ROBERT STRONG WOODWARD
SHELBURNE FALLS, MASSACHUSETTS

June 19th 1942

Dear Bess Oakford Hunter - it was deep satisfaction to have your recent letter come in to me and I thank you for writing it. I meant much to me. Lately I have been thinking a great deal about you & your good husband, wondering very intimately just how you & your children were being affected by this ghastly war, fearing to hear that your Tom might be in service, yet really wishing to know, because of my frequent & intimate thoughts of you & your dear family. Somehow, I didn't quite realize that both your children were married - & now you have told me of them & of the active part they both are bearing directly in this war. I cry out to God that it has to be; yet of course with dire threats against freedom pressing as they have been in the world, & pressing against us - you both would have it no other way. I pray for you & Jay - & I pray for them. My heart is beaten sore with it all, especially pained when it touches so directly those for whom I care with personal depth. Your night thoughts in verse were moving & poignant & I appreciate sensitively your capturing out the "rythm" for me - even if it does sear & pain the mind & heart.

No, I hear very little from old Peoria contacts, & me the fact. Occasionally I used to hear from Lena Belsley but of late years not - just because immediate life is so crowded with hourly demands, other interests need be put aside. I used to hear occasionally from Lena's mother,

Mrs. Ulrick — but not for a number of years now, so I judge she has passed on ahead of us, although I was not told so directly at the time. Sometime if you think of it, settle my thoughts on this score. You know I had some sad differences with the Julia Bourland Clark family a number of years ago (once my most intimate friends) — although Fred has refused to recognize it — & even called here a year or two ago. But I still hear of them occasionally through Julia Maria Bourland Smith of Pontiac, who has kept up the friendship — & of whom I am deeply fond. Did you know "Julia Maria"?

It is good indeed to have you write how you still love my sugar house on the steep hill. I especially loved that canvas — & think of it often indeed. "The Steaming Sugar House" is its official title as entered on my records. Possibly the children might like a little print or two extra to use as a bookmark or to stick in the mirror edge — to remind them a bit of home. I have a few extra ones cut from an exhibition folder — which I enclose.

Yes I admire Horace Pushman's work very much. It is interesting to know you have one of his prints. Some time tell me just what the print is. Did you know about his recent law suit (last year, I think) because one of the Western Art Museums published publicly a print from one of his canvases owned by the museum. He claimed they had no right to do it, without his permission — but the museum

worn out in the courts! Possibly you have that print!

As to news of myself – I guess none in this letter – but perhaps I'll send you a dirge later! For several years I have had a most terrible inside "trouble" – which keeps me in gruelling pain most of the days of the week. We had two sieges with operations by specialists in the Boston Hospitals – but to no relief – except that of my last dollar! I force myself through the daily work, most of the time – but of course inspiration is wanted. I wish you could both see my Buckland home and studio – it is rarely beautiful and of great interest – with inspiring outlook on valley and mountains. Perhaps you will come some day – I do wish for it. My affection goes out to you both in Peoria – and my prayers and hopes turn often to Tom and Betty in their "part" of this nation's fight. May God preserve them!

Bob

Address me. Shelburne Falls – and not Buckland; I eventually get the latter although not as directly as S.F. – even if I do live in the village of B.

I enclose a clipping or two from my recent Boston exhibition. Some of them were mere critics twaddle + chatter to fill up space – but the one from the

(over)

Boston Globe by Philpott, is really worth while. Aside from the unfortunate word "photographic" (which he really explains away) it is a worth while ~~reay~~ realization of what I am doing with New England - a worth while appreciation. That's the only one worth reading - but I send the others for the illustration interest.