

Nov 28.52

Dear Minor White:-

Here is the article. It may be too long so cut it as you see fit.

I am very grateful for your answer to my museum questions. The way you printed 35mm at the MMA is what I first proposed to the boss but he didnt want to cut the rolls. It is a satisfaction to have you back me without knowing it. Considering where you worked on a similar project, perhaps will help solve the empass. I hadnt thought of Jimmy Cohn. Of-course I know him: he is a C.R.White student along with L.G. Wonder why he didnt come to the conference?

Glad you killed the pictures in Arizona highways. I have in HOUSE & GARDEN. It was very carefully composed for the cover and then used as a frontispiece! Looks to me as though my confreres will think my camera slipped! However it is fine reproduction.

I thought Dody Warren's article most excellent! I dont know her, but do tell her so for me.

With the best of wishes,

Nov. 28, 1952.

It was with a deep sense of disappointment that I heard the news that there would be no conference on Photography at Aspen, Colorado in 1952. All those who were present in October of 1951 share this view, I am certain, and I am equally certain that those photographers who were not there and who have advocated holding this conference in New York, simply do not understand just what happens at Aspen. This is true in every field of endeavor on which a conference has been held in this unique spot. It seems to me that the answer is fairly simple. But first let us have a little background for these conferences.

Mr. Walter Paepke of Chicago is the founder of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. With great vision and understanding, he has organized this Institute based on the need for advanced individuals in various fields of activity gather for proper and leisurely discussion and communication. The setting of Aspen is unique and ideal for such conferences. Similar gatherings in a big city could not possibly yield the same results. The simple answer, as I see it, is that by getting such groups of individuals together AT A DISTANCE FROM THEIR WORKING BASES, where all their time can be given to thought and discussion of their separate fields, a magical intercourse takes place when threads of thought are not broken by diversions. It is stimulating beyond belief. Here in the high mountains of Colorado's superb scenery, the gathering together of the top workers in a given profession meet for a week or ten days with nothing to do but exchange their thoughts. Here too, the veneers of city life are stripped off and the individual emerges in his true light. Formalities drop, false standards cease to exist, and each individual gets down to the business of the fundamental thoughts and problems of his chosen field. Housed in the fine old hotel renovated by Mr. Paepke, one begins talking at the breakfast table and doesn't stop until after midnight. Only under such circumstances can one sit with one group for breakfast, another for lunch, and still another for dinner. The sparks fly and the stimulation increases with each passing day. A graphic example of this was told me by Mr. Paepke in 1951. That year there was a conference on philosophy. Many noted men and women from all over this country, Canada and perhaps other countries were present. Mr. Paepke was out very early one morning and found two Canadian members of the Conference taking a vigorous walk. He commented on their early hour ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ and they answered "At Mr. Paepke, we cannot sleep!" He inquired if they found the

altitude too stimulating. They answered, "Oh no, it is only that we cannot sleep for thinking of all that we wish to discuss with these many noted men. For years we have wanted such an opportunity and now how can we possibly discuss all that we wish in the space of one short week?"

The planned discussions and talks on photography were intensely interesting, but even more than these were the personal talks with all those present following the lines commenced by these programs. Herein lay the greatest value, as each individual responded with a different line of thought. This could happen elsewhere, but not with such relaxed informality and feeling of genuineness. This is all difficult to describe; one had to be there fully to understand. Something magical is happening at Aspen. That Photography has been privileged to be one of the Conferences is noteworthy. To lose this privilege would be a calamity. Throughout the past year I have found myself constantly thinking of talks with Dorothea Lange, with Beaumont Newhall, with Ansel Adams, Bernice Abbott, Minor White, Paul Vanderbilt, John Morris, Nancy Newhall, Will Connell and others. Only under the informal, close relationship that was our good fortune to enjoy, can such beneficial exchange of thought take place. It couldn't possibly happen in any big city, and there are few places anywhere, where all conditions are so ideally blended as they are at Aspen. I recall one person coming from the meeting at which plans for 1952 were discussed. With great excitement he commented "This is the most important day in the history of Photography."

If all those present in 1951 felt the great benefit of that conference as I did, we should make every effort to renew this beginning and help to build it into PHOTOGRAPHY'S most important event. We know what Aspen is and what it does, the skeptics will follow, it was the most stimulating experience it has ever been my good fortune to share. As Dorothea Lange commented:- "one must earn the privilege to take part in such a gathering."