

May 26, 1950

Dear John:-

It was a disappointment not to hear from you again on your way back through this way. There are still a number of things to go over in the article that I wanted to discuss with you. I do not like to make too quick judgements and I need to let things soak in awhile to digest them thoroughly. I wrote to Mr. Ortega that there were still several errors in the biographical material which I thought he and I could correct but he prefers to have me do it through you. This has given me still more time to go over the article. When you were here and we were doing so much talking and you were wanting to get off on your trip, I let several things pass which I think we should discuss. As I see the spring issue of the Quarterly is out, I take it that there will be time to get this off to you for your correction and you can mail it in direct. My only worry is catching you, so I shall send this to Taos to be forwarded.

First, let me say again, that I do appreciate all your effort and all that you sum up in my behalf. And as long as we have gone into all this as far as we have we might just as well get it all right, for there are some biographical errors still, so here goes with a page by page correction list.

Page 1. last par. When we corrected the dates we failed to see a discrepancy. "At the age of 13 ***** 1903****. L.G. had to spend thirteen ***** San Francisco Fair 1916.

n.b. This fair was my first real compact with painting and sculpture. The latter influenced me greatly.

Page 3. (I let this one pass, but I think we should correct it.) My father sold his ranch following the cattle slump of 1893 (I think this date correct) and turned to mining in Cripple Creek. We lived in Colo. Springs. There was no returning to the ranch. (We did return to the cattle business in 1911 near Delta Colorado. for a period of five years, but this need not be mentioned.)

Did I give you the idea that I rebelled against school? I dont remember it. I loved it. Some of my marks were poor but not all! (please dont make me out too dumb!)

Painting was
my mother was, bought
as a bride in 1890.

*The White himself was giving away to soft focus which
it was at the school of his administration for the work
8 try to get it.*

I was very bad in latin, but I got 99 in the Bryn Mawr entrance exam. in mathematics. I loved physical geography, and for many years was very absorbed in music. Also I was strong in athletics.

You see, I did not know you were going to go into all this biography so far or I could have given you more that day in Taos. Guess I was just reticent about it. When I went to NY. to the C.H.W. School, I was living with five girls, two of whom were musicians. One a sculptor of note and ever since one of my very best friends, Brenda Putnam. I practised photography on her work, and in so respects was getting away from soft focus right then and there. My association with her developed my sense of form to a great degree. It was all these associations in N.Y. at that time and my music hungry soul that kept me from even thinking about social reforms. I remember well, Mr. White showing us the wonderful work of Hines (The name I was trying to remember when you were here) done at Ellis Island. Also I was too shy and frightened of people to have done such work at that time. If you wish to damn the White school so hard, that is yours to decide. I would not have missed my work under both Clarence White himself nor a course in design under Max Weber for anything. In my opinion design still is and ever will be the basis of all pictures. In the documentary field of photography, those who have this sense the strongest are the best.

Page 5.

The dates and times are wrong in the beginning of my Southwest work. This began in 1925. The work later used in the PUEBLOS dates from this period. Hence those pictures which are soft focus. The Indians that you object to in the ruins at Mesa Verde, were so used to suggest life as it might have been. There was no attempt at portraying Indians as they were in this series. By 1930 or even before I had completely gotten away from soft focus, was using a Protar lens stopped down.

Par. 2. page 5. 20 years after her studies in NY. is wrong. This was seven years, as I worked at CHW sch. for two years.

Page 6.

Par. 3. As my project was to do the book on the ruins of Chichon Itza which has been cleared of jungle how could I have done it buried in the jungle? I was able to suggest that it had been in a few pictures by the use of trees.

Now we come the RIO GRANDE. You are naturally judging it from your own point of view, sociology. That is quite O.K. BUT this was never intended for a sociological book. The Preface states it is the portrait of the river and the land through which it flows with but a glimpse of the life along. It would take a three volume book to do both. I minimized man in the picture because his sojourn along the river is infinitesimal in the LIFE OF THE RIVER. Now a question, why did you skip New Mexico and the mid-stream section completely without mention?

Page 7, last par. Does my concept break down? The Texas end is NOT where man has made the greatest use of the river. There is more land under irrigation in the San Luis Valley than there is the delta area. In thinking over your criticisms on this part of the book, I am wondering if you really do know all that border section. With the exception of the industry in El Paso, which I included in the book, the industrial centers of Texas are not in the Rio Grande Valley. Someone will come back at you for this John, so be careful. The big agricultural development in the delta area is barely twenty years old, whereas here in New Mexico is several hundred and in Colorado nearly one hundred. The people who belonged in the south Texas area were stockmen who have pretty much been moved out. The people there now, most of them have moved in from Iowa, ^{many} of the farming states north, and are a heterogeneous mixture with little or no thought of the history of the river, or the thought thereof. Now in the book I have the Anglo irrigator, the Indian irrigator, the Mexican irrigator, and show how the water was pumped out of the river for the newly developed delta area. I have the harvests; the chief crops of each section of the river; Potatoes in the San Luis Valley, wool and cotton in New Mexico, ~~Grapefruit and garden~~ produce in the delta. In a book of this size I could do no more AND AT THE SAME TIME do what the book was about, show the country and the river. That last section may be colorless. By comparison with the country up here it is. Where I think I have failed the most seriously is in Mexico, for the river belongs half to Mexico from El Paso down. And I was just too late to get a huge new agricultural boom that is getting underway right now in the Delta area in Mexico. This will put more land under irrigation from the river in Mexico than there is in Texas. I deeply wish I had had more material from Mexico, but there again there were limits to the size of the book. In a book of this size only the highlights as I saw them could be included. It was too big an undertaking to get into detail

Call in west Texas.

all along the way. Also this book does not even make the slightest attempt ~~at~~ any contemporary social problem, as it is intended to be the physical aspects of the river and its historic background. The social aspects as I see it, would be another book entirely, and even more than one book. I go into all this in detail for I wonder if I made myself clear to you on what was the intention both of myself and my publisher in doing just what I did. Please don't think I am minding your criticism for I do not. I have known full well it would come from many sources, and it has. Some day I shall put all these criticisms together and find out what it sums up to! It will be interesting, for each critic sees ~~only their~~ ^{his} own line and ~~then~~ quite justifiably sails into that. All these help me to sharpen my own judgements and so I am grateful.

I hope you had a good trip east and that you will enjoy Nova Scotia and your job there. I shall be greatly interested to see what you do.

I enclose the carbon copy of the article which you left with me so that you can make what changes you wish and send it back to Mr. Ortega. I am ~~writing~~ ^{writing} him that I am doing this.

Again my appreciation for your summing up of L.G. I hope she proves worth it!. My best to Mary and yourself

Most sincerely