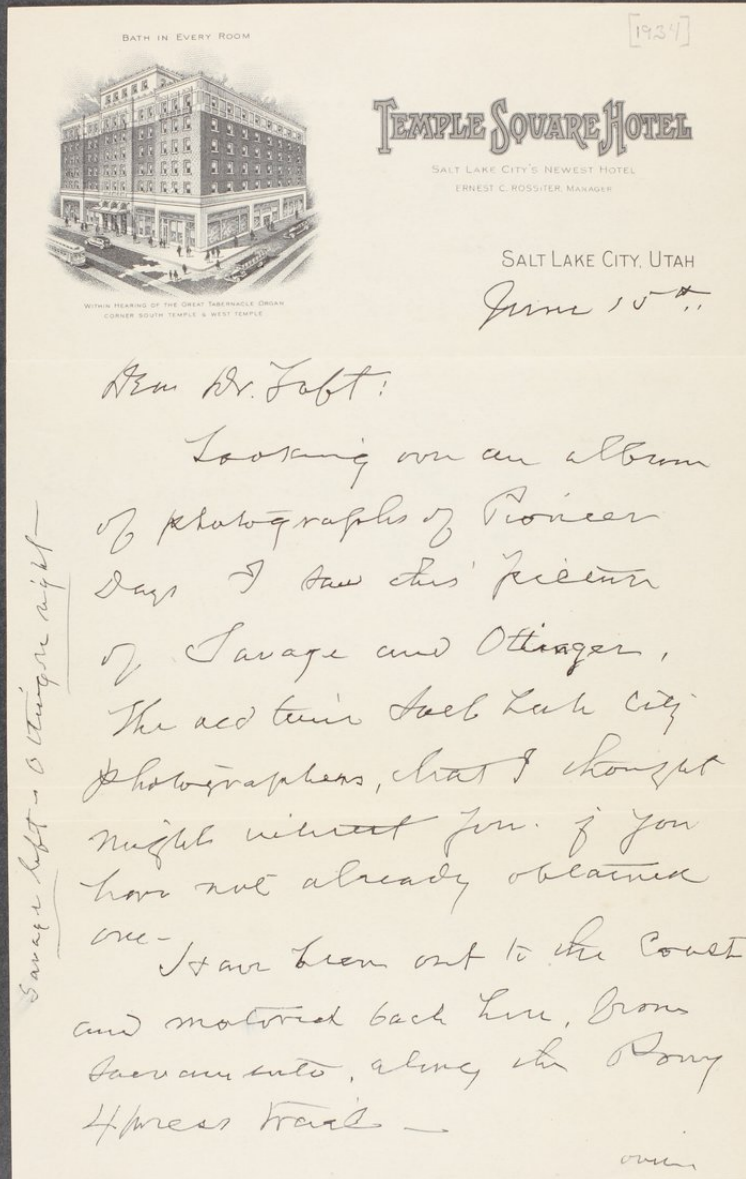
Be sure to send me a copy of your article in the Denver Rocky Mountain News if you have any extra ones.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

I expect to reach Denver
about the 25th and remain
about there a few days.

If you wish to reach me at
any time - send care of Colorado
Mountain Club, 422 Chamber
of Commerce Bldg, Denver, Colo.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

PHONE, CALEDONIA 5-8300

FIREPROOF

HOTEL LATHAM

28TH ST. AT 5TH AVE.

NEW YORK August 22, 1933

Dear Dr. Taft:

I have been back in New York now since the 12th. Much of the time since then has been occupied in looking up new living rooms and getting settled again for taking up my various activities from where I left off. All at the above address which, I hope, will prove to be permanent.

These few lines are merely to let you know where I am located and to thank you and your good wife again most cordially for the fine entertainment I had at your hands while in Lawrence, and in this I am including Mr. Bingham for the fine photographic work he did for us. As soon as they come from the publisher, will send him a copy of my book.

You asked me for a picture of myself of the early 70s. Well, here it is, marked 1873 but I really think it was made in '68 or '69, just before I joined the Hayden Survey. But however that may be it is a fair representation of myself during that period, when at home from my field work,

My visit in St. Louis was not productive of much interest, mainly I presume because I did not give enough time to it. Mr. Stone at Columbus was entertaining in telling his photographing the Grand Canyon of the Colorado - a continuous series throughout its entire length. Called on Olmstead in Washington, of course. He is a genial, pleasant sort of fellow and I know you would enjoy knowing him personally

Sincerely,

R. H. Jackson

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

October 8, 1934

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 28th St.
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I have wondered frequently since writing you on June 18 if you ever received my letter. I addressed it to the Colorado Mountain Club with instructions to hold it until called for. I had hoped you would be able to stop and see us on your way east, but evidently we didn't make connections.

I appreciated your sending the print with the portraits of Savage and of Ottinger. I expect to use it in my history. Did you ever receive the copy of the Kansas Historical Quarterly with my article in it? I have been getting favorable comments on it from several sources. Both the American Photographic Journal and Camera reviewed it nicely, and in addition I have received a number of letters about it, among them letters from Olmstead at the National Museum and from Dellenbaugh.

We couldn't have given you very respectable weather if you had stopped to see us this summer. It was the hottest and driest on record. We were here until late in August and then went on a brief trip to Denver and the Rocky Mountain National Park.

Please write me when you find it convenient. Thanks again for the print.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

January 3, 1935

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 28th St.
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Mrs. Taft and I received your interesting greeting card and wish to thank you for sending it. We are pleased to be numbered among your friends and return your wishes for the New Year, with an added good measure.

I have been busy all fall in writing up my material and making fair progress when it is considered that I cannot put all my time on it. I have finished the first draft of the first three chapters and am working on the fourth. They are, in order: the introduction of daguerreotypy into the United States; the era of the daguerreotype; Talbotypes and the early stage of the collodion process, including ambrotypes; and the family album, which includes the origin and history of the card photographs and tintypes. I am planning, at present, to have nine chapters, all rather long, however. At the rate I am going, it will be summer before it is finished.

I hope you will be able to find time to read it in manuscript form and give me the advantage of your comment and criticism. If you can do this I will send it along in small portions as it is typed. I would appreciate it greatly if you find it convenient to do so.

With kindest regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. JACKSON
FOUR EAST TWENTY-EIGHTH STREET
NEW YORK

January 4, '38-

Dear Mr. Taft:

Glad to get your recent letter and that you are getting on with your book about early days in photography. I don't know if I can help you much but I would like very much to read your manuscript in advance of its publication.

I have just come across an item from "Nature", among my clippings. Hunt says: "The year 1839 is famous for the production of the earliest recorded photograph on paper. This was the work of Henry Fox Talbot who used paper sensitized by means of silver chloride. His book, "The Pencil of Nature", written in 1843, was the first book to be illustrated with photographs."

Does this check in with your reading? I spent the Christmas - New Year week in Detroit with one of my daughters' family and there met the ^{British} Director of the Devon Public Library who had come on there to confer with the owner of my old negatives about

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the purchase of all the westerns for
the Denver Library - I think I have
helped to pay the way for the transfer
of many of my acquisitions back to
where they came from -

Old man winter hasn't bothered
as much as you, a few cold days
but no snow to speak of. Plenty
of it "up state" however.

Cordial regards to Mrs. Taft
and the children -

Sincerely yours

H. J. Jackson

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

May 10, 1935

Mr. W. H. Jackson
4 East 28th St.
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I have been slow in getting my manuscript to you, but you will find inclosed the sixth chapter, in which I know you will be especially interested. I wish you would go over this quite critically and make any suggestions that you think would improve it. Errors of omission, commission, or of meaning I wish to correct before I send it in for publication. You will understand, of course, that I have fully described the various photographic processes in previous chapters.

On page 42 I wish you would note especially the statement made in the last sentence beginning on that page, and the added bibliographic note under No. 303, on the opposite side of page 59.

Thanks again for your many kindnesses of the past and for the present one.

Yours,

Robert Taft

RT:AS

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Jackson - Leigh

W. H. JACKSON
HOTEL LATHAM, 4 EAST 28TH ST.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

May 24, 1935.

Dear Prof. Taft:

I have been pretty busy these last few days before getting away for my annual run-around of the old trails. Dr. Driggs has just completed a new book on Pony Express days which the Stokes will bring out in August. The title is "The Mail Goes through" and I am providing, in all, some 50 illustrations for it- ten in color. ~~The~~ others, head and tail sketches for each chapter and I am now rushing these along so that I can get away by June 10th. Dr. Driggs, born in Utah, was personally acquainted with many riders of the western end of the line and is telling their individual experiences rather than an historical narration.

The above, with some other activities, explains why I have been so long in reviewing "Photographing the Frontier". I have found it delightfully interesting and shall anticipate its publication with still greater interest.

Your research work has been quite thorough and many facts have come to light that I have not been acquainted with and I am glad to find them here, and, no doubt, your statement as to possible existing old diaries or letters may bring them to light.

In reading through the manuscript I made the following notes, none of particular importance and which you might catch yourself on final revision:

Referring to the opinions of Ives and Simpson, p. 13-14, as to the failure of photography in rendering landscape adequately, I think the trouble comes from the expectation that far distant, hazy ranges should show up as plainly as near by objects. The photographer knew the limitations of his process but the commanders gave it no consideration

Probably you have noticed that on the last line of p. 17, Stephens should be Stevens. ✓

I was much interested in the story of Savage's wagon on p. 23. He started out from Nebraska City with it only a few days after I did with my "bull outfit". I haven't the day of his arrival in Salt Lake, but he must have passed us somewhere on the road without my knowing it.

P. 29, Carbutt's assistant, "Hein," must be the T. J. Hine of Chicago, who probably did most of Carbutt's work for I do not think Carbutt, himself, was much of a photographer. ✓

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P.35, O'Sullivan, photographing for Wheeler in 1873-4, did some photographing of the old cliff ruins in Canyon de Chelly, (various spellings of this name) source of the Chin-li, an affluent of the San Juan. He did not photograph the Chaco region. That was reserved for my failure with Warneke's roll film in 1877.

P.40, "Jackson Canyon" is not a canyon at all, just a big gulch, or "draw" in the mountain side. Not worth the attention given it. Just west of the Mt. of the Holy Cross is Mt. Jackson, a 13,000 ft. peak, which, locally, is said to have been named for me on account of my work in that region. I must find out sometime from the Geographic Board in Washington, if this is so. There was another Jackson, Geo. A., well known in Colorado's Annals as one of the early miners of the Clear Creek region, whose name appears in several places about the state.

In your last paragraph the Washburn party is named as the first authoritative explorers of the Yellowstone region in 1870. In September of 1869 the so called Cook-Folsom party from Montana made much the same trip as the Washburn party, an account of which was printed in the "Western Monthly" of Chicago. It was the report of this party which inspired the Washburn party.

P.42, Last paragraph: There were several photographers working in the Front Range west of Denver, including the Rocky Mountain National Park region, the most prominent of whom was Robert Collier, (Before my time, for several years. His son, of the same name, is a member of the Colorado Mountain Club of Denver. While not of wide range the work of the elder Collier was of the highest quality.

P. 45 and elsewhere- General Custer was named George A., instead of E. B. ✓

P.47, If You think it worth while I can send you a complete inventory of my first outfitting for a long trip, which included material for printing and finishing of photographs, of some 60 items

Note 270. In one of the Fremont Memoirs, I don't remember which, are steel engravings lettered as made direct from daguerreotypes. One, in particular, Huerfano Butte, is where Carvalho and assistants got left behind in making the picture.

For many years, contemporaneously with Bradley & Rulofson, Taber was also a leading photographer of San Francisco, specializing more particularly in landscape work. I have understood it was he who bought the last of the Watkins negatives some time in the late 80s

In the first photographing of the Yellowstone I presume you have kept in mind my statement in the first two lines on p.111 of The Pioneer Photographer.

Dellenbaugh, (297), was 81 at his passing on.

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Your work has been done so well, in this section of it that I have been privileged to read, that there is little criticism to make.

Amateurs

I have had the opinion heretofore, without data to confirm it, that both Hutton and Ives experimented with the daguerreotype. The 50s was a transition period of some years before the final adoption of collodion. To explorers the daguerreotype had some advantages in lighter apparatus, fewer chemicals, and for beginners, more facility in operation. On the other hand, the daguerreotype, itself, was of little use, serving only as a means for making other kinds of pictures. Your reading has been more careful than *mine* of the old reports and if you have found wet plate chemicals mentioned that settles it.

I expect to spend some time this summer on the Kansas end of the "Pony Route", but whether at the beginning or end of the season is not determined as yet. I will let you know if I get in your neighborhood at any time.

With kind remembrances for your little family I remain-

Sincerely yours

M. Jackson