

14-7-E  
Topaz, Utah  
Nov. 23, 1942

Dear Ma and Pa:

Just a note to tell you that I am still all right, and still kicking. Camp life is the most boring thing imaginable under heaven. The days pass very slowly and very tediously because of the lack of anything constructive to do. As far as I myself <sup>am</sup> concerned, I find camp life unbearable because I have not the necessary privacy in which ~~where~~ only I can paint. I am roomed with 4 old bachelors whom I've never seen before in my life in a room about the size of your parlour, and naturally I can not keep my own hours and spread my art supplies around like I would desire to. Most of the people in this camp do nothing at all, most of the time while away the time on their cot reading the Salt Lake Tribune and the cheap weeklys like the LIFE magazine and the Saturday Evening Post and snoozing at intervals. There is no ambition ~~in~~ in this camp because men are not free to do what they will. Perhaps the old bachelors would do approximately the same thing if they were in the city, but it is a cinch that the young would not! The jobs in camp are not worth talking about both from the standpoint of interest and from the money viewpoint, since the pay amounts to \$ 16 and \$ 19 a month and the work is mostly dish-washing and waiting on tables and driving trucks, or some variety of office work. What can one buy for such a measly stipend? And who wants to work 8 hours a day for a month in order to obtain it? So I am spending most of my time writing letters to my friends and to various schools in the East asking for a job as an instructor in painting. I intend to place myself in such a job in order that I may be able to escape from this camp to some more amenable environment in the New England States. Not very long ago I wrote a letter to The Black Mountain College in North Carolina, a rather progressive little college, for such a position; also, I wrote to a couple of labor schools in the city of New York. I have quite a few contacts in the East mostly thru my friends, and I hear that Dr. Neuhaus of the Art Dep't is looking out for a job for me too. So it may be that I will find myself in a new surroundings before I know it! I will let you know as soon as decisions are made.

And did you know that I sold many paintings during the time that I was in these camps? I sold one to the U of C permanent collection, one to a professor in the Decor. Art Dep't in the U of C, and two to my friends. Also I have prospects of selling two more! And I had a One man Show in the Art Gallery of the University of California in September, with the help of my professors. Not bad tho I would like to be in a position to do a lot more.

Prospects of painting here are pretty crummy because I've drawn all this to death, and crave a little variety. But don't you worry, I will somehow get to work again.

The only time that I like this camp is when it is covered with snow. Then the whole vista is transformed into a beautiful glowing white settlement sharply contrasted against the leaden sky. The light during a snowstorm is the most clean and even and actually glorious light imaginable. And there is hardly no shadow visible anywhere, while the soft flakes are patiently fluttering down. This is the first time that I've ever been in a real snow-fall, and I count it as one of the few pleasures that I receive from this camp. I want ~~some~~ to be in a real heavy storm sometime: here the flakes only pile up to not much over 3 or 4 inches. Perhaps later in the year it will pile up more, who knows?

*purple* As for the cold, it is cold enough for me. When it isn't snowing the temperature drops way below freezing point ( 32 F is freezing ) and during such times the streets are bare. It has gotten as low as 10 degrees Fahrenheit in the camp, already! But that was unusual. I had Maggie send me a long union suit to keep me warm; still it is so freezing that I wear 2 trousers over them. If we were fed enough at meal times, I wouldn't mind the cold so much; but the food is too scanty for a wolf such as I. As I write this to you my stomach is gurgling with hunger. It is enough for the old people in camp, but insufficient for me. At breakfast we usually are fed toast, lousy coffee, maybe apple butter for the bread, some cereal or other, some poisonous-looking dried fruit, and maybe fried potatoes. It is rare that we see a small slice of butter served, or one egg usually hardboiled, and it is also infrequently that we have one orange, or apple,

or half a grapefruit. That is a good meal for a hot day in summer, but ~~when one is~~ freezing as we are, it is entirely insufficient. So this is another reason why I must scam out: I want a filling meal once in a while.

But I am not too unhappy tho I wish I had some friends in camp. By the way, in case Maggie hasn't told you, I want you to open the <sup>es</sup> box that contains the Encyclopedia Americana and use it. What the hell use is it for a set of books to lie around unused for years? And I dont want any objections on this score: you either open the box of books and use the books or you aint my friend any more! Let George make a sort of a bookcase, because it is more convenient; and handle them with reasonable care. Of course I understand that books cannot be used without becoming soiled. So the hell with it.

My best to Jack and George and the talking Encyclopedeia, namely James, and especially to you two. Are they as large as mastodons yet?

And a merry Xmas to all of you!

Tom

PS. My address is going to change in a few days; I will send you a post card when it does. Thinking of moving from

14 - 7 - E to

42 - 11 - C for privacy's sake  
but it isn't decided as yet.

Tom