

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

January 24, 1918.

My dear Mrs. Willson:

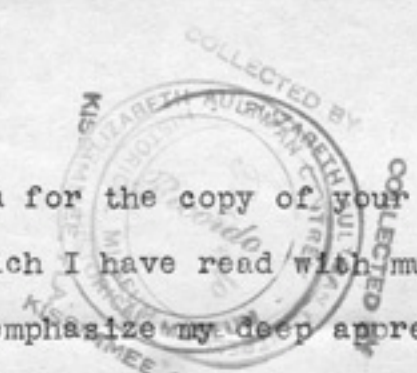
I thank you for the copy of your "Snap Shots from the Everglades," which I have read with much interest.

May I not emphasize my deep appreciation of the successful efforts of yourself, ~~Mr. M. K. Sniffen~~, and other friends of the Seminole Indians who took an active part in presenting to the Florida legislature their imperative needs, and also of the justice in conveying to them 100,000 acres of land.

I am exceedingly grateful to Governor Catts and the members of the legislature for their thoughtful action in this connection.

I am sure that the sentiment created by your publications was largely responsible for this splendid achievement.

During my administration as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I have discovered that there are a number of tribes and remnants of tribes which have been comparatively overlooked and neglected, and I am persuaded that it is my duty to give these forgotten Indians my earnest attention, among them the Seminoles of Florida, the Choctaws of Mississippi and Louisiana, and the Alabama Indians of Texas.



*Willson*

To this end I have detailed Special Supervisor Frank E. Brandon to proceed to Florida, where he has recently entered upon his duties as practically superintendent of the Seminoles.

Mr. Brandon is well qualified by disposition, education and experience to secure good results. He was educated in the public schools, is a graduate of one of our leading Indian schools, received a soldier's training in the Philippines, and had experience in handling important agricultural and livestock interests before entering the Indian Service about ten years ago. Since then he has held positions as farmer, disciplinarian, principal and superintendent of an Indian school and reservation. His last service has been as a Special Supervisor and member of a commission to determine the competency of Indians. These activities have associated him with many and responsible duties in connection with Indian affairs, and coupled with his kinship of blood - he is an Indian - they give him peculiar adaptation to the work we are undertaking among the Seminoles, which I am anxious shall be genuinely sympathetic, helpful and progressive. I shall not limit this procedure to preliminaries, although we will properly and of necessity make a studious and effective survey in advance of comprehensive plans or action.

It is my purpose to work out a constructive program involving educational and industrial betterments. I am convinced that with human sympathy and encouragement we can overcome their inherited and deep-seated suspicion of the white man's civilization, resultant from historical grievances and more recent acts of injustice.

As soon as my official requirements here will permit, I shall go to Florida that I may have personal association with the tribe of the noble chief, Osceola, and learn through first hand information the exact conditions surrounding these people, in order to become thoroughly equipped for giving the best cooperation of which I am capable. I am determined to exert myself to the uttermost, that among us we may induce the Seminoles to accept our sincere offers to aid them in bringing about their prosperity and happiness.

With assurance of high esteem, I am,

Sincerely yours,

  
Commissioner.

Mrs. Minnie Moore-Willson,  
Kissimmee, Florida.