

Monday 30th 1963
Sept or Oct.

Dear Stu,

Let me tell you before I go on that hardly ever have I been so moved ~~by~~ by photographs as I was with your last batch. You have a sensitivity for excellent composition and a nose for sniffing out great subjects. Later on in this letter I'll tell you a great complement given your pictures by a mutual friend of ours.

But Stuart, the negros on the front porch!!!! and the negro in the blue shirt!!!! You said they cry out for oils. No! they cry out for tempera and I'm starting to paint some in that most difficult of mediums. Careful study has to go into a Tempera - detailed preparatory drawings then water color studies then perhaps oil studies. I have about a four month project ahead of me, and I pray that I can capture what you got in those pictures.

Today I ~~am~~ am very tired because ~~you~~ yesterday at 2:00 o'clock AM. Ronald, his family and myself took a trip down to Middletown Virginia to visit John Chumley and his family. Stuart the country I passed through would have knocked your eye out. I was in five states; New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, a nice trip wouldn't you say? John has just bought a huge Georgian house built in 1790 that is in pretty bad condition and he's fixing it up. Stu, the things in that old house would knock your eye out. The house is set in one of the most beautiful stretches of country I've ever seen - on a hill among rolling green hills and flaming woods all set in the smack dab middle of the Shenandoah valley, with mountains all around. He originally bought just the ~~house~~ land and the house came with it - free. He owns about 200 acres

and there a clear mountain stream that passes through it. The stream has been dammed up to form a small mill race and on that is the foundation of a mill built in 1740 which he's going to restore. Also on his land are the ruins of 2 log cabins each a couple of hundred years old and an old grave yard with white and slave graves some dating back to 1750 and including a revolutionary war soldier. I can never tell all this in writing so I'll have to wait until I see you. His place is located just a few miles from the battle ground of Cedar Creek. I didn't get to see that.

When we were traveling down there we stopped at Harper's ferry and looked around. Stuart that was one of the scariest places I've ever been. We were there at about seven in the morning in a fog and drizzling rain. The old buildings and streets remain virtually unchanged and the views are unsurpassed. Ronald took some good photos and we drove around some of the surrounding country - the old arsenal is no longer in the city but has been moved to a Negro College upon a hill nearby. We saw it. And after an hour of sight seeing we crossed the Potomac into Virginia. In a small town we passed through I read a sign on and on an old courthouse that said "John Brown was tried here" and there was the wagon they ~~had~~ took him to the scaffold in. Stuart there are historical signs and markers everywhere - old taverns and meeting houses. Then we passed within 5 miles of the battle field of Antietam but didn't see it. Don't you hate me? Next time we go to John's we are going to stop there and spend a few hours. We were also very close to Gettysburg. We crossed the Shenandoah and went into The Valley, ~~then~~

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I showed John your last photos and he went absolutely
Apeshit. When he came to the old hunchback
woman in the graveyard and the picture of tombstones
he asked me every detail about them. He called
your pictures great and when he came to the pictures
of the blue shirted man on the porch and the woman
his breathing took a sudden leap and a look of
longing came over him. God he wanted to paint those.
And if he had never told he didn't paint from photographs
I'm sure he would have asked me to lend him those and
it was with the greatest fortitude that he gave
them back to me. Aint that a complement. I
imagine that he was thinking "that little bastard
will probably screw them up" and he's probably
right but time will tell.

Not only so I plan to do paintings from them
but etchings as well. When I first saw those
pictures my breathing, heart, viscera etc. took a
severe jolt. If you keep up with quality like that
I would say to you "to hell with being a lawyer be
a photographer" and this summer for sure I'm going
to get you started with watercolors and drawing and
that aint going to be nothing you can do. Also for risking
your life for these pictures you will be amply rewarded
by many Gentling originals. How's that.

Stu I must go now if I'm going to school today.
I've had a terrible sore throat and a slight cold
but things seem to be looking up. Mother still
hasn't shipped my trunk with my oils in it and
I'm getting pretty burned up about it otherwise
I'm fine, in good spirits and with plenty of work ~~to~~ to do
Work hard and take pictures.

Scott