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Personal

ELDORADO, ILLINOIS
July 31, 1939

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
Greatest Lincoln Biographer of All Time,
120 East Nineteenth Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I hope that you will pardon me for taking this liberty in writing to you, but I felt impressed to drop you a few lines in appreciation of your wonderful, understanding, authentic, human books on our greatest American, Abraham Lincoln. With your life's work you have builded a monument to the memory of Lincoln greater than any sculptor could chisel from stone, no matter how skilled might be his hands. Personally, I want to thank you for the great pleasure that your books on Lincoln have given me. It seems that I was born with an admiration for the great Emancipator. At a very early age, the story of his life captured my childish mind, and ever since I have been a devoted admirer and serious student of his life. No other author's writings concerning him have given me the pleasure that have yours, Miss Tarbell. So, in admiring Mr. Lincoln, you as his greatest biographer are included in my admiration. Our only child, now past ten years old, is named after Mr. Lincoln. He, too, has early shown a love for stories and things pertaining to him. Only this Summer we took him to Springfield and out to the reconstructed village of New Salem, and his eyes sparkle when he relates

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MINARTIS STUDIO
VACHEL DAVIS • ARTIST

Miss Ida M. Tarbell

ELDORADO, ILLINOIS

#2

about this trip.

Were I not so poor, I would like to be a collector of Lincolniana. Not for commercial purposes,--but because I would treasure the smallest item associated with his life. I am most sure that it is an never-ending pleasure to you to recall the many persons you interviewed for material for your books, who personally knew Mr. Lincoln, and the various scenes and other material that you had access to would furnish me with the thrill of a life-time.

Miss Tarbell, if it wouldn't be asking too much of you, I would greatly treasure a copy of your favorite photograph autographed to me, to frame and hang upon the wall of my studio-study. I ask this because you are my favorite authority on the life and works of the man that I admire above any American, living or dead. And I shall be delighted to own a photograph of his greatest biographer, whether I am ever able to own a single item of Lincolniana or not. I hope that you will do me the honor of placing in my hands this likeness of you.

This has been a lengthy, rambling letter,--but I hope beneath the surface of it all, you will discern the spirit of admiration and sincerity that prompted it to be written.

With all good wishes for your health, long life with all the blessings of our God, I am

Most sincerely yours,

Vachel Davis

encl/clipping

Art Brought to the Coal Fields by Illinois Man

(Reprinted from the Daily Journal, Eldorado, Ill., Jan. 25, 1938.)

Fulfilling a life-time ambition, Vachel Davis, widely known as the "coal miner artist," is in his own words, "going to bring art to the coal-fields."

Mr. Davis spent fourteen years of his life working at the mines, all these years spending his spare time studying and dreaming of the day when he could give full time to his art work. Sitting in his little studio, which he has named "Minartis," a composite of the two words, "miner" and "artist," this ex-miner discussed with enthusiasm his plans to establish a school in the heart of the coal-fields where ambitious boys and girls can have the opportunity long denied them here, to receive an art education. Mr. Davis believes that there is much natural talent and ability in the art line in the coal towns, that only needs an opportunity of expression through proper training. He recalls the struggle of his early life to receive training as an artist, with no school of such instruction closer than a distant city, and few miners' boys and girls were able to pay board, room rent and high tuition fees to attend such schools.

For over eight years Vachel Davis has had his own artist's studio in Eldorado. Many years prior to this he has been busy at his easel. Newspapers, magazines and syndicates have published stories concerning this miner-artist and his work. His hand-drawn safety posters for coal mines have been used by coal mining companies in various sections of the United States, for the past



nine years. Mining officials and safety men have been lavish in their praise of these posters and their contribution toward accident prevention in coal mines where used. It can be truthfully said that the art of Vachel Davis has no doubt saved the lives of many coal miners. He has also had wide experience in drawing for newspapers, magazines and advertising.

So, Vachel Davis sits at his easel and smiles the smile of satisfaction of one who has had a hard struggle to attain a goal in life and has rolled up his sleeves and challenged obstacles until he has brought to the coal-fields an opportunity long denied the boys and girls of miner families—making an art education available to all who might be interested.

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