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1901

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Letters Relating to the Claus Papers

Niagara, Sept. 25th, 1900.

DOUGLAS BRYMNER, ESQ.,
Public Archives, Ottawa.

SIR,—Would you be kind enough to let me know if, at the time our papers (Claus Papers) went to Ottawa, there were among them two books—one an Orderly Book of the 1st Lincoln Militia, and another which might be called a Letter Book, as it contained copies of letters sent and received by Col. William Claus, also a manuscript of 8 or 10 pages, called "The Origin of Many of the Ceremonies and Customs Among the Indians." I have reason to believe Mr. Kirby has kept some of the papers which should have gone to Ottawa, and, if so, he has no right to them, as I only allowed him to keep two or three for the signatures.

Yours truly,

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Ottawa, 27th September, 1900.

MRS. C. A. M. CLAUS.

MADAM,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 25th. The Orderly Book of the 1st Lincoln Militia, the Letter Book and the manuscript called "The Origin of Many of the Ceremonies and Customs among the Indians," were not received. I have examined carefully since your letter reached me, not only the catalogues, but the books themselves. There are orderly books of a good many militia regiments received from other sources, but there is no Orderly Book of the 1st Lincoln Militia.

I am pleased to know that it was, and still is, your intention to have all the Claus papers sent here, as I reported at the time they were received that there were deficiencies in the collection.

Your obedient servant,

DOUGLAS BRYMNER.

Niagara, Sept., 1900.

DOUGLAS BRYMNER, ESQ.,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have received your letter to-day, and I am very much annoyed to find that you have neither the books nor the manuscript. The Letter Book I did not find until some time after the papers had gone to

Ottawa, and I took it up to Mr. Kirby to let him see it. I went for it a few days after, and he then told me he had sent it to Ottawa. The Government purchased those letters from us, and the business was transacted through the late Senator Plumb and Mr. Wm. Kirby. There were quite a number of letters belonging to Col. Daniel Claus and Col. Wm. Claus. I first went over these letters myself. There were a number of letters of no importance—these I destroyed, and about 150 or 200 private ones—these I kept. The rest I took up to Mr. Kirby to look at and see if they were important enough to send to Ottawa, and of these he did not return any to me. He at one time told us there were fifteen hundred went to Ottawa. Of course I did not keep any account of them, as I supposed I was dealing with honest men. I did not give any of them to Mr. Plumb, and, as I told you before, only two or three to Mr. Kirby for the signatures; so that, if he has kept any others, he has kept what belonged to the Government, and papers for which the Government has paid. There was between twenty and thirty letters from Col. De Peyster (who was in command at Detroit) to Col. McKie, Indian Agent at Amherstburg, or Drummond's Island. I did not keep any of these letters, nor a number from Capt. Matthews, who was military or private secretary to Sir Fredrick Haldimand. Then there was a copy of a letter from Daniel Claus (I have forgotten to whom) in which he says, "Joseph Brant was not at Wyoming," and he tells where he was at the time. When I took this letter up to Mr. Kirby, I told him it was a very important letter to go to Ottawa. There was also a letter from an Indian Agent (I have forgotten to whom written), referring to the death of Tecumseh. All these letters were given to Mr. Kirby to send to Ottawa.

C. A. M. CLAUS.

TO THE HON. THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,
Ottawa.

SIR,—Some fifteen or sixteen years ago the Government purchased from us a number of letters of the late Col. Daniel Claus and his son, Col. William Claus, which had belonged to my father. The business was transacted through the late Senator Plumb, and Mr. William Kirby, of Niagara. A short time ago it came to my knowledge that Mr. Kirby had in his possession a number of letters of Col. Daniel Claus and Col. William Claus. I wrote to Mr. Brimner and asked him if certain books and a manuscript I had given to Mr. Kirby to send to Ottawa were in the Archives, and he wrote back they were not there. I then wrote a second letter to him, telling all about the business, and that, with the exception of two or three letters which I had allowed Mr. Kirby to keep for the signatures, he had no right to have any letters

belonging to us in his possession. To this letter he replied that he did not see that any action was possible to be taken in the matter. I now address myself to you. The letters that went to Ottawa were considered an addition to the Archives. The books I enquired about when I wrote to Mr. Brimmer, were an Orderly Book of the 1st Lincoln Militia, a Letter Book in which were copies of letters sent and received by Col. William Claus, and a manuscript of eight or ten pages called "The Origin of Many of the Ceremonies Among the Indians." I am afraid from this that he has kept the best of the collection for himself before sending the rest to Ottawa.

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Niagara, Nov. 17, 1900.

Ottawa, Nov. 23rd, 1900.

MRS. C. A. CLAUS,
Niagara, Ont.

DEAR MADAM,—I have yours of November 17th in regard to your papers. I find on enquiry that these papers were bought by my predecessor, Mr. Pope, from a certain Mr. Kirby, through the intercession of Senator Plumb. No list of the papers was ever furnished. Mr. Cruickshank, at Fort Erie, has examined the papers in Mr. Kirby's possession and could give you information. As there was no list furnished at any time of the papers we were to receive, there is nothing to shew us whether Mr. Kirby supplied us with the papers we bought. The matter is an old one, and I could not myself re-open it with these facts in view. If Mr. Kirby has retained any papers which belonged to you, the only course I can see for you would be for you to take an action against him for that reason. We could, I suppose, supply you with a list of the papers which Mr. Kirby furnished, if you wish it for use in such a suit.

Yours truly,

SYDNEY FISHER.

THE HON. SIDNEY FISHER,
Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.

SIR,—Would you be kind enough to send me a list of the Claus papers in the Archives, and could you let me know how much Mr. Pope paid Mr. Kirby for these papers?

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Niagara, Jan'y 29th, 1901.

Ottawa, Feb. 4th. 1901.

MRS. CLAUS,
Niagara, Ont.

DEAR MADAM,—Your letter to Mr. Fisher, of 29th Jan'y, has been transferred to me this morning, in which you ask a list of the papers (the Claus papers) in the Archives, and also the price paid for them. To send a complete list giving each individual paper would take two or three days to have it made, but I could send you the number of papers in each class, if that would be sufficient. The amount paid was \$500, with a commission to Mr. Kirby of \$50.

Your obedient servant,
DOUGLAS BRYMNER.

Niagara, 6th Jan'y, 1901.

WILLIAM KIRBY, ESQ.,
Niagara.

SIR,—I have lately heard through Col. Cruickshank, of Fort Erie, that you have quite a number of valuable papers belonging to us in your possession. I wrote to the authorities in Ottawa and gave them an account of the selling of those papers. From Mr. Brymner I learn that certain books and papers I gave you to send to Ottawa are not in the Archives, and from the Minister of Agriculture that you sold these papers to Mr. Pope, and were paid \$500 for them and a commission of \$50. What business had you to sell our papers to Mr. Pope? and, as we only received \$400 of the money, what became of the other \$100, and what right had you to keep any of our papers?

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Niagara, Jan'y 7th, 1901.

DEAR MISS CLAUS,—

I was surprised at the letter received from you relative to the sale of the papers. Your memory ought to have informed you that it was the late Senator Plumb who negotiated for the sale of them to the Government, and he did it out of pure kind feeling for your family. The money, \$400, was sent to him, and by himself paid over to you; that I know. I had nothing whatever to do with the sale, or the payment. The papers laid in my office over a year and a half before he could effect the sale. Mr. Pope was the proper person to negotiate with. I sent the papers to Mr. Pope. A few Mr. Plumb sent to Sir John McDonald. I kept no track of them after they went to Ottawa. I have none of them in my possession. I had a few copied while they remained in my custody, and I let Mr. Cruickshank take copies of my copies. The orig-

inals are in Ottawa. Your sister Nellie copied some for me. Your father gave me two or three papers and books, as did you yourself. Considering what Mr. Plumb did for you and the trouble I took to benefit your family, I think you might have written me a better letter.

Yours truly,

W. KIRBY.

Niagara, February, 1901.

WILLIAM KIRBY, ESQ.,
Niagara.

SIR,—I enclose you copies of the letters from the Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Brymner on the subject of our papers. The originals are in my possession, and you or your friends can see them at any time. The papers were not in your office a year and a half; they were only there about six or seven months. As to Mr. Plumb giving any to Sir John MacDonald; he may have done so, or he may not; but as the contents of Sir John's Library were sold at the same time as his furniture, I can very soon find out from the catalogue if any of our papers were among the contents, so you will not be able to hide yourself behind dead men. As to my father giving you any papers or books; he once loaned you a book he valued and was never able to get it back. That cured him of lending you anything, and as you were not a man he cared for, he was not likely to give you any papers belonging to his father and grandfather; and it is these books and papers I am looking after. As for myself; I gave you an old Almanac published at York in 1824, and twelve or thirteen years ago I lent you a History of the War of 1812. This book I am still waiting for you to return. As for the papers; I told you you might keep two or three letters for the signatures, but no books and no valuable papers. You will always remember my sister was a party to the transaction, and she knows as well as I do, and as well as you do, that those books and papers were not given to you for yourself, but to be sent to Ottawa, to be placed in the Archives. Now, as to some of the things that were given to you: There was an Orderly Book of the 1st Lincoln Militia. This book my father once allowed you to see and at the same time told you he thought he would present it to the 19th Batt. You advised him not to give it to them, but to send it to Ottawa. He did neither, and that book was still in his possession when he died. We placed it with the papers and gave it to you to send to Ottawa. This book is not in the Archives. Then there was a manuscript of several pages called "The Origin of Many of the Ceremonies and Customs Among the Indians," dated "Guy Park," 177— (I have forgotten the exact year). This was given to you to send to Ottawa, and this is not in the Archives. Of course this did not surprise me, after I found you had been kind enough to give Col. Guy Johnson a second wife. Then

there was a book that might be called a letter book, as it contained copies of letters sent and received by Col. William Claus. This book I did not find until some time after the papers had gone to Ottawa, and I took it up to let you see it. I went for it a few days after and you then told me you had sent it to Ottawa, and I told you at the time that I had not intended that book to go to Ottawa. This is not in the Archives; and, in fact, it was not at all necessary for me to enquire if it was there, as I had already heard from Col. Cruickshank that you had never sent that book to Ottawa, and it was from this book Col. Cruickshank obtained the information for an article which he published in "Canadiana," entitled "Reminiscences of Col. Claus from his Day-Book." I just mention these three articles to you to let you see that, if your memory is poor, mine is still good; and, although some years have passed since we sold those papers to the Government, I can still remember some of the valuable ones. As to any trouble you took in the business, it was certainly no trouble for you to sit in your office and read those letters over, and that was the greatest amount of trouble you took; and if you had been a writer of any consequence, the mere fact of seeing those papers would more than have repaid you for any trouble you might have taken, not to mention the commission of fifty dollars that the Government paid you; and, as there is still one hundred dollars of the money paid for those papers missing, any trouble you took in the matter was not done entirely to benefit my family. I am determined that the people to whom you have shewn these papers shall know how you came by them, and to whom they really belong.

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Niagara, April 13th, 1901.

DOUGLAS BRYMNER, ESQ.,
Public Archives, Ottawa.

DEAR SIR,—I have had an interview with Mr. Kirby on the subject of the papers. He says he has none of them in his possession—that he has nothing but copies, the originals of which went to Ottawa. He acknowledges he has the Orderly Book, and when I asked him why he had kept it, he said he wished to copy some of it, and that afterwards it got mislaid; yet, when Col. Cruickshank sent to Mr. Kirby for the loan of it, he sent it up to Fort Erie—so it could not have been very much mislaid. The Letter Book he does not know anything about; in fact, did not know what it was nor what it was like. The manuscript, he says, he sent to Ottawa, and, if they would look for it there, they would find it. He thinks that after the papers went to Ottawa they were very careless about them, and that a great many of them were lost or stolen. He tells me he sent a list of the papers with them when they went to Ottawa and that list should be there now. He never got any commis-

sion of \$50—never even heard of it until he saw it in your letter to me, of which I sent him a copy. Of the \$500 that was paid for the papers, we only received four hundred, and Mr. Kirby knows nothing of the other hundred. He says some of the papers were sent to Sir John MacDonald, and he has no doubt some of them would be found in his old office now. Every person is to blame in the business but Mr. Kirby.

C. A. M. CLAUS.

Ottawa, 17th April, 1901.

MRS. C. A. M. CLAUS,
Niagara.

DEAR MADAM,—This morning I received your letter of the 13th, and at the same time an Orderly Book with a note from Mr. Kirby. In regard to the papers; they were purchased by Mr. Pope during my absence in London, he being then the Minister of Agriculture. He told me he had paid \$500 for them, with a commission to Mr. Kirby of \$50. Personally, I do not know this, having accepted Mr. Pope's word. That the papers sent were not worth the amount paid, I reported to Mr. Pope, but, as I had no list, and never heard of one, I had no means of checking the contents of the collection. I do not understand the statement that, after the papers went to Ottawa, "they were very careless about them," and that a great many of them "were lost or stolen." Whatever was done before my return I cannot tell, but the statement is, I venture to think, not consistent with the facts. As soon as I got them, I examined them, made a report and had them bound; so that, after that time, no papers of the collection were either lost or stolen. I knew Mr. Cruickshank had obtained access to papers in the possession of Mr. Kirby which would seem to form part of the collection sold to Mr. Pope. Of course, Sir John McDonald may have been presented with some of the papers, that I do not know; but, if the statement is correct, it may to some extent account for the shrinkage in value.

Your obedient servant,

DOUGLAS BRYMNER.

Department of Agriculture
(Archive Branch),

Ottawa, 23 Mar., 1905.

DEAR MADAM,—

I am requested by Dr. Doughty to write you that, since the receipt of the Orderly Book from Mr. Kirby, in 1900, of which Dr. Brymner informed you, nothing further has been received from Mr. Kirby.

Yours faithfully,

MAGDALENE CASEY.