

April 13, 1936

Dear Ted:

Your three rolls of Leica films taken in Jackson and Hooking Counties just arrived. I am sending them over to the laboratory for development and hope they are good. I am very much disappointed in the pictures received from you to date. I am sending back to you, under separate cover, two prints from your Leica negatives taken in Cincinnati, the farm pictures, and also the Columbus rehabilitation pictures. Perhaps you can diagnose your troubles better than we can. These prints are, of course, on PMO paper. I realize too that they would look better on glossy paper, but the fault, I am sure, lies in you and the camera, not the paper. I am also sure it isn't the developing, because other rolls coming from other men developed at the same time are coming out very satisfactorily.

There are several comments which I would like to make in general regarding the work you have done: 1. You are taking too many pictures of an individual subject. It seems to me that two should afford sufficient expression. 2. You are apparently holding your camera in places where you should use a tripod.--- This includes the Leica as well as the 4x5. 3. It looks as though your exposures are not correct. The film pack No. 8 which you took of the Farm Debt Adjustment turned out to be almost a complete flop. There were three good pictures of the whole pack and these were so faint that we are unable to get anything at all. Ted Johnson tried to intensify the negative in hopes that we can get a picture for Mercy's film strip. I might add that Mr. Mercy was very much upset over the FDA pictures, since they had held the film strip for about a week waiting for your material.

In your caption list, No. 6 under Leica Roll #2 is marked "blank". Why?

Are you sure that you understand the use of that camera? I would appreciate a letter giving me your idea of this whole situation. It is my plan to keep you in the field the rest of the summer, but I am a little hesitant about it unless I am sure that you can turn out more pictures than you have in this first month that you have been out. None of the photographers have a better eye for good pictures than you do. Your subject matter in most of these was

excellent, but the fault seems to lie in your camera technique.

You perhaps realize it costs us (including per diem and travel) about \$700 to keep a photographer in the field. This means that we must get a large number of good pictures per month or it is a decided losing venture for the Resettlement Administration. If you still feel that you are not familiar enough with that camera, do some work in Washington with Johnson or one of the men in the laboratory until you can feel familiar enough with the machine. I am sorry to have to bring all this up, but I realize I am somewhat on the spot having to justify my budget in terms of work done. If you are going to stay, you must turn out more and better pictures. Please do not, when you go out to take the pictures which I request spend too much time on objects. For example, the picture of the hay rick... there are plenty of pictures like this in the extension files of Agriculture. The thing I am interested in is a set of pictures which would give us an idea of how a large scale farm is carried on. We also need, as you remember, some good photographs of spring plowing and other spring operations in the farm belt.

Under separate cover I am sending you some franked post-cards which I would like to have sent in about twice a week. If possible, please give the information requested on the little sheet of paper accompanying the cards.

We are enclosing a card which you will have to sign if we are to get the advance for you.

How are you fixed on supplies?

I understand that Jennings has a very interesting trip lined up for you through Missouri with a man from the National Park Service.

Please reply immediately, telling me what you think you can turn out for the next month. There are piles of work to be done in the field and I am anxious to keep all the photographers on the go during the summer months, but believe me they have all got to deliver plenty of good pictures or they are going to hear from us. I understand perfectly that you cannot take good pictures in the rain and I also understand that it does rain occasionally in different parts of the United States. This means that you have to work just that much harder when the days are good.

I called Carl back from the South and sent him back to Cincinnati to set up a new system of progress photographs. We are supplying an engineer with a Recomar camera and teaching him to take a series of progress shots each week or ten days from given areas. This will

obviate a trip for one of our men in regard to Cincinnati and Milwaukee each week or ten days.

We have been receiving a number of very good pictures from Arthur.

Paul Carter should be in from his trip today or tomorrow.

Walker Evans expects to be in by the fifteenth.

Carl probably will finish in Milwaukee and then return to Region 5 for some additional work.

Do not keep those pictures which I sent you.

Best regards,

Ray E. Stryker