

Aug. 24, 1907
Smith's Dale, B.C.

Dear Mamma:-

I am getting very anxious to get where I can get my mail again. Just now I am waiting for Percy who was to have been here nearly two weeks ago. I suppose now it will be the first of September before we can get back to Port Harvey. That will set things back a little for me in getting started on my winter's work, or rather in deciding what it shall be. I am very anxious to hear what you have to say in regard to the possibility of my becoming a Canadian citizen. I have been inquiring of everyone in regard to land. You know the people in a new country like this have nearly all done a very great deal of travelling hunting either for money or adventure. My working partner has been in the land business in the wheat country and has written there for me. The answer to his letter says there is good land open there yet. You know here on this side of the line you can take up 320 acres. Gray with his brother and father took up 800 acres and now are offering it for sale at \$2,000 with stable for six horses, a small house, graineries etc. They are only four miles from a small shipping point and eight miles from a larger one. If you know of a possible buyer I wish you'd tell me.

Another district I am looking up is the Okanagon country. Nothing much grows there without irrigation. The Okanagon valley is also partly in Washington and is very similar to the Wenatchee valley where my room mate at the University lives.

The climate is ~~in good deal~~ colder than that of Oberlin (in winter) and probably not as cold as Clifton. There is plenty of snow in the winter but scarcely any rain in summer but very hot sunny weather. The soil is very rich and will grow the finest of melons, berries, peaches, apples etc. The land in orchards and irrigated is worth from one hundred dollars and ~~up~~ ^{to} ten times that amount. There is plenty of land there open for entry, but there is not enough water to go around. They have a system here of filing "water claims" that is a person applies for permission to use 100 inches or 200 or whatever he thinks he can out of a certain stream. There can be any number of water rights filed on a single stream, but they are like so many mortgages on a piece of property. The first has first claim even if it takes the whole stream. There is of course a limit to the amount of water a person may take up, and there are requirements which must be kept in order to keep the water right. There are at present many water rights fraudulently held, that is the water is being held but not used. A person could very likely get a good water right by taking the matter into court and it would be a perfectly fair thing to do as no one has the right to play dog in the manger and retard the country's development. There is also the possibility of getting a good ranch and water right if ~~it~~ a person is willing to spend a month or more looking for it. I intend to get full information in Victoria as to open land, streams, water rights etc.

Another part of the country that I have been investigating a

little is the land in the valleys on the route of the Grand
Trunk Pacific which will have its terminal some distance
north of here. There is some fine grazing country there up
the valley of the Bella Coola and some others. It is this
side the mountains and a fairly equable climate,
a little more severe than this in winter, with longer
days and maybe a little hotter in the summer.

I am also going to look up the Alberta country which
has a milder climate than Saskatchewan but with not quite
such a good wheat soil.

Except for the fact of its being all by itself and shut
off by the mountains I should like a place like that on
Kingcomb River of which I told you. There is another river with a
very similar valley about fifteen or twenty miles from Kingcomb
called the Wakeman River. There is no land take on it. At the mouth
if I am rightly informed one could probably get a whole square
mile with nothing but grass on it. (Better land you know.)

The soil is over fifteen feet deep. Snow covered mountains
rise right up from the sea level of the valley and there would be
plenty of never failing mountain streams that one could utilize
for water and for power. On account of the steepness of these
mountains there is a great deal of timber that will never be logged
nor privately owned which would make a never failing supply for
wood, logs, rails, split shingles etc. Selden and I could take up a
square mile between us. This take up largely meadow with
some timbered and hill side land. You know a square mi

is an awful big piece of land. very nearly as big on one side as from 253
west college to where ~~the~~ Deacon Bunnell used to live and the other direction
from the railroad station to about where the Killian lives lately.
We could dyke out our meadow land and plant timothy and clover,
utilizing some of our mountain streams for garden irrigation, and some for
water and power perhaps. We could plant an orchard and also raise
small fruit which is natural to the soil and climate. I think there
ought to be a good market for lots of fruit don't you. When I
was at Alert Bay we were having red raspberries (middle of August)
and I believe at Kingscomb they last still longer. I suppose we could build
and our own boats and handle our own produce. We'd only be about
thirty miles from the nearest point where a regular mail boat calls.

Very likely we could carry a regular route of our own. There'd be enough
business to warrant it. I think I'd go in largely for raising horses
as good ones are very much in demand in the cities here. Cattle
and hogs ought to pay very well also. It would be unnecessary
to ship any garden stuff to Vancouver if we had a boat of our own
as there would be a big demand for it. Almost everyone's supplies
come from Vancouver. Very likely we could get rid of all the pork and
beef we could raise in the same manner. Of course all that would
mean a great deal more than two men's work.

I hope you have written what you think about the idea of my
taking up a claim and where you would advise me to go. If I take up fruit land
in Washington like the Okanogan country that I spoke of, I can only take up
160 acres and under an irrigation ditch only 40 acres according to the
new ruling. Up here I understand I can take up 320 acres and only
have to live on it three years instead of five as in the U.S.

I haven't had any of my minerals assayed yet. I'd like to send some

home but am afraid they'll get hampered with in the customs
office. I think the mineral is mostly iron and some copper. I don't
know whether it is in paying quantities but I think in two or
maybe three places the iron ought to pay. Some of the Indians
here brought in a rock that had gold in it but they
won't tell where it is for fear they'll lose their hunting
grounds. An anthracite coal mine of very fine quality is
being developed not far from here. The company is under
very bad management at present. I'm going to look them
up when I get to Victoria. They hold ten square miles at
present and it is very possible they may let some of them
lapse. In fact the present owners got the property by the
original owners allowing their claims to lapse. The original
owners at the time were trying to freeze out some of the smaller
stock holders

Well I must close for the present

Loveably
Willie.

Sept 12, 1907

OBERLIN, OHIO
SEP 12
8-AM
1907



[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, possibly a return address or recipient details.]

Mrs. V. A. Belden
~~Care Rev. Scott St. 287 West 4th Street~~
Weyoming, ~~Oberlin,~~
Penn. ~~Ohio.~~

SEP 8
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1907

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