

April 4, 1962.

Mrs. James Ward Thorne,
232 East Walton Place,
Chicago,
Illinois.

Dear Mrs. Thorne:

Treasures of the Vatican arrived in fine shape with its handsome gift wrapping and your card and I spent several delightful hours with it on Saturday and Sunday. It is the picture book par excellence and will bear endless viewings. Never before have color reproductions had such virtues of depth and dimension, while the black and white photographs have a superiority all their own which marks a new triumph in the field of half-tone illustrations where so much progress has been made during the last few years.

To say I am grateful to you for this book is not to say enough. Added to the beauty of the gift was the element of surprise which accompanied its arrival and I wish to thank you again for your interest and understanding.

The forty-seven photographs of Rome by James Macpherson, made about 1857, and which you gave us, have already put us on the photographic map. George Eastman House is organizing an exhibition demonstrating the development of photography as an expressive medium. This show is also to give some idea of photographic collections in the United States and will be circulated by The American Federation of Arts for one year. They have appealed for loans and were much surprised to find that we owned so many of the rare Macpherson views. I have sent four so that they may make a choice of what is most suitable and I am pleased we will be represented by this unusual accession which is, of course, due to your assistance.

I hope you will find time someday to stop at the print study room for a few words. For some time now I have wanted to make a statement of my photographic credo, but have not been able to find the time. An article by Brude Downs has done this for me and strangely seems to have taken the words out of my mouth. I have received several copies of the Annual in which it appeared and am mailing one to you, hoping you will read this excellent essay. It will come to you under separate cover.

Tonight I shall return to Treasures of the Vatican which will occupy me for many evenings to come.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

May 10, 1962.

Mrs. James Ward Thorne,
232 East Walton Place,
Chicago,
Illinois.

Dear Mrs. Thorne:

Your gift was received and soon after that the Walker Evans photographs arrived, so I have a great deal for which I want to thank you. Mr. Evans made a beautiful and carefully considered selection of thirty prints (I had not expected more than twenty-five), so that now we have the finest representation of his work outside his own collection.

I owe all of my taste and predilection for photography to my first experience of his pictures in 1939. It has been one of my greatest satisfactions to see these masterpieces of photography become classics. And if he is uncompromising in regard to his work and almost fanatical in preserving his integrity, I feel we are more than rewarded because these characteristics undoubtedly give it some of that singleness and decidedly American strength which he has never allowed to be vulgarized or cheapened. I have never seen such beautiful, unpretentious quality of photographic craftsmanship as is demonstrated in the photographs you have made it possible for us to own. I look forward to your seeing them. We are having special mats made for them and I shall be happy to see them included in our survey show (the next exhibition). Then, when we are in our new galleries, there will be a special showing of the entire group.

The Committee on Prints and Drawings met day before yesterday and now the addition of these photographs to the collection is the most important event in its short history. Again I must mention how much this means to me, not only as a personal matter, but also as an incentive and inspiration for better photography in Chicago.

I hope you will find time to visit us before long. With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

May 17, 1968.

Mrs. James Ward Thorne,
232 East Walton Place,
Chicago,
Illinois.

Dear Mrs. Thorne:

Recently I have had two photographs submitted for addition to our collection, one of which is most desirable. Both of them are by the famous Victorian, Julia Margaret Cameron, and the one which I feel we should have is of a woman, probably one of the Tennyson family.

Mrs. Cameron's photographs are becoming exceedingly difficult to find. A number of prints from her negatives were made after she left England and these are inferior to the much rarer ones which she made herself. All of Mrs. Cameron's prints are signed and the present photograph is one of these. It is very handsome and I believe you would like it.

I am so fond of it I have become very bold and wish to ask you if you would be interested in adding it to the collection. The price is \$50.00 and is reasonable in view of the fact that one of Mrs. Cameron's portraits was sold at auction in Switzerland few years ago for \$800.00. I shall be very happy to show you this print, if you are interested in seeing it.

I enjoyed your visit with the schools last Saturday and hope you find time to come to the print room again before very long. We are now showing John Nash's The Mansions of England in the Olden Time in the gallery case with one of the original water colors for it.

Yours sincerely,

Rugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

May 22, 1963.

Mrs. James Ward Thorne,
232 East Walton Place,
Chicago,
Illinois.

Dear Mrs. Thorne:

I am more grateful for your gift than I am able to tell you; it is impossible to say how much I wanted to acquire the Julia Margaret Cameron photograph for the collection. Now I hope very much you will come in soon and see it for I ~~feel~~ it harmonizes so well with your collection of books. And certainly it is a handsome addition to our collection of original photographs.

This gift has done much to restore my good spirits, for lately the depletion of the Photography Purchase Fund, with no permanent funds to look forward to, and the small number of interested collectors in this field which is so new, has been a discouraging prospect to face.

With every good wish and hoping to see you again before long.

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

P.S. The display of The Mansions of England in the Olden Time is handsome and has attracted much favorable attention.

September 18, 1965.

Mrs. James Ward Thorne,
232 East Walton Place,
Chicago,
Illinois.

Dear Mrs. Thorne:

Miss Lutz has notified me that you are agreeable to transferring to the Photography Purchase Fund a balance of \$ 736.55 remaining from your exhibition case fund. This will be of much help in the acquisition of certain prints I am anxious to add to the collection and for which no funds have been available. Once more you have rescued the photography collection from one of its difficulties and I am very grateful to you.

As The Art Institute is one of the two museums in the United States which include continuous photography activities in their programs, our exhibitions and the availability of the permanent collection attract many visitors. Of all the prints we have in the collection, the handsome group by Walker Evans, which you gave us, is the one most in demand. Some of these will be shown next month in the important exhibition of American photography which is being organized for showing at Yale University.

I have thought often of you and trust there will be some occasion before long when you will pay us a visit and when I may talk with you. Then I shall be able to tell you more details of the stimulating results of your interest and generosity.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.