

7-21-77

Dear Mrs. Stollweg:

I must confess that I am just unable to adjust to "taping" - every taped I have done is to me a bust. I had to re-write the Al Murray tape 3 to 4 times to get it in some acceptable form.

So what I'm doing is - as you see - to try to respond to the topics or questions you sent to me in longhand or script. The attached response to your sheet of Chudiana questions is a case in point. I have numbered your topics 1 thru 8 - and correspondingly listed my replies 1 thru 8. My replies are attached (stapled). I suggest you read your questions in numerical order & at the same time my replies in that ord (each separately). The Chudiana sheet, now being sent, will be followed soon by the France sheet - then the others. I hope you're in agreement. I also thought you might start on the present sheet (Chudiana) and begin editing - or whatever you saw fit to do. My (style?) is subject to your re-writing etc. There may be some "flash-backs" in re: information overlooked previously as I read your questions. More anon, sincerely, Hal Woodruff

Indianapolis

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Your cartoons protested the injustices to the black community. Do you recall an event which prompted you do a specific cartoon? What was your compensation for this work?

Describe the kind of landscapes you were doing in this period. Where would you go to paint or sketch your ideas? Whom did you regard as a great landscape painter then?

Were you making prints at this time? You write of an early attraction to the work of Gustave Dore. What was your subject matter?

You shared a studio with John Wesley Hardrick, already a known portrait painter. How did this arrangement come about? What did you learn from him?

Did you know William E. Scott personally? Other painters there? Did you have an organization among you? Were there organizations which accepted the black artist there? (I feel that perhaps the mid-west might have offered a little more leeway than, say, Atlanta at that time. Was this true?)

Did you have access to the public libraries? the museums? Where could you exhibit? Could you name specific places? State fairs? A black church?

In what capacity did the Y.M.C.A. serve your needs? Did you meet outstanding individuals there? Give their names, and, if you can recall, their offices, etc. Did someone serve as your role model? What people were of importance to you, particularly, and to the Indianapolis black community, generally.

Where did you live--streets or places?

Other than the encouragement from the Harmon Foundation prize, what other thoughts helped you to decide to go to Paris for further education? Had you met artists who had been there? Had you met artists of the Harlem Renaissance at that time? Had the John Herron Art Institute prepared you for this change? Can you recall a teacher there who helped you to understand the meaning of art or taught you a special skill which you value today?

Rec'd.
July 21, '77

1. I do not recall any specific event. I always felt the effect of what may be called an "on-going state of injustices, exploitations, discriminations, mis-treatments etc, etc." Most of the cartoons dealt with lynchings, police brutality, segregation & the like. A rather general approach to these ills characterized the cartoons, (done in pen & ink). I was paid \$5.00 (five dollars) for each cartoon. I would do one a week for the weekly paper, perhaps a week or two went by with no cartoon. There was no contractual regularity as to how many or when I was to do a cartoon.

2. There was and, perhaps, still is a tradition of landscape painting in Indiana. Brown County which is beautiful the year around attracted many Indiana artists. My teacher at Herron, Wm Forsyth, was to me a fine imaginative artist. His work had a meaning for me. But it was the great European artists: Jainetoro, Van Ruyssdael, Turner, Mauve, Rembrandt, etc, who truly

appealed to me. Of course Ryder and Homer could not have been ignored then. Also a great many of the landscapes I turned out were purely imaginary or imaginative. I considered landscape as a means of producing a painting - not of recording some aspect or scene in nature, realistic^{ally}. The country side around Indianapolis did offer interesting "locales" for painting & I did avail myself of these opportunities.

③ I made no prints during these times. I was impressed by Dore's draftsmanship - as it was revealed in the steel engravings of his paintings. I considered then, as I do now, the primary role of drawing in art. Subject matter of Dore was unimportant - altho' I did become ^{involved} in his renderings of "Dante's Inferno." It still holds a great deal of magic for me. permanence

④ John Hardrick was a close friend. We took a studio together for reasons of "paying less rent" more than anything else. Indeed he would turn out a fine portrait. But he was more concerned with the qualities or attributes of his sitter - I always sought

out my own manners of "expressiveness"
(if you will) in what I had "said" about the
letter. Hardrick and I worked closely to-
gether in the sense stated above. But I
do not believe that as artists we learned
anything from each other.

(5) Please refer to my article on Tanner wherein
I speak of Scott. He was born in Indpls.,
went to Chicago art inst. & won many
prizes, then to Paris where he knew Taguer.
He was a friendly person, coming to Indpls.
only occasionally from Chicago where he lived.
There was no "group" of painters there, not
even a group for any thing like an organization. Per-
haps the white artists had such relationships
but not the blacks, who were not, to my
knowledge, received in any white group if
such groups existed. Indpls was only a bit
better than say Atlanta at that time. in the

(Blacks)
(6) sense that we showed at the Museum, I
always entered a work which was shown.
The libraries were open to all. I did a full length
study on Egyptian art for my art class through
research at the major library. It took weeks.
I was a regular exhibitor at the Ind. State Fair.

most always got some kind of prize award.
The "Colored" Ymca. was truly a culture
center for the blacks. They always had
art shows, concerts, lectures etc etc. They
owned one of my works + 2 of Scotts. Also

⑦ Leading scholars came to the "Y." William
Pickens, John Hope, Mordecai Johnson,
Aggrey, on and on - College presidents,
politicians, professionals like DuBois,
Walter White, Countee Cullen even - in
later years - Hale Woodruff!

The "Y" was my home. I lived there - went
to John Heron in the day - mopped the
floors and cleaned the spittoon at night,
became a Membership Secretary, with all that
that implies, in 1925-26, built up the largest
(percentage-wise) membership in the black
national community under my direction (for
black YMCAs) that is - The "Senate Avenue"
"Ymca" was the leading "Y" in the country
at the time, regardless. Its director, F. C.
DeFrantz, was a man of great vision,
and of action. He sought to enrich the

So-called Negro Community by bringing before them evidences of the cultural achievements of the Negro effort - in a national sense. He promoted and supported what we, artists scholars professionals, etc were trying to do. He was "Chief" - in a word "Mr. Y.M.C.A." (U.S.A.)

8. Where did I live? I lived at the "12" as I have stated above. I think, in answer to your question as to street or place, that the address was "450 N. Senate Ave" (please check this out if it's important) Just as why the "colored" Y.M.C.A. was called the Senate Ave. Y.M.C.A. (address took precedence over race) (or did it???)

~~It~~ might say that the Herndon School's attitude was one of casual indifference - not to say ignorance of what the Harmon Award meant. The award came in 1926 long after I had ceased to attend the art school which came about 1923-24. I had entered John Herndon as I recall

in the fall of 1920. Inability to attend
classes on a regularly scheduled basis
during the years 1920-23-24, was caused
by my inability to pay the tuition fees.
I was duly informed by the Art School
administrators that my fees had to be
paid, in advance. Being so informed I
appealed to my "Chief" at the "Y" who was my
employer, as stated above. Could he
or would he advance me the funds re-
quired by John Herron for my tuition. He only
said that he would submit a statement
which would, in effect, guarantee the event-
ual payment of the fees in quarters. Of
course all this was un-acceptable. I withdrew
from Herron Art School as a student. I never
returned to John Herron Art School as a
student or in any such capacity.

So the substance of the above statement be
interpreted as -----

8. The Harmon Award of 1926 was an en-
couraging event. It had nothing to do
with my already fixed determination to

7.
to see a great show of Claud Monet at
the Orangerie Museum in Paris. It had
only recently opened. It was a chance
of anyones life time! Unforgettable!
There was no one - no one - at John
Herron Art School who could have
prepared me for the great impact
of Monet or any of the great artists
of the moment.

Again I say that Wm Forsyth was for me a
good teacher - But he was out of the
mid-19th century. The New-Modernism
had already taken hold. So how could
Forsyth have prepared me for Monet
not to say Pissarro, Cezanne and the
others or even African Sculpture and the
rest of other artists. ~~It is a pity that~~

I think I should have mentioned
that ~~there~~ there was an art dealer in
Ludwigshafen who dealt in photo equip-
ment, art supplies etc, and also had a
little gallery on the 2nd floor of his shop.
His name was Hermann Lieber. I knew
him well and he knew me well as a
student at John Heron. One day ^{in 1923} when
I entered his shop he said - "Hale, I want
you to know something about the art of
your race. He gave me a little book
which I cherish to this very day. It was
entitled in German, AFRIKANISCHE PLASTIK. The author
was Carl Einstein. I could not read German
but the illustrations told me much. It
was my first ~~and last~~ introduction
to African Art. Of course later I was to
meet Alain Locke who opened to me wider
doors leading to deeper understanding of Afr-
ican Art. This deep concern I hold and
cherish even at this very moment.

In addition, I think it needful to point out that most of the so-called Indiana Artists - the most distinguished ones (Forsyth, Steele, ^{Chapin Wheeler,} Gray, etc., etc.) were so devoted to their heritage, i.e., Indiana and Indiana art that they couldn't see anything else. I had often wondered if they even had heard of the Great Armory Show - let alone had seen it. I recall a painting coming to the Museum there about 1924-25. It was by the now very elderly artist Sidney Dickinson who was a relative of Preston Dickinson and the great American artist of today Edwin Dickinson. But Sidney's painting showed a young man done with elongated forms, distortions of the anatomy, etc. I recall the furor it caused! Artistic blasphemy! But I liked it as did others of the students in Forsyth's painting class. However there was a note of freshness. A fine collection of Medieval Italian art from the Cross people was loaned to the museum. They were all jewels - just magnificent jewels - altho' not the best selections from the Cross Treasury.