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UA3/1/7 Letter to George Cherry

Henry Cherry

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October 18, 1935.

Mr. George W. Cherry,
Enterprise Oregon.

My dear Brother George:

I am inclosing a photo of a dead man made in bronze. It is ten feet from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. This is a photo of the product of the work of Lorado Taft the sculptor over a period of three years. Of course, this does not mean he has worked on the statue three years continuously but it does mean that at different intervals during the three years I have been in his studio and that the statue was made from life. It is a wonderful piece of work according to the opinion of others. Of course, one cannot make a proper estimate concerning himself. Mrs. Cherry and a committee visited the studio a few months ago and they all speak of it as a real piece of art. The statue will not be put up until after I am dead. I am not willing for folks to throw gravel on it and make marks on it and tell things about me until after I am dead. There has been real pressure brought upon me to allow it to be put up at once. This I will never agree to. I am not willing to walk around in this live campus and look at its dead president, especially in bronze.

Confidentially, and very confidentially I have never been interested in it, but I would not offend my friends by saying this. When the matter was first brought before me I refused to agree with the plan for the statue, but a committee of my old friends and coworkers waited upon me and I was told by this committee that they felt I had no right to remove myself from the hands of those who had stood by me and that they felt I should let them go ahead with the program. This was a statement it was hard for me to meet and I agreed but only under the conditions mentioned above. One member of this committee was J.R. Alexander whom you know. He told me very emphatically that while he felt a little like I do about these things, he still felt I should allow my friends to do what they wanted in this case. Now, I am sending this photo with no feeling of pride but because you are my brother. You have written in the past and asked me to tell you something about it. I have told you about all I know except when the artist looked at some of the wrinkles in my hands and face and took a piece of clay not bigger than a pin

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head to work them out I became sometimes quite nervous and wondered what it all meant. Notwithstanding the fact that the statue is a monument, I am not thinking of it in this sense. If I have a monument it is an invitable one--it is in the hearts and lives of those young men and women who have come to this institution and have been a part of its life and leadership. It is in this great Hill, the most beautiful in the South. The only way you can understand the beauty of the Hill is to be here. It is a complete panorama that enables one to have far reaches of landscape and beauty.

This letter is written and this photo is sent without any thought of pride, but as a result of a brotherly affection for one who lives far away.

Fraternally yours,

HHC:F