

Colorado Spring, Colo.
Aug. 1st, 1924

Dear Dr. Church:

Received your letter addressed to Kansas City. Another probably awaiting me at Denver, but, as we have decided to end our auto journey at this point, I shall have to have mail sent down.

We have had a pretty good trip, on the whole, save for the horrible roads in Missouri and if we had not lost so much time, and could go by very easy stages, we should continue, but Mrs. Tripp's is in delicate condition and it would be extremely hazardous to rush.

We have found a very pleasant place to stay at one of the chief auto camps where we may rent a small cottage at fairly reasonable figure for a month. Meanwhile we shall try to dispose of our car and camp equipment at the best we can do.

There are several matters that I would like to get your advice on:

- (1) Quarry: I enclose my copy of the contract for the lease of the quarry, - you may keep it among papers concerning my affairs You will see from this that I am guaranteed a minimum royalty income of \$1200.00 per annum. Owing to misunderstanding among the original company the personel was changed with only Mallon remaining in and John & Dudley taking the greater part of the interests. The original contract holds however.

Now it appears that the company is unable to carry on the business and they are already behind in statements and payments for stone taken out. I do not believe it would pay to sue them, so probably it would mean considerable cost and no remuneration, but I thought it might be possible to get them to turn things over to the more reliable parties.

The present combination has, of course, fallen considerable under \$12,00.00 royalties for the first year to July 1st, but, in consideration of the difficulties of their starting, I would be willing to overlook that provided they had prospects of good business in the future. Perhaps if you could an interview with Mr. Dudley, you might be able to get some more exact information or find some possible solution. My attorney in the affairs pertaining to the quarry has been Mr. John W. Rust of Fairfax, who is acquainted with all details.

A party who might be interested in taking over the work is Mr. A. H. Osmond, president Potomac Garage Co., 3307-9 M. St. N.W. He was interested before when there seemed a probability of the original arrangement collapsing entirely, also he has experienced quarrymen in his family.

In making settlement between the bank and the quarry company, I would like the bank to retain my royalty portion and apply same on my interest debt.

- (2) Owing to the apparent failing of quarry operations, I am left in a rather unpleasant situation relative to my debt to the Falls Church Bank and some others. I have not wished to dispose of any of my real estate at this time, so I have felt that I could get much more for it within a very few years time, but it is impossible to let debts accumulate, -especially bank interest. Now that Horseshoe Hill property I believe will bring \$1000.00 per acre within four or five years – perhaps sooner. It is the highest ground within the corporate limits of the town of Falls Church near stores, schools and churches and on Lee Highway. My loss in interest and taxes by holding would amount to perhaps \$250.00 to \$300.00 per acre, so, if I could sell today at \$700.00 per acre, I should probably be no loser. But, the property could not be sold at anywhere near that amount at present, perhaps not more than half, so I should lose several thousand dollars on future possibilities. However, I must do something about my debts.

Aside from the balance of First Trust (about \$3,772.00) and the second trust of \$8000.00, I have an additional indebtedness of approximately \$2,500.00 including interest due on second trust. This is about \$2,500.00 less than I was owing two or three years ago, but prospects of leasing off soon are very poor.

If I could get anywhere over a reasonable figure I feel that perhaps I had better let that piece of property go. What would you advise? What do you think is the best I could obtain? If anybody wishes to make what you consider a reasonable offer, you might let them take an option subject of my approval and send me a deed form to sign before we have the county.

Mr. W. S. Browning of East Falls Church owns the Freeman tract just above mine and I offered him mine at \$700.00. He may still be interested at a little lower figure.

I have already sold 2 acres of said land at \$275.00 per acre, before the Lee Highway was thought of as passing that way.

(3)There is one more problem that is giving me great concern. I mentioned this to you before leaving Washington. Whether I should have sufficient funds to complete our journey back to China. I believe that at that time I feared a shortage of \$500.00 or \$600.00. Things turned out better than I expected and we should probably have just about gotten there, could we have carried out our original intentions, but the necessity of stopping here and completing our journey to the coast by rail will add upward of \$200.00 to our expenses.

I shall sell our car and equipment for the best I can get, and perhaps, if we are fortunate, we may get enough to carry us there, but I very much fear not. I hope to know shortly, as I am putting the car on sale immediately. The bank, I know, is pretty tightly pressed, but for a small amount – not over \$200.00- perhaps I could be accommodated for a short period, particularly if any arrangement can be made to dispose that Horseshoe Hill Property.

The sooner I can get back to China, the sooner I can get financial relief and that, with my wife's condition, makes it imperative not to fail. Please do your best to get this for me, if I need it! about the end of August or first of Sept. –between \$100 or \$200. Most of it I shall need for incidental expenses on our voyage across the Pacific and for our journey by rail from Shanghai to Tientsin with a few dollars to start with upon arrival.

Hester often yields a little more upon pressing, especially immediately after the first & fifteenth of month. His milk money comes in at about those times and also his salary as rural mail carrier. He has so many activities that the first one to speak usually gets what he has, so, if you could manage to have your office call him up just about when he is getting in, you might find it works better than waiting for him to appear and then trying to get it after it is all gone! I believe he is honest, but I have learned a bit from experience how to deal with him.

Sincerely Yours
Percy B. Tripp

Source: Special Collections
University of Virginia Library
“Papers of Merton Elbridge Church, 1866-1959”