4-10-1936

Paul to Sam April 10, 1936

Paul Sargent

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Recommended Citation
Sargent, Paul, "Paul to Sam April 10, 1936" (1936). Letters and Correspondence. 19.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/paul_sargent_letters/19
Paul to Sam  April 10, 1936
Dear Sam,

Spring is coming steady by jerks. Cold and rainy lately. A week ago had two or three nights-temperature was down to 20 degrees. About the coldest April I ever felt. Ground froze several nights. Paper said coldest April since 1875. Every month a record breaker of some kind. Longest winter I ever saw. Easter flowers froze stiff, but are as good as ever now.

You wanted to know what I use on the picture frames. I have used plastic paint, a certain kind, for 8 yrs. with good results. It is called “Rough and Ready”. It is used in making rough texture on walls of houses. You can find it in a good paint store. This kind was recommended to me by an artist who knew it would stick. I would not try any other kind. This kind was used yrs. ago to make the rough surfaced radio horns, after other kinds used failed to stick to metal. The 1st I got cost about $2.00 for gal. But if I were you I would use whiting and shellac. Mock says he has been using that for years with good results. I think that whiting and a good varnish mixed would work also. Lately I have been getting a good finish on frames by mixing gilt powder with a little spar varnish and turpentine. The varnish makes it dry fast and binds it. The turpentine makes a mat finish—it dries without shine that varnish alone would give it. A little raw inseed oil added will allow the drying, but is not necessary. When several days dry tone with oil paint mixed with kerosene, and a little varnish to dry faster. To tone, mix enough oil color, usually blue with white, or green with white, with a teaspoon of spar varnish and some kerosene. Paint on the frame, then wipe off with cloths, leaving color in low places of carving. This way makes a frame of gray gilt that goes very well with most pictures but is not quite bright enough for some pictures with bright color. To get a brighter frame might give a coat of “spirit gold lacquer” to the gilt when dry, then tone as described. Maybe the gilt won’t lose so much of its brightness with the lacquer to protect. I haven’t tried the lacquer and gilt powder but it is the regular procedure for frames covered with metal leaf.
I am going to do some experiment with the notes I took on
gilding out there. I like the finish Flax gets on his frames, it is
brighter than anything I have ever been able to get.

The pictures I had at T.C. are now over at Mattoon—about
1/3 are Western. You remember the sketch I made of the
triangular mountains

near Indio last fall—in the morning. I made a 24X36 from the
sketch and it is one of the best in the exhibit. A woman told me
she thought it the best in the exhibit. I may be able to sell a few
but they do so much talking, miles and miles of it, before getting
out the checkbook. I have one prospect that wants a larger
picture but he is not in a hurry about it, as he said, but I am,
somewhat. For two years I have had little chance to sell to the
T.C. Teacher here because so many had to go to to school to get
their degree that are now required to teach. Most of them are
back now so I have a better chance, and they are my prospects.
It could be worse. I am afraid of some developments that may
scare them out, anything can happen these days and probably
will before long. Before this panic is over the bankers will
probably pull another one.

I had an interview with Mr. Buzzard, the Pres. of T.C. a while
back about pictures for the dormitory that they are refurnishing.
Will know about the decision sometime this month. I haven’t
much hopes, although he seemed favorable. Lack of money I
think will be the result. They spent $ 9,000 fixing up the kitchen,
so I hear, so probably won’t be any left for pictures. I was late in
hearing of the refurnishing of the dorms, so they may have it all
spent.

Is about midnight so guess I better ring off.

Spring is around the corner. Grass is getting green, a few
bushes have leaves showing. We need the warm days for things
to burst forth.
Sincerely,
Paul
p.s. Noticed buds in pear tree showing a little white.