

Tropic, Utah

14-7-2

Dear Wagsell Family:

Well here I am, in the middle of a large dry lake bed in ~~the~~ between mountain ranges somewhere in the central part of Utah. Tho it was very hot for the first 3 weeks, lately the weather has become mild and sometimes blazing, especially during the early part of the day. In fact, 4 days or so ago I was treated ^{to} the first rain, wind and thunder storm I've experienced in this rather desolate state. It was magnificent weather with a steady downpour from open metal skies filled with clouds and a brisk wind which unaccountably raised a dust storm all enveloped in terrible (but wonderful) crashes and lit by intermittingly seen lightning flashes. It is the only time that I felt that I really enjoyed this boring distance under which we have lived for approx. 6 months & half year, already. It is wonderful when nature's value and the cool air refreshes your skin, all the while ^{when} your whole body is thrilled by the marvelous spectacles to which the sky above reverberates. For the remainder of the week

and up until now the sun has been kind to us and it is really beginning to feel like the onslaught of winter.

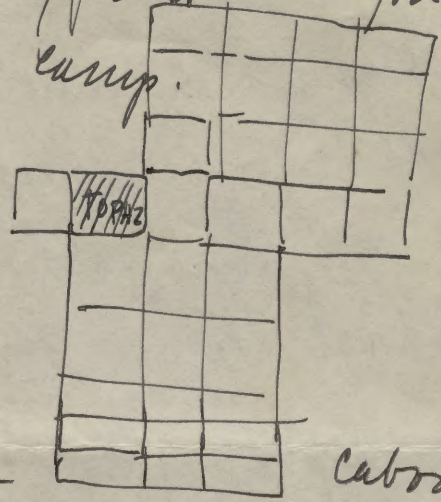
I hear that it snows here, tho not deeply and that of course the thermometer drops out of sight when it decides to be nasty. I shiver in anticipation for already the air cuts thru my T-shirt as though it were made of cheese cloth, tho I also regard the coming of snow as a new and consequently exhilarating experience (tho congealing) for me. In anticipation I have hunted a long sleeved turtle neck sweater and a pair of mittens and am slowly and ~~patiently~~ spending in order to get myself a decent winter outfit!

The jobs here require one to work 44 hrs a week and as recompense we are paid either \$16 or \$19 a month. That isn't much especially in consideration of the time spent on the job, which is 5 days and $\frac{1}{2}$ day on Saturday. Thinking it over carefully I decided that the pay ~~was~~ in view of the time consumed wasn't worth it, because with all that time wasted, I wouldn't have any time at all left to draw in. You notice I don't say point, and this is because I

I am at present roomed with four old bachelors in a
barack room with no privacy, no quiet in which to
scatter my art supplies and work as suits my instincts.

I need solitude and elbow room and especially my own
hours to paint in, for an artist is not a clock-punching
machine. These buzzards go to bed at 8:30 and get up
at 6:30 thus maddeningly disorganizing my life. Frequently
I like to paint far into the night particularly since when I
lived in the city the hustle + bustle of autos, streetcars
& people in general were non-existent in the night and made
an ideal quiet in which to furiously paint. So you see I
am slightly incensed in this camp.

The ^{whole} camp ^{is} shaped like this
and the little shaded part which is
Topaz, our camp, is approx. one
mile square and ~~is~~ ^{is} the whole



is set on a large dried up lake. The water has chlorine +
fluorine content and as can be imagined the earth is silt, fine
silt and alkaline in character. It seems to make good ^{grds} for
alfalfa seed and the like. I hear that this part of Utah is

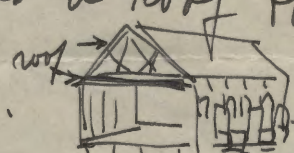
the alfalfa seed producer for ^{the} ~~the~~ & maybe the world(?).

The camp it self is divided into 42 squares, each of which ~~is~~ contains 12 barracks and in the middle a kitchen & latrine & laundry. at one corner, a barrack building without the custom any apartment divisions serves as a recreation hall. Some of these are already in function. Tho mostly the administration is concerned with paving the roads and finishing many blocks of barracks as yet unoccupied and putting inner sheet-rock walls in the barrack apartments in view of the incoming cold.

Each barrack is divided into apartments of varying sizes to accommodate large & small families. Bachelor like myself are roomed 5 + 6 to a room. Each room is provided with a large cast iron stove burning coal which resembles faintly a ~~the~~ slender barrel with a flat top. As I said before the building is walled on the outside only, and only now are they beginning to put on the inner walls (double walls



cross-section



off the rafters from ^{our} view. The floors are of masonry panels $\frac{1}{8}$ " nailed on a wooden floor. And we have doors with door knobs & sliding 2 paned windows.



So lodging is fair & loved even he considered good if one were

(3)

Un-mindful of other shortcomings of this kind of "enforced company" life. The shower rooms & toilet have concrete floors, like cream walls and roof, individual wash basins with running hot & cold water. So facilities are good.

The administration here is progressive. They want most of all to get all of us relocated outside, in, say, Salt Lake City in a job before the end of the year. As a matter of fact many of us have already left on various jobs, mostly ^{sugar} beet tapping. The others are working in private homes, farm labor such as hay stacking & Turkey plucking, and even in city jobs. So the W.R.A. which is apart from the army is very favorable towards us. They want to get us out on jobs so things are hopeful. Naturally I am going to try to get out, so I am bending all my efforts in that direction. I don't intend to spend 1 minute longer here than is necessary. My main objective is to get out back east and paint.

Food in camp is fair. In many ways the food is

better than that served me in San Francisco. Of course I miss
milk. When you can have a lot of it (pasteurized) you don't want it,
but when they'll only give it to old people over 65 and children
under 16 you crave it badly!

Thank you immensely for the N-M. + SR Today + the PW. I read
them all, and passed them on to fellow sympathizers. I don't believe
you'd better send the plants + shoots etc because as I said, I intend
to leave here very soon - at least as soon as a job materializes.

Also, Ynez Johnston just wrote me from W.R.A TULE LAKE
PROJECT, NEWELL P.O. MODOC COUNTY, CALIF, where she is
teaching art in the line of crafts and teaching history classes - fun
gal!

Lone the dry air: makes me feel like a muller doll
all the time - Compared to here, california humidity is
deadly. Hello to all -

Joe

Wassell.

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