

Alfred A. Cohn

PHOTOGRAPHY

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4373 N. Swan Rd.
Tucson, Ariz. 85718.

Dear Laura,

It does'nt seem possible that it has taken me these many months to get around to thanking you for the lovely Christmas card and your good wishes.

Coming back from St Paul just before Christmas I found it impossible to come thru Sante Fe because of the heavy snows - and so missed seeing you both. Now you seem so very very far away. Suddenly I have become tired of the long trek between here and Minnesota, and do not look forward to making the trip again by car in the near future, but even as I write this I know that it is quite possible that I may be coming your way this summer to join my son and his family on a camping trip somewhere in the midwest. If so I will be sure to come thru Sante Fe and stop by to say hello. It would seem that whenever we come your way we are more than in a reasonable hurry and never have a decent time to visit.

For some reason time has been flying by at a great rate, I have always prided myself on living leisurely, but now that I am older it would seem as if I begrudged myself every fleeting hour as if I realized that there is so much I want to do and so little time to do it in. Not that it is so important that I complete all these minor projects I have set myself to, but just that I no longer have the energy to daily tackle all the work I plan on. Just at this time I have been working on the handicraft films we made in Europe several years ago; they have kept me from resting - so much time is necessary for me to edit them. This is a new field for me and one that I am hardly adept at. In fact I have always found that in photography I have done things the hard and long way! Last night I showed the almost completed film on Sardinia to Tad Nichols. He liked it but felt it was too short. That is a great compliment as I find I am frequently bored by over-long films. I showed it with a trial sound track; one that I had narrated and combined myself. It makes the film much more alive but needs much polishing. And I have at least three more films to do in the near future. I feel that now that I have learned the technique somewhat the others may go more rapidly.

Then, for goodness knows what reason, I undertook to do a series of book illustrations for a children's book by Ann Nolan Clark (who I believe you know). She lives about twenty miles from our home and we have spent many pleasant hours discussing the new book. Originally it was to be in black and white, but at the last minute the editor at Viking Press decided on color. I am not too fond of color, and really do not feel that children would find it any more attractive than good black and white pictures. It is a story about quail and I am having to learn new techniques once more. It is fascinating work however and the only difficulty is that I will have to work here thru the hot summer, and all of it outdoors of course. Thus far we have set up a feeding station just outside our dining room window and do some shooting with a telephoto lens (300 mm on a 35 mm camera)! Most of the time I just love to watch the birds and small animals thru the long focus lens, but the birds are not too co-operative about conforming with the story line....

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Mrs Clark has told us a good deal about her most interesting life with the Indian Department. She is still very active and is working on new books at this time, one of them a history of this Arizona region. She finds that there have been so many myths and untruths written that it is difficult for her to unearth the truth. I know how she feels....all thru my life I have struggled to separate the news from the truth, and to-day this is more so than ever before. All the information we get is "canned" and very little of it bears the mark of authenticity from a sincere and dedicated newsgatherer. Books and some magazine seem to be much more reliable sources of whats actually happening in the world. I really do not think that conditions are any worse than during my lifetime, but of course we get much more information from remote areas of the world because of improved communications.

Have you seen Eliot's book on Baja California? I saw an exhibit of prints from his transparencies (which I hear he did not make himself) which were quite disappointing; they were much inferior to the reproductions in the book. And speaking of books....are we to have the pleasure soon of seeing your book completed? I hope the same thing doesn't happen to me in the way of delays before actual publication.

We are in good health. We hope to hear news of an improvement in your condition - last time we saw you you were hobbling about on crutches. Is your condition better? Margaret is leaving here for St Paul on Tuesday. She will attend a 40th college alumni re-union at Carleton and also visit with her mother. Mother is 97, living in a nursing home, almost completely blind, and yet, quite cheerful. Father Hummel died last winter while we were in St Paul but Mother doesn't seem to miss him too much. These visits are very hard on Margaret because, actually, she can do very little to comfort her Mother.

I hope you can find time to drop us a line and bring us up to date on your book, your health and future plans. And of course we are interested in hearing how Betsy is getting on. I have always hoped that some day you might be able to come to Tucson and be our guest for a long stay - we would be more than happy to have you, and I am sure you'd enjoy our desert, preferably not in the hot summer.

Much love to you and Betsy from Margaret and
yours most cordially, *Jimmie*

Please forgive the typewriter, but it is quite painful for me to use a pen for more than a few words.

I am very happy to have your beautiful picture of the church.