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Philadelphia, January 4, 1916

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Mrs. J. M. Willson,  
Kissimmee, Fla.

Dear Mrs. Willson:

Your interesting letter of December 27th, with various enclosures, duly reached me, for which I thank you. The information that you have been sending me is not only valuable in many ways, but it shows what a vast amount of work you have been doing for the Seminoles. It is not strange that those Indians want to visit your home.

The clippings and other data I will keep for a few days and then return them to you. I may want to make extracts from some of them.

The fact that Mrs. Jennings is president of the Federation of Women's clubs of Florida is significant.

When the time comes to reach the Interior Department (that is, Secretary Lane), I believe I can do so without much difficulty. I have had a number of personal interviews with him on Indian matters.

It is not an unusual experience for me to know that I am the object of suspicion in travelling about; and on such occasions I always endeavor to keep my eyes and ears open, to be a good listener and talk very little. One is able, in this way, to pick up a surprising amount of information. Of course this does not mean that I ask no questions when I find a person in a communicative mood.

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I want to thank you and Mr. Willson for all the trouble you are taking to help make our trip ~~XXX~~ a profitable one, and I hope we will be able to supplement your efforts for bettering Seminole conditions.

According to my present light, I ought to reach Kissimmee about February 4th or 5th. I want to take the boat to Jacksonville and stop off there long enough to find out something about the Land Company in which Mr. Jennings is interested,--literature describing the land, its location, price, etc., etc.; then spend a day in ~~XXXX~~ St. Augustine to call on a couple of people who may be able to give me some helpful information about State political conditions. From there I will go to Orlando, to meet Mr. Elkin-  
about February ~~3rd~~ of 4th.  
ton, Then we will proceed to Kissimmee for a conference with you.

Last week I had an interesting interview with Mr. Alanson Skinner, of the American Museum of Natural History, in New York. He made a trip through the Everglades some years ago, and his information, and experience, were interesting to me, and I believe helpful in the way of suggestions. Although a scientist by training, he has strong humanitarian instincts. He started from Fort Myer to Immokalee, and had Frank Brown for a guide. Do you know of him? Mr. Skinner appeared to get in close touch with the Indians, and if there is no better way open to me, I might try to make arrangements with Mr. Brown for covering the lower part of the  
\*Glades.

I understand that there are three groups: the 'Glades, the Cypress, and "Hungerland" or Cow Creeks. Of course I want to get in touch with all three.

If it seems best to go to the Cow Creeks from Stuart, it might

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be better for us to proceed from Kissimmee to Fort Myers, then to Immokalee and Boat Landing, for the 'Glades and Cypress contingents, on through to Miami, then up the coast to Stuart and so from there to "Hungerland." I would like your advice on these points.

In the way of further data, I want to secure a copy of the Act of the Florida legislature relating to the Seminoles--the one vetoed by the Governor. There may be a copy of this at the Indian Office, or I might have to go to Tallahassee for it.

I expect to look up the Florida Enabling act, to see if there is any reference made in that document to the rights of the Seminoles. This I can get at Washington.

Another important item is referred to in your article on "The Florida Seminoles and their treaty rights in Florida." If General Worth acted under instructions from the President, there ought to be a report from him on this subject; and possibly some Executive order of the President confirming the agreement, or peace terms made with the Seminoles. If there is evidence of formal ratification of this in Washington, it will materially help our cause from a legal standpoint.

I want to go to Washington next week and dig for all these things. We want to ascertain how it came that the boundaries of the areas described by your historical records were diminished. I am sure that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Hon. Cato Sells, will gladly help me in my search for this data.

With regard to Willson Tiger: if he is favorably disposed to our visit, would he go with us in the lower part of the 'Glades, and is he known to all the Indians? I presume that he is. Of course, we would expect to pay him for his services, and bear his

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travelling and living expenses. I think he would be very valuable to us, if he is willing to go. Mr. Skinner spoke of him as one of the best of the Seminoles. I realize that without some one to vouch for us, or really introduce us to the Seminoles, it will be difficult to get on intimate terms with them. At the same time, I think my experience among many other Indian tribes will be helpful, and the fact that I am the adopted son of Chief Big Medicine, of the Crow tribe, if it could be known, would help. You might mention this to Willson Tiger. I visited the Seminoles in Oklahoma several years ago, and that might interest the Florida bands, although, that would not be mentioned in a way to even suggest that we thought the latter ought to be moved. They showed that they wanted to remain, and our purpose is to help secure for them, in a permanent manner, what morally belongs to them.

Regarding your suggestion that I talk to your club, there is this to be considered: would it help our expedition to have it generally known in Florida just what our real mission is? I had thought we would travel more as a couple of tourists; but if you think it will encourage your friends to know that the cause is gaining reinforcements, I am entirely willing to tell them something of the general Indian situation and what we have been seeking to accomplish. Do as you think best about it.

With kind regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

*M. K. Sniffen*