

8-1-1915

Minthorn Letters

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Newport, Ore. Aug. 1, 1915

Mr. Wm. Dungan,
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

I have been at home nearly two weeks. I think I wrote you that I saw Mr. Lopp and Mr. Claxton and Mr. Thos. N. Strong. I judged from what Mr. Claxton said that he would try to disturb matters still more at Metlakatla.

Criticizes
Claxton

I think he is filled up considerably with the consciousness (consciousness) of authority and has a wrong idea in regard to the work there. I tried to get him to understand that you never considered yourself in relation to the work there except as the instrument in the hand of the Lord--and that you considered everything there as belonging to the Mission and that you had no other thought but that it would be used in some way to continue the work but if I understood him rightly he is acting on the theory that you claimed a personal interest and that whatever you would claim that way would be given you and that the Govt.--which in this instance means him--would claim and insist on having all that they could get by legal means which I think he states will be the land and all that according to law goes with the land, meaning buildings &c.

I did not talk much with him but told him I did not think you wanted anything personally but that it be used for the support of the Mission. I have not talked with Prof. Taylor as I thought perhaps you might not want him if the school was ordered discontinued. He is working in a store here during vacation.

I am willing to come back if you want me. Mrs. Minthorn is better than she was when I left home & thinks she would like to come also but of course at our age our coming would be only temporary and if younger people are available it would be better. If we come we would not want to remain through the fishing season when there is nothing to do. I would want one hundred dollars per mo. and the medicine furnished and board as before.

If Catherine does not want to keep house Mrs. Minthorn would undertake that for her board & \$5.00 per week the same as Catherine does it and I would do what I could to help her and she would try to do something for the women as she did when she was there before.

We would not want to furnish anything but would want to fix

Minthorn
willing to
go back to
Metlakatla.

Wainwright, Alaska, August 10, 1915.

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Wetlakatia, Alaska.

H

Dear Friend:

After spending one or three days in Ketchikan and becoming a little acquainted with some of the people there, and after seeing Mr. Thos. H. Strong of Portland, I came to the conclusion that a better plan than leaving it by a will for Mr. Strong to deal with, as old and feeble as he seems to be, would be for you to appoint six trustees to act, with you as the seventh, and get everything in their hands now and get the final disposition of your work started during your lifetime, and then upon the event of your death or disability everything would be already all in working order. Supposing you should appoint Mr. Thos. H. Strong, Governor of Alaska, Mr. Strong and Dr. John Meyers of Ketchikan, and two natives, making with yourself seven in all; and Dr. Meyers and Mr. Strong of Ketchikan, with yourself and the two natives would constitute a quartet that could be gotten together at any time for a business meeting, and at the annual meeting the Governor and Thos. H. Strong might be there. Then for the everyday and all the time management there would be yourself and the two natives, which would leave the direction to you practically. If you find you can remain at Wetlakatia you could then proceed to invest the proceeds of your personal property in a hospital building and equipment which next to the church work is most beneficial in a mission work. Christ himself kept Gospel teaching and healing constantly associated. Almost the last public act he performed in his work was the healing of the servant of the high priest. Also, if you became disabled you could have the benefit of your own hospital. Wetlakatia is a good place for a hospital as there is none in Southeastern Alaska open to natives, and the hospital service would benefit very many more than the Wetlakatians. The preaching of the Gospel comes first and then the care of the sick. Ever since I had to spend several months in a hospital I have been very much impressed with the amount of good that is dispensed through that means. It seems to me if you could leave the church organized and working as it now is and a hospital also organized and working, it would be safe to leave the educational and industrial work to others.

Your friend,
H. J. Winter.

Wishes

Future Plans for Mission

Document No. 13

Folder No. 252.

13
E-5

See F 222 B3

Newport, Ore. Aug. 5, 1915.

H

Mr. Wm. Duncan,

Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear friend:

Enclosed is a clipping from the Evening
Newspapers Telegram of Portland in regard to the intentions of
Dr. Claxton.

Your friend

(Signed) H. J. Minthorn.

(Copied from a letter in Mr. Minthorn's handwriting--CRS)

Newport, Ore., August 12, 1915.

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

U. S. Senator Harry Lane called here today to ascertain some things about Metlakatla. I was expecting him as he had sent word that he would be here, and for fear that I would not remember to tell him the important things I had written out a statement which I gave to him, which was headed by a clipping from the Portland Journal given out by Dr. Claxton at Juneau and which stated that all real estate and fixtures would be taken by the Government, and all personal property given to you. The Senator is talking of going to Alaska, I think on purpose to see you, and as he is acting on his own responsibility and with the object in view of correcting or at least showing up the deficiencies of the Government administration of Indian affairs. I think his visit will be wholly in your favor. Not that I think that he will not do exact justice, but because I think he is opposed to destroying an efficient and eminently successful management in order to give place to one of inefficiency and failure. And I think he will find a good text for his sermon in the present movement at Metlakatla which so far has to its account the suspension of all industries and the turning over of the fishing sites to the trap men, and the location of Verney & Davis on the water front without consulting the Secretary in regard to it. But if he goes to Metlakatla he will see for himself, and I am sure you will not be afraid to give him all information possible, especially that Jones and others have made charges against you to the Secretary and you have not been allowed to know what the charges are, or to have a hearing and opportunity to refute the charges.

Your friend,

H. J. Minthorn.

P.S. I ought to say that Senator Lane has been Mayor of Portland several terms, and was elected U. S. Senator wholly on his merits as a tried public official that has stood for right and justice. He made his own canvass for U.S. Senator, his expenses being mostly for shoe leather. I think he has also worn out some shoe leather in tramping through Alaska. I feel sure his only object in having anything to do with the Metlakatla business is to forward the interests of efficient administration of affairs of the Indians.

H

Buildings
Metlakatladeficiencies
of Govt.Praises
Senator
Lane

Document No. 17
Folder No. 252

(Second Letter)
Newport, Ore., Aug. 12, 1915.

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

Since writing a letter to you which I mailed today and which may go along with this, I saw the enclosed in the Evening Telegram, which I suppose is what Dr. Claxton has done and which is what I inferred he intended to do from what he said when I saw him in Seattle; but should Senator Lane go to Alaska, which he may not do now that Dr. Claxton has decided on a course of action, I think he should be encouraged to endeavor to have justice done. I think surely such a bold faced transaction will get some of the perpetrators into trouble some time.

Your friend,
H. J. Minthorn.

Newport, Oregon: Aug. 13, 1915

H

Mr. Wm. Dawson
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Your Friend:

Fishes
Buildings
at
Metlakatla
Canneries
started

I recd. a letter from Moses Newson giving an account of the fire & also telling about Claxton having informed the people that all the buildings including the church & the peoples houses belonged to the Govt. He seems to be a fairly good specimen of a hog as well as a thief but I am sure you will look at it all as something permitted of the Lord for some wise and good purpose - also I suppose you will not think of staying there any longer than you can help.

Fisheries
Canneries

I suppose Claxton did not try to take the little steamer probably the engine would do for a small sawmill, and probably John Tulson or some one else could start an establishment for mild curing salmon & perhaps some one could start a small cannery of the improved type that would put up two or three thousand cases and some one or two a boat building shop and with the goods you have then you could have a store and you would soon have a church & school house &c all on a small scale with the land purchased and deeded. I think all the people would join you that you would want and the work would be harmonious & successful from the start.

Suggests
New
Mission
site

The thing to do first is to find a suitable site. If you want me to help you to get the location and get started I will come but I do not want to go to Metlakatla the way things are there now and the way they will be as long as Claxton has anything to do with it. But I wish to know right away as I will need to get a team and some other equipment if I stay here. Just now we are using Gertrude's car, but as soon as it rains we cannot use that any longer.

Med. & Surg.
Missionaries

Gertrude is going to India as a medical missionary and Mary is going to New York to take some post graduate work and intends to teach when she comes back.

Investigation

I wrote you about U. S. Senator Harry Lane. I think he will go up there and if he does I am sure he will start an investigation that will clear out Claxton and Toyr Jones &c but such things are slow and will not produce any result in time to help you any except that it will show the transaction in its true light.

Miss. Father
Lynn
Lynn's school

I think the only course for you & the people is to get out of there by which I mean all the people. Since Claxton has taken the action that he has no one will be justified in spending money & labor on property that may be taken from them at any time. Those that are

W. Duncan 2

time to the church you could organize into a Christian community but the others will if they want to progress have to go to some other place where they can obtain more stable two party rights.

In many ways it will be a good thing especially to get the Christians into a community by themselves. I think you should organize the mission and have trustees appointed by yourself but keep the management in your own hands while you live but have it started during your lifetime so there would be no lost time. I think Mr. Strong is too near the end himself to undertake the work & too far away. John Meyers and Mr. Strong in Ketchikan are closer & younger and would be more interested and understand about it better.

If you want me to help to get a new location & get moved let me know soon. Gertrude will leave Seattle about Sep. 20 and we would start at the same time.

Your friend,

I. J. Minthorn

Newport, Ore., Aug. 17, 1915

H

Mr. Duncan,
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

I have been thinking of your situation much of the time since I saw Dr. Claxton's statement in the paper and rec'd Moses Newson's letter. Not that I have been pitying you for I remember the promise that "all things shall work together for good to them that love the Lord," but I was just trying to make out the meaning of what the Lord has allowed to happen like Joseph said about his brethren selling him. Genesis 50-20 "Ye thought evil against me but God meant it unto good."

Now I know that Claxton thought evil. I could see it in his talk when I met him in Seattle but I know that everything that he did will only help on God's good plan, and I can see how it simplifies matters there for now of course it will be impossible for you to stay there and be dependent on him and have no liberty to do your work and to help the people - and then it is all mapped out just what you are to take and you have the opportunity to do as Christ said, "If he take thy coat give him thy cloak also," just as you did once before and then he has unwittingly done the very thing above all others that will make the people suspicious and will, it seems to me, make all of them feel discouraged about ever doing anything there where they have such an uncertain title and prospect of securing the benefit of their labors. And then the faction among the people who have been so anxious to have Claxton assume charge will themselves be disappointed at the way things have turned out - and will consequently be in disfavor with the rest of the people and all of those who had hardly known where they stood will discredit the leadership of Hamilton, Verney et al, and you can have first choice.

Also at this stage of the progress of the people they can do much more to help themselves than ever before and I think if they have a place where they can have deeds to their homes the best of them will very much appreciate it and they having had the experience they have will be something like the Pilgrims who went from England to Holland and then to America where they became the real basis of the best principles that the country has ever stood for so I think the Metlakatla Mission once more sifted by the good and ever wise providence of God will be yet as a light on a hill and a way will be made plain for each step.

Your friend

E. J. Minthorn

Newport, Ore., Aug. 25, 1915

H

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Metlakatla, Alaska

Dear Friend:

According to the enclosed clipping which is the authorized statement of Dr. Clanton and other statements, I suppose he has taken all the buildings and fixtures including your residence, church, etc. That being the case there is no other course than for you to leave there and do the best you can in some other place where you can get a title to the land. Also from the actions of Mr. Jones he will make it as uncomfortable as possible for you as long as you remain there.

Seizures
of
Property
Buildings
at
Metlakatla

Land Titles

If a location suitable could be secured a small dwelling could be erected and a warehouse in which to store your personal property as they call it and move your things and fix to live and then go on with other things afterward. It seems to me if a good location for more gardening operations and some stock - Goats if they could be kept separate could be secured and the lots be secured to the people by deeds. That at their present state of advancement they would not need much other help and a hospital and church would be the main items, but whatever seems the best to do you will not want to stay there any longer than you can help; also whatever you do in some other location where you will have control and be uncollected will do much more good than anything you could possibly do there.

Warehouses

Agriculture

Your friend,

Keopert, Ore., Aug. 30, 1915

H

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Netsilik, Alaska

Dear Friend:

Yours of Aug. 17th rec'd. I do not see what else you could do under the circumstances than to refuse to see Mr. Clanton as any interview you might have had with him would not have changed the result for his course of action was already decided upon before he arrived there and an interview might have been construed to mean that you had acquiesced in his procedure.

Seizures
of
Property
should be

I think some steps should be taken to file a claim against the government for the property taken and to have a bill introduced in Congress to reimburse the Mission for the property taken or to have it returned to the possession of the Mission. Also the Mission should be incorporated and officers elected and the claim transferred to the corporation so that future action could be taken. The incorporation articles could provide that you should be the manager during your lifetime.

The property not claimed should be cared for in some way - probably a location could be purchased and everything removed to it. It is possible that tracts suitable for gardening and stock could be secured in the near vicinity of the new location if not enough could be secured in one place and the people could all reside at the new location and yet some of them have gardens some little distance away.

Water Supply

One of the main things to secure would be water power also.

Gertrude leaves Seattle Sept. 21st for India to take a place in a medical college and hospital. It is not under the control of any one denomination but is Interdenominational. May leaves about the same time to go to take a Domestic Science course in Columbia University N. Y. We will go with them as far as Seattle, if we hear from you that you want us there, otherwise we will remain here.

Your friend,

H. J. Minthorn

Newport, Ore., Sept. 3, 1915

H

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Netslakatla, Alaska

Dear Friend:

I rec'd. the enclosed letter from Senator Lane.

The book I loaned him for the purpose of acquainting him with the work done there. I have not the least doubt but the matter will be all set right but it will take time and will call for much patience and a constant effort in the right direction.

The fact that the people who are so anxious to appropriate what in no sense they have any right to have already allowed outsiders to come in and appropriate the most valuable assets of the people by building fish traps on the most desirable locations and taking the fish to other canneries is the very strongest evidence that they are not proper persons to have the custody of that or other property.

Fish Traps
Canneries
Fishing

Respectfully,

Your Friend,

R. J. Minthorn

Seport, Ore., Sept. 7, 1915



Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Netslakotla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

Yours of 8-31-15 rec'd. We will try to leave
Seattle Sept. 20th so as to get that far with Gertrude.

Education

Prof. Taylor has commenced work in his school and cannot
get released. I could not give him a certain reply about going
to Netslakotla until your last letter. I think as you are coming
down soon perhaps it would be best to leave it now until then so
that you can engage some one yourself.

Med & Surg.

I will write more fully in a day or two. If you will
have Fisher Bros. to hold your order until we come I will try to
get the Str. to go into Netslakotla. I will also send a bill of
medical supplies that will be needed the coming year.

It will suit us to board ourselves as you propose and
we will bring some fruit &c but will depend upon getting suffi-
cient furniture, bedding &c there.

We are very busy getting Gertrude & Mary ready to leave.

Your friend,

T. J. Hinthorn.

Newport, Oregon.

Sep. 15, 1915.

Mr. Wm. Duncan,
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Friend:

Missionaries

Your two letters recd. We will go to Seattle in time for the Str. Sep. 21--as that is the day Gertrude sails for India from Seattle. There is a man here a missionary from Africa home on a furlough and cannot get back on account of the war as the French & Germans are fighting for the territory where his mission is located.

Missions

I think he would go to Metlakatla for one year if you wanted him. I think he would do good work and it might be just the thing for one year while you are finding some one to remain permanently. From what I can hear he & his wife have been unusually successfull (successful) where they were in Africa.

They seem to me to be modest intelligent people. They are, I should think, about thirty years old and have two small children. They could live in the guest house with us. I talked some with them and told them that you would be down here soon and might arrange to see them.

They are both college graduates and have _____ (?) an experience as missionaries. I suppose it will be difficult to find any one now this year as late as it is and they would come on short notice. I think it would be a great thing for them to be at Metlakatla for one year before returning to their field of labor in Africa, as you have demonstrated some of the industrial features of mission work in a different way from any other mission.

Also their mission in Africa is under the Equator and the climate is not well adapted to white people and one year in Alaska would give them a good preparation for another three years in Africa.

Mrs. Neil is a graduate nurse. _____ (?) might drill some of the women at Metlakatla. They both learned the Bu Lu (?) language and also German as they were in a German province. I think they can help about the singing and music. I would not take him to be much of a business man and her not much of a housekeeper. They are both Americans. Altogether they would do some good and yet quite a lot of good. If you think worth while you can meet them when they come down

Newport, Oregon, Sep. 15, 1915

H

Mr. W. Duncan,
Kotlikatia, Alaska

Dear Friend:

Return to
Kotlikatia

We are packing our things & expect to leave from Seattle about the first of next week. Your proposition to pay \$100.00 per month & furnish house and furniture & us board ourselves is satisfactory. We do not want to ship any bedding or furniture as the freight is so high - also we do not want to remain there during the summer when there is not anything to do. Then Mary has the hay fever any place where she has been during the summer except here so that she has to stay here during the summer and we want to be here too.

As I said in my last letter Mr. Taylor had commenced his school work before we got the word.

Congress
Claims
Seizures of
Property

I have not heard anything more from Senator Lane but as Congress does not meet until December you will have plenty of time to see him before then. I think you should put in a claim for the property that Dr. Claxton has taken and while you are down you can see the Congressmen from the state of Washington and Senator Chamberlain from Oregon and Congressman Hawley from Oregon who lives in Salem; also Governor Withycombe of Oregon and others and you can get Mr. Thos. W. Strong to organize your corporation for the Mission Co.

Canneries

There may not be much accomplished just now but it is sure to be righted under some other administration inside of two years. I think in making the claim for compensation for the cannery it should be stated that its value has been greatly decreased by allowing outside parties to put up traps and thus divert the supply of fish to other canneries.

I think you will have a good opportunity to find a suitable person to take charge of the work while you are down.

Your friend,

H. J. Minthorn

Document No. 23 Sept 1915
Folder No. 252 file 15

From original document.

in handwriting of
Statement ~~of~~ Dr. H. J. Minthorn.

In September 1915 the superintendent took possession of the doctor's office and residence, removed all the medicine from the dispensary - about 350 bottles, surgical, dental and optical instruments, surgical dressings, bottles, medical books and journals, bottles, corks, paper and tin boxes, stove, cupboards, tables, chairs and other furniture, throwing them promiscuously in boxes in an unused, leaky building, and proceeded to overhaul, change and fit it up for his own use. This building with garden attached, together with the clearing of the ground, which contained many large stumps and fruit trees and gooseberry and other bushes, was all at my own personal expense and cost not less than dollars and taken by the superintendent without giving me notice or opportunity to care for the contents of the building.

The same is true of the other building used as day school, Wednesday evening meeting, Juvenile Sunday School and to house a collection of relics and files of papers, journals and other literature, some of the files extending back as much as 20 years, all piled promiscuously in an unused room, the furniture taken out of the school room and Juvenile Sunday School room necessitating me to hold the school and Juvenile Sunday School in my dining room and eating in the kitchen. There is no apparent reason for this action, as there is much more room in the Government school house than can be needed for the number of children there are in the village.

(Note by H.S.F.)

The town hall, well lighted, unused and wrecked, would hold 4 or 500.

Did the Govt. agents desire to dazzle the natives with new fashionable school furniture to contrast with the Quaker like simplicity of Mr. Duncan's equipment?