

#### Robert Taft general correspondence

**Section 3, Pages 61 - 90** 

Rober Taft (1894-1955) was a professor of chemistry, author, historian, and editor at the University of Kansas. The general correspondence letters of Mr. Taft consist of letters between various organizations and people.

Date: 1918-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll.#172, Box 1-2

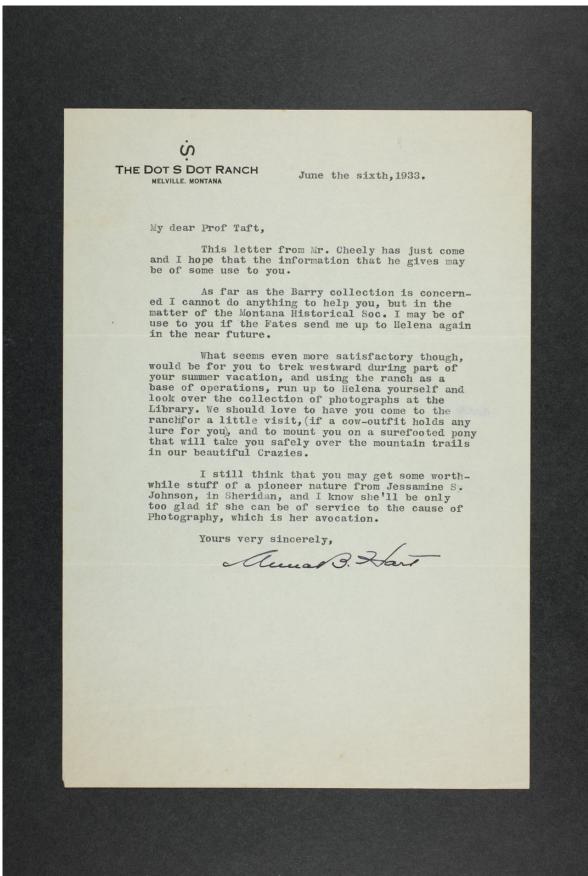
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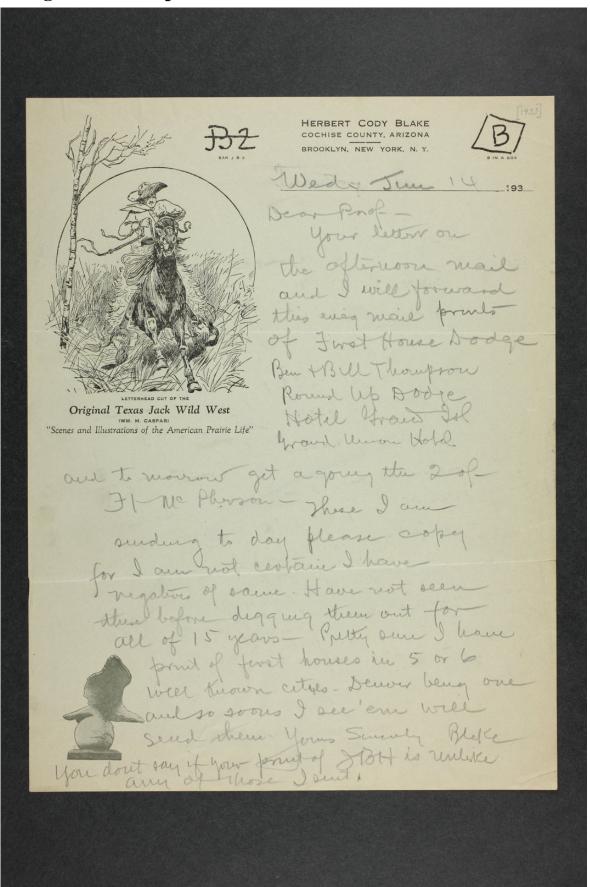
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# KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

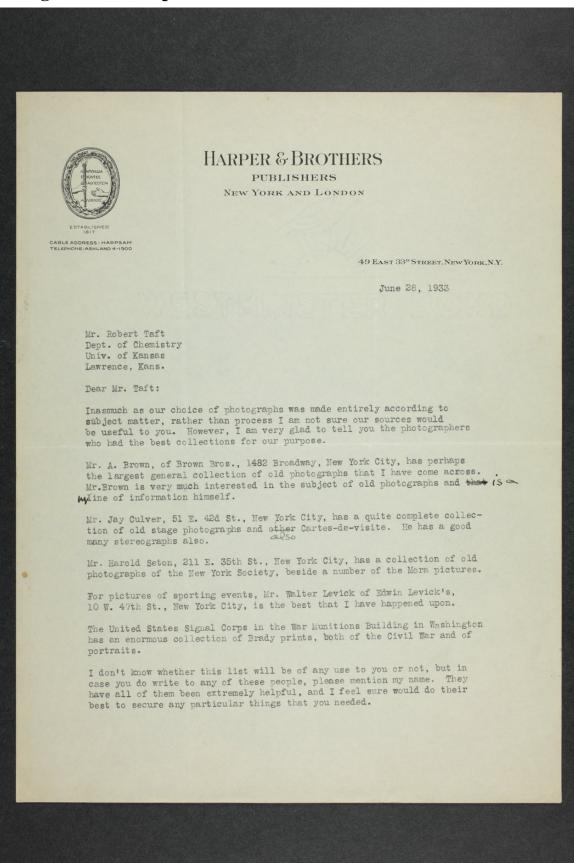




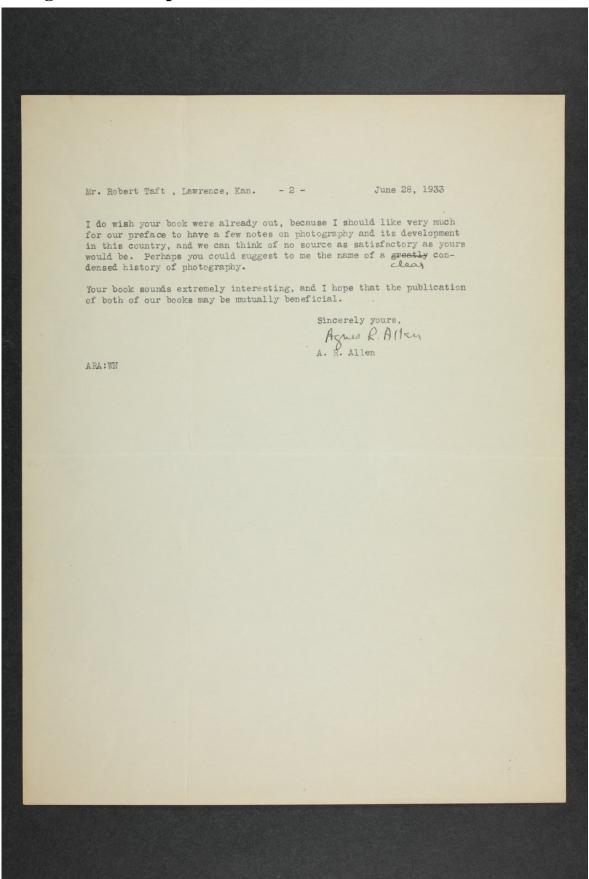






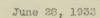








#### Robert Taft general correspondence



Outline for Study Financed by National Research Council

In most of the previous studies on addition agents in our laboratory detailed examination of the effect of a single addition agent upon a particular metal has been made. For this particular study I wish to make an examination of the effect of a number of addition agents upon the mass and micro structure of electrodeposited copper and silver.

The study should proceed along the following lines: a standard plating bath such as is used in commercial plating work is to be spected and operated at commercial current densities. Electrolyses (in duplicate) of as many cells in series as can be conveniently handled should be carried out at constant temperature (30°C.). Each pair of cells should contain a different addition agent (save, of course, the control pair). The addition agents I wish to examine are as follows: gelatine, ising-glass, haemoglobin, elbumen, gum arabic, sodium cleate (?), dextrin, tannin (?), sodium nitrate, sodium chlorate, urea, acetone, aldehyde (formic or sectic), — turnone, quinoline, salicylaldehyde, nitrobenzene, sodium nitrite, sodium bromate, sodium idate. Not all of these can be used, due to lack of solubility or to interfering reactions, but in the absence of any data this must be determined qualitatively.

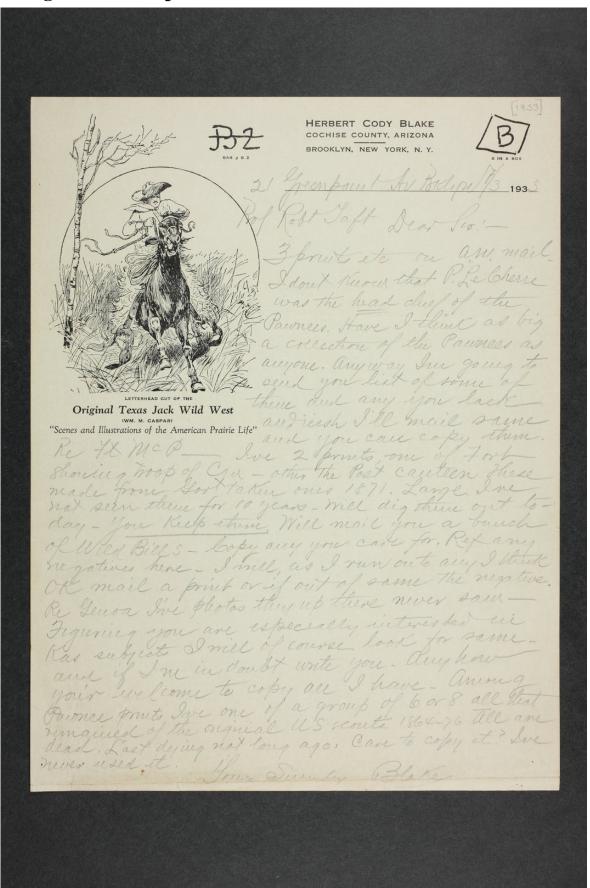
The concentrations of the addition agents will probably have to be determined by trial, but as a starter I would suggest 0.1% weight per cent for the colloidal substances and 0.1 M. for those whose molecular weights are known. A pair of copper coulometers should be included in the circuit for the trials with the copper plating baths.

Possibly a second temperature (90 C.) will be tried as temperature plays a rather large part in addition agent action.

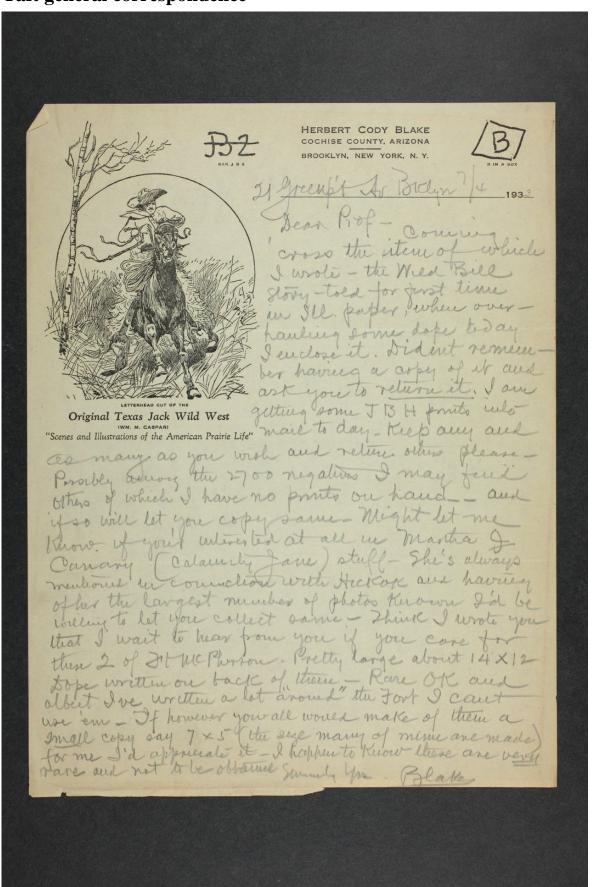
The data desired are (a) the masses of the deposits (to fourth decimal) and (b) the form, both macroscopic and microscopic.

I am especially desirous of securing an extensive knowledge of the form. For this reason, the deposite should be photographed at at least two magnifications, and possibly again after polishing and etching. The same treatment should be accorded controls.

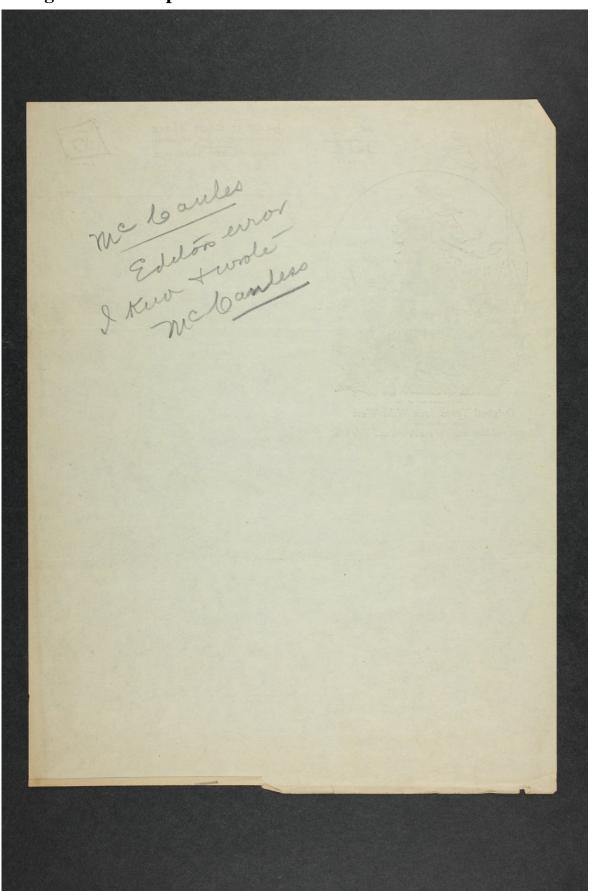




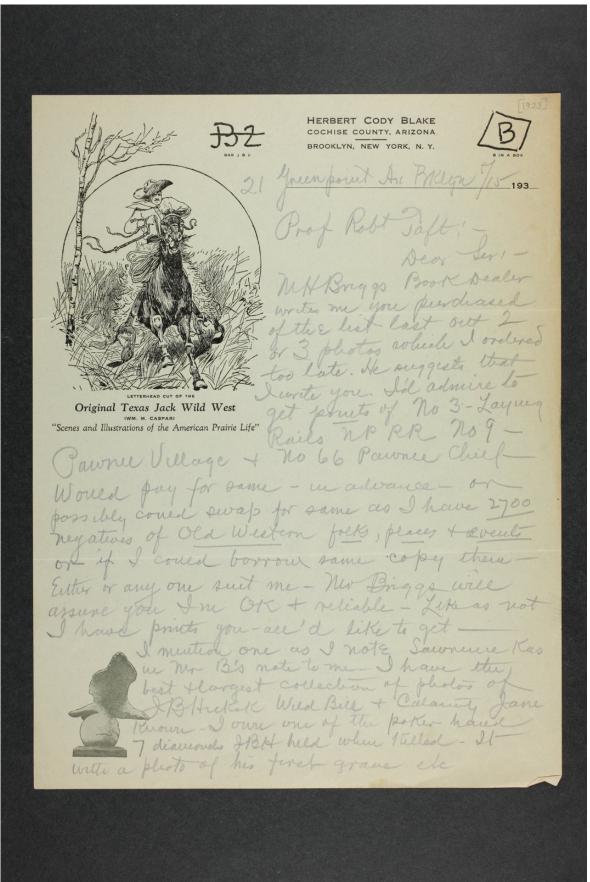




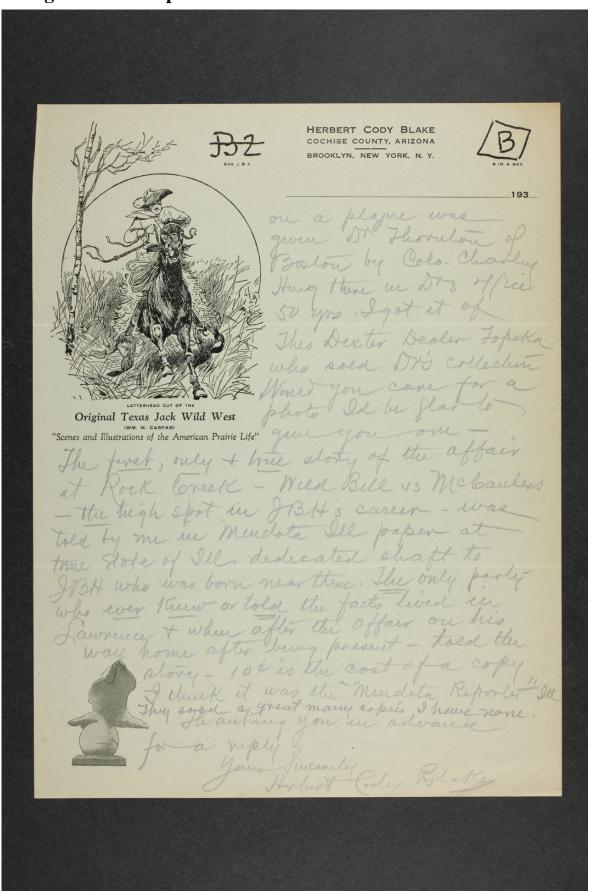




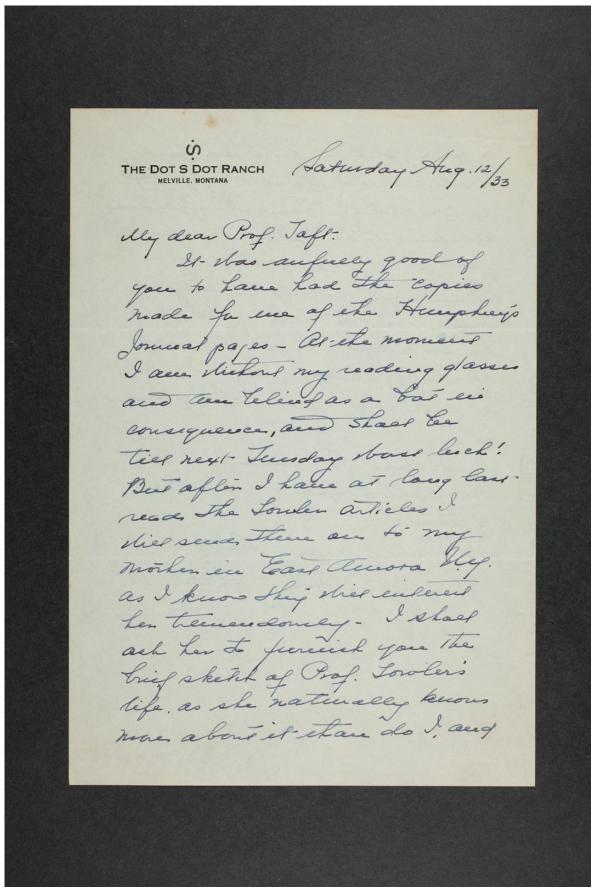




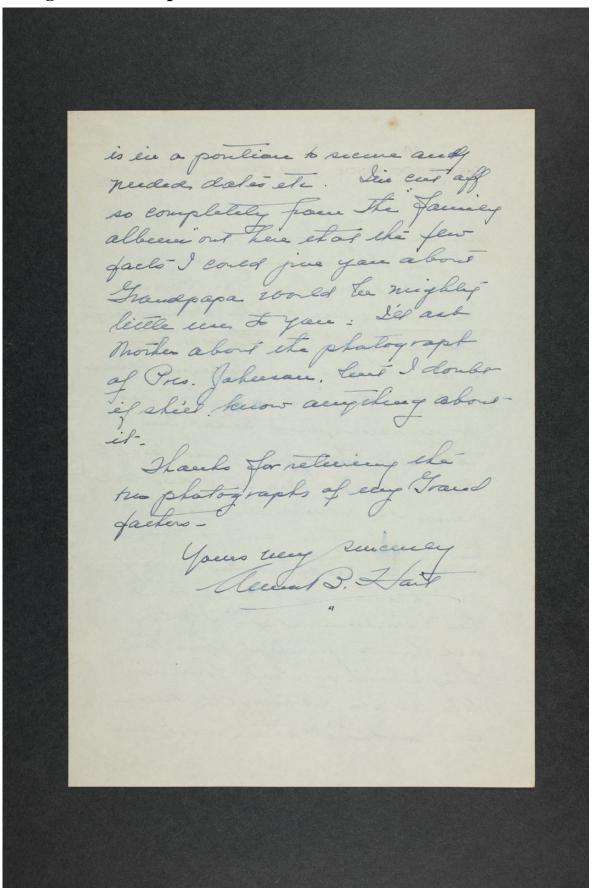




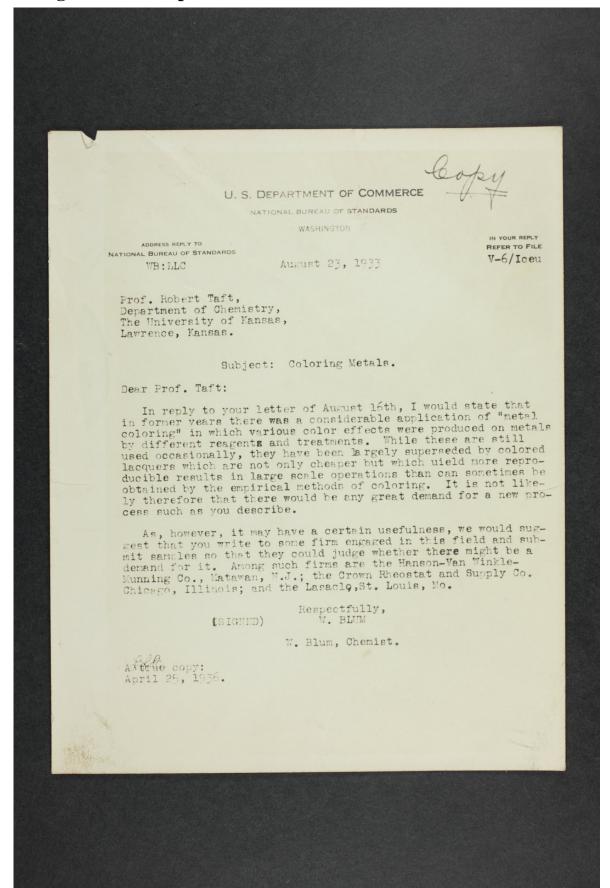














#### **Robert Taft general correspondence**

October 10, 1933

Mr. B. B. Snowden The Agfa Ansco Corp. Binghampton, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Snowden:

You may recall that I wrote you some time ago concerning my proposed history of American photography. This history has been planned to cover the firld of types of photographs and photographic personalities, rather than a detailed history of photographic processes, i.e., a book for the layman and historian. The chapter headings I have planned at present are as follows:

- The Daguerrectype in America
   The Introduction of Photograp
   The Ambrotype
   The Tintype
   Stereographs The Introduction of Photography on Glass

- 5. Stereographs
  6. Carte-de-Visite Photographs
  7. The Cabinet Photograph
  8. Miscellaneous Types: Carbon Transparencies, Crayon and Imperial Photographs, Crystallotypes, etc.
  9. Photo-Mechanical Processes
  10. Early Western Photography
  11. The Positiving of the Dry Plate Fra

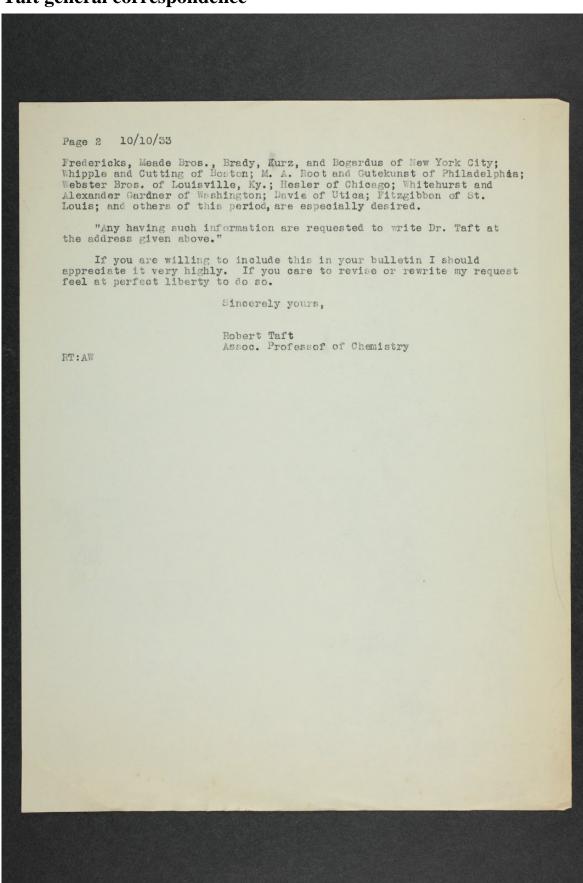
- 11. The Beginning of the Dry Plate Era

I am obtaining my information from a systematic examination of the early American photographic books and journals, especially Humphrey's Journal, The Photographic and Fine Art Journal, and the Philadelphia Photographer; from an examination of popular contemporary journals; and from correspondence (now amounting to many hundreds of letters) from the families and descendants of early day photographers.

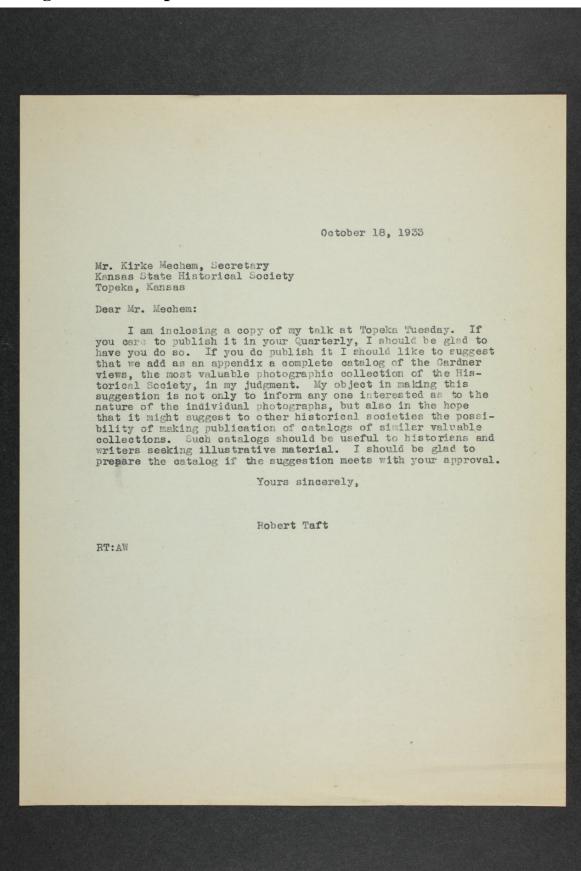
I am describing my project in considerable detail as I wish further help from you. Would it be possible to include in your Agfa Ansco News a brief request for further information along the lines of my study? I realize that I am making a request for free advertising, but, on the other hand, I believe my history when completed will be a valuable contribution to a neglected field of photographic literature. The request that I have in mind might read as follows:

"Dr. Robert Taft, Chemistry Department, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, is preparing a history of American photography and desires the cooperation of any who may be interested in this project. Any who have first-hand information concerning prominent photographers and their work during the period 1840-1880 are requested to communicate with Dr. Taft. Authentic biographical data concerning Plumbe, Gurney,











#### Robert Taft general correspondence

December 9, 1933

Mrs. Agnes R. Allen Harper and Brothers, Publishers New York City

Dear Mrs. Allen:

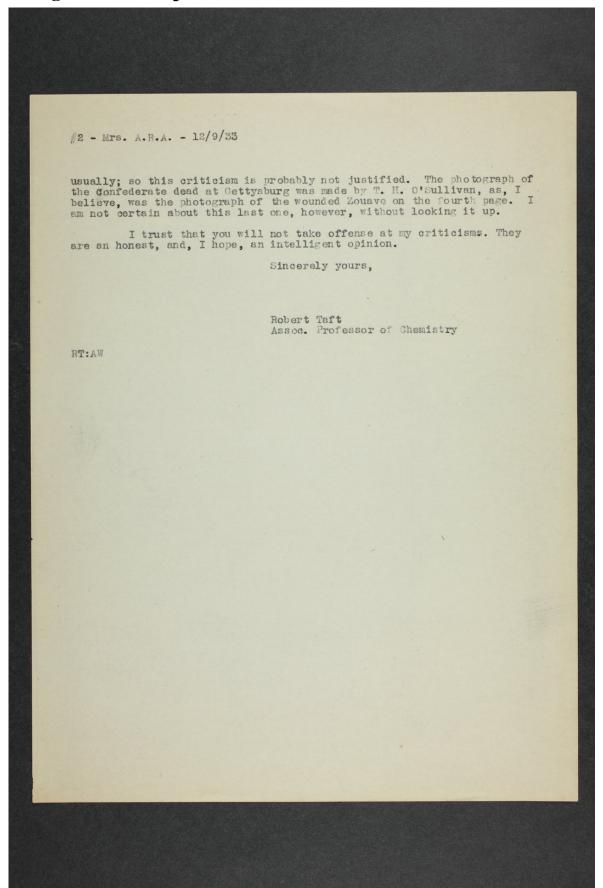
Please allow me to congratulate you on your excellent book, "The American Procession." I have read and examined it with a great deal of pleasure and profit. I can realize the amount of time and effort that you and your husband must have expended and also the satisfaction which results when an important but unknown photograph is found. One almost feels like a discoverer at times!

Where did you obtain the little print on the title page and who and "when" are they? I have been looking for a similar photograph for some time. Although I have a number of sketches and woodcut prints of head rests, I do not have an actual photograph which shows the instrument so plainly as the one you have. It is interesting to see a portion of the rests appear occasionally in portraits of this period.

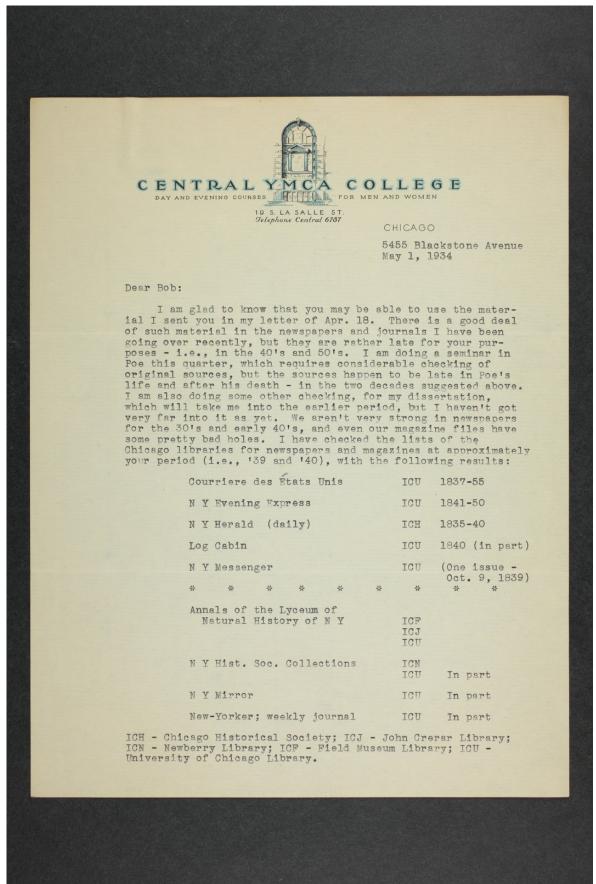
I have two minor criticisms to make of your book, and they are offered entirely as constructive criticisms, in case you have occasion to revise it. The first of this deals with the statement in the preface relative to the use of the daguerreotype for portrait purposes. It is true that most of the familiar daguerreotypes are portraits, but view pictures were extensively made. As a matter of fact, Daguerre himself at first thought that only views or still life could be recorded. Very large view daguerreotypes were made, some as large as 16" x 12". For example, there is a very excellent reproduction of a beautiful daguerreotype of Niagara Falls made in July of 1850, which appeared in Photo-Era for September, 1912. It is true that the number of such view daguerreotypes is limited, but there must be in the museums of this country a number of such pictures. The most important historically of such daguerreotypes of which I have any record are some 300 full plate (6 1/2" x 8 1/2") daguerreotypes made by R. H. Vance in California in 1849 and 1850. These were on exhibition in New York City in the fall of 1859. (The New York Public Library has a partial catalog of this set.) Among these were views of San Francisco, Capt. Sutter and his saw mill, etc. I do not know whether the set yet exists or not. It was in St. Louis for a time, but after that I have no record. I am corresponding with several individuals in California who have become interested and who possibly can locate some of these daguerreotypes for me.

The second oriticism I had in mind was the matter of crediting the individual photographs to the photographer who made them. Invariably when a painting or drawing is reproduced, credit is given to the originator, and I believe that the same should be true of photographs. I realize, however, how difficult it is to obtain the necessary data,

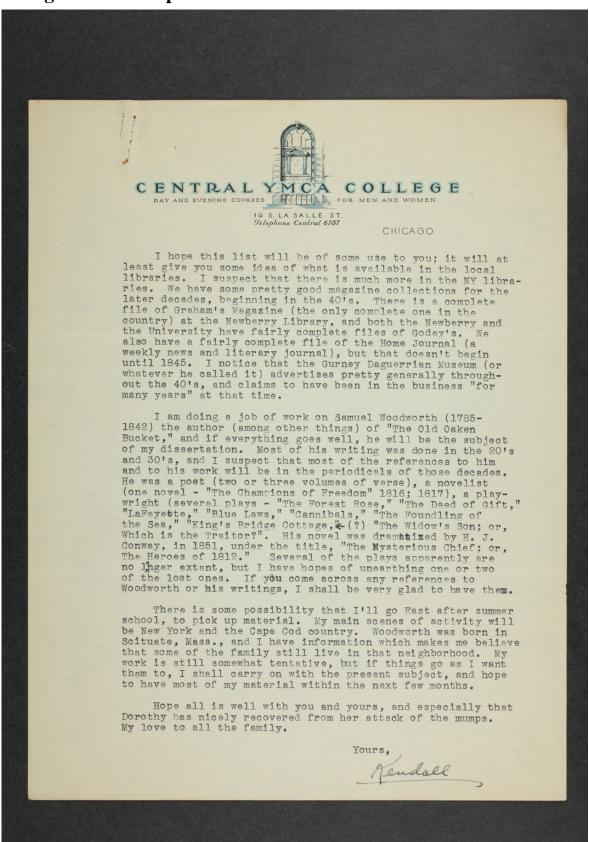














#### Robert Taft general correspondence

July 13, 1934

Mr. John A. Tennant 70 Fifth Ave. New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Tennant:

Thank you for your kind letter concerning my article in the Kansas Historical Quarterly. I do have in preparation a history of American photography and have been collecting material along this line for several years. My sources of information have been the early photographic journals, such as Humphrey's Journal, Snelling's Photographic Art Journal, Am. Journal of Photography, the Philadelphia Photographer, etc. I have examined complete files of all of these journals (with one exception) and have made voluminous notes from these journals as the examination has been a page by page one. Books such as Root's Camera and Pencil, which you mention, have also been very useful sources of such material. Similar books are Werge's Evolution of Photography and Ryder's Voigtlander and I in Pursuit of the Shadow (I am not certain that this is the exact title). The contemporary newspapers and journals, such as Harper's Weekly, have also been examined. I have, too, a very good collection of the early American photographic journals. In addition to these sources of information I have developed a very extensive correspondence with early photographers still living (Horgan, W. H. Jackson, Ives, etc.) or with the descendants of prominent early American photographers. Probably several hundred letters dealing with the personal history of these men have been written and received by me.

I am attempting to get this material in shape for publication, but I do not know when it will be complete. Do you have any suggestion of sources of information other than those I have mentioned above?

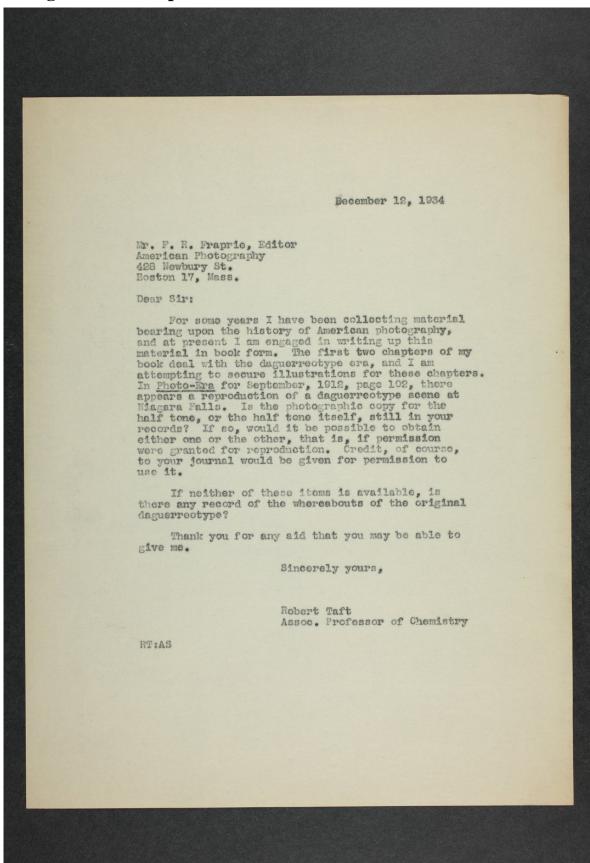
Thank you again for your interest and for any help that you can give me.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Taft Assoc. Professor of Chemistry

RT: AS







#### Robert Taft general correspondence



AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY
PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY
AMERICAN ANNUAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

December 27, 1934.

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

Dear Professor Taft:

Everybody concerned with the editing of PHOTO ERA in 1912 is dead, so that I am afraid it will be impossible for you to get any information in regard to the present whereabouts of the Daguerreotype which you mention. The plate is destroyed, but I think that any competent engraver could make a reasonably good reproduction from the half tone in the magazine, and as far as we are owners of the copyright, which is really ours although it has never been assigned to us, you have our permission to reproduce this with proper credit.

We are interested in the early history of photography ourselves. We have an impression that the first landscape Daguerreotype made in America was made by a physician in Newburyport, Mass., who ground his own lenses and made his own camera in 1839 before any information was generally available in this country. We have not been able to locate the original Daguerreotype, but think it was engraved for historical work. One of our associates, Mr. C. F. Stiles, has done a lot of research work in the early history of Daguerreotypes in New England newspapers.

Yours very truly,

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC PUBLISHING CO.

F. R. Fraprie/McC



#### Robert Taft general correspondence

PHILIP S. HOPKINS
PATENT AND TRADE MARK COUNSEL
65 EXCHANGE STREET
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

January 17, 1935

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

Dear Professor Taft:

After considerable conversation and investigation it now appears that Agfa Ansco does not have the extra set of volumes of the Goodwin film litigation which I had been told they possessed. I have, therefore, sent my set of these volumes to you, they having been sent out from Agfa Ansco yesterday, January 16. I will appreciate your advising me of your receipt of them.

In talking with Mr. Snowden of Agfa Ansco about this matter he mentioned the fact that he has in addition to these volumes quite a collection of clippings about the suit at the time it was pending. If you feel that these clippings would add anything to the information which you are seeking and will let me know, I will ask Mr. Snowden to send them on to you.

Trusting that our delay in sending these volumes to you has not inconvenienced you seriously, I am,

very truly yours

PSH:MW



