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John the Baptist A. Brouillet

Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

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MINNESOTA, GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

1873-1874

Archives and Institutional Repository Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

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[1873]
March 15th 73.

Rt. Rev. Bishop, Grace
St. Paul, Minn.
: : :
: : : Dr. Sir:

The Chippewa Indian Agency, in your diocese, has just become vacant, by the appointment of its Agent, Edwin Smith, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I am informed that the Indians of that Agency are most of them Catholics, & that therefore it is desirable that their agent should be Catholic. Will you be so kind as to give me without any delay all the information you can regarding them; & tell me whether you think it advisable or not that I should apply for the appointment of a Catholic Agent for them? ☺

If you think it is, will you please have me informed as to the date of the establishment of the first Catholic Mission among these Indians: if it has been continuous; at what date any Protestant Missions were established among them, & whether they have been continuously attended or not.

Please tell me, also, to what extent you would be prepared to provide the schools of the Agency with competent teachers under government pay.

I will request the Department here to postpone for a few days the appointment of an agent, until I receive from you the desired information.

I remain, Sir, Very Respectfully,

Montgomery

[1873]
March 15 73.

To the Honorable
The Secy. of the Interior.

Sir,

I am informed that the Indians of the Chippewa Agency, now become vacant by the appointment of Hon. Edward Smith to the Commissionerhip of Indian Affairs, are most of them Catholic; & in addition to this fact, it is claimed that the Catholic Missions are the oldest Missions among these Indians. If the facts are as stated, the Indian Policy of the President gives this Agency to the Catholic Church.

I have just written to the Bishop, in which I discuss these Indians and located,

for information concerning them; and I respectfully request, if the interests of the service permit, that you postpone for a few days the appointment of a new agent, until I can get, & submit to you the desired information.

I remain, Sir,

Respectfully, Yours

Charles Ewing

Archives and Institutional Repository - Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

Minnesota Chippewa Catholic Agent

1873 The Chippewa Indian Agency in your diocese has just become vacant by the appointment of its agent, Edward Smith, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I am informed that the Indians of that agency are most of them Catholics and that therefore it is desirable that their agent should be Catholic. Will you be so kind as to give me without any delay all the information you can regarding them?

St. Paul, Minn.
Fwing, Charles, to Bishop Grace/ Washington, D.C. 3/15/1873
B.C.I.M. Archives Washington, D.C. 1873

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VERSO OF NEXT DOCUMENT

Bishop T. L. Grace

Mch. 22nd 74.

Let's forth the necessity
existing for having
a Catholic Agent
appointed for the Ship-
pens -

0.2.176

Dr. Paul, Winnebago
Nov. 22^d 1873

Charles Ewing, Attorney at Law
Washington D. C.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter
of 15th inst, which I received only
yesterday, I would say that it is
not only desirable that a Catholic
Agent should be appointed in
Winnebago but is very necessary
in order to secure their rights to the
Indians who are already Catholics, and
to do justice to the wishes of the Indians
in general who never fail when
occasion offers to express their preference
for Catholic missionaries to have
charge of the instruction of their children
and themselves.

54

At the time the appointment

2

of Agents was made for Minnesota
I felt greatly aggrieved at the
wrong of ignoring the existence of the
~~Leathotic~~ ^{Leathotic} Missions & Missionaries
in the State; and of the fact that
large numbers of the Indians
~~are~~ ^{are} already baptized Leathotics,
and, furthermore, that the entire
caste of mixed-blood Indians, the
descendants of the old French
voyagers, who intermarried with
the Natives, are Leathotics with
scarcely a single exception. These
mixed-bloods are quite numerous,
lead a common life with the
Indians, intermarrying with them,
and their influence among the
tribes is very great.

The Leippewes retain
traditions of the Jesuit Missionaries
who labored among their tribe at
a very early date. From time to
time the visits of Missionaries

among them were continued from the borders of Lake Superior. Bishop Baraga had a missionary station on the St. Louis River, near Fond-du-Lac, in Minnesota, in the year 1836. But it was not until Minnesota was erected into a diocese, 1850, that the missions among the Chippewas were regularly attended. Rev. Mr. Belcourt was stationed here at Pembina, and Rev. Mr. Rivy at Levee Wing in 1852. Since then without intermission these Indian missions have been in charge of three, four, and sometimes as many as six priests, who have visited the Indians regularly every year at stated periods, and remaining with the Indians often three, four, and six months at a time.

The shifting of the Indians from place to place, and particularly the want of means, prompted the building of mission houses and

4
schools. There are at the present
time six priests devoted to the
missions among the Chippewas
in Minnesota; these priests
have made themselves well
acquainted with the language of
the Indians and speak it fluently.

Several Protestant missionary
enterprises were attempted, by
the American Board, in Minnesota,
in the years 1832, '33, and '35; but they
were given up after some years
of effort and were not in existence
in 1850. They left no perceptible
fruits. The Episcopalians made
attempts to reestablish missions at
Sault Lake and Leech Lake in
1852-3. They abandoned them a few
years later, with the exception of
retaining one Half-breed teacher (now
deacon) named Johnson, for some time
at Crow Wing, and at present at
White Earth. Much credit is due,

2) however, to ⁵ Bishop Whipple of the Episcopal Church, for his zealous advocacy of the cause of the Indians before the Government in Washington, his exposure of the wrongs toward the Indians under former systems, and denunciation of the frauds practised upon the Indians by Government Officials. His voice was potent where a Catholic's would not be listened to.

I have repeatedly in the last 14 years proposed to the Indian Agents in Minnesota and to the Department in Washington, to send priests and Sisters to take charge of the education of the Indians, if the houses were provided for them and the simplest maintenance allowed them. These proposals though made in every instance at the earnest solicitation of the Indian Chiefs, were never even considered, so far as
56 I am aware; and this discouraged

6

me from making further efforts or
entertaining even hopes, until the
receipt of your letter. I am
willing and ready to send clergymen
and Sisters to reside at any of the
stations in Minnesota and assure
their full competency to take
charge of the schools and all useful
ventures among the Indians.

There are three Reservations
with Resident Agents, I believe, in
Minnesota; One at Luck Lake,
One at White Earth and One at
Lac-qui-Parle. The Lutherians have
charge of the Reservation at Luck
Lake, and the Episcopalians
those at White Earth and Lac-
qui-Parle. These appointments
were made without consulting with
the Catholics in Minnesota and in
utter disregard, as was felt at the
time, of their claims. It would be
but scant justice to Catholics to

7

allow them the Agency at White
Earth, where Indians and mixed bloods
possessing the Catholic faith are
perhaps most numerous. To
protect these against the allurement
held out to them to attend the
Protestant Church and school
at the Agency, the Catholic priest,
Rev Ignatius Pomaroy, has com-
menced the erection of a church, ^{at White Earth} with
what means I can afford him and
he can collect from the faithful of the
diocese.

Should there be any hope of
obtaining this appointment at
White Earth, I would recommend
Mr Wm L. Kelly, of St Paul, as a
most suitable person in every
respect for the position.

Believe me, Dear Sir, to be
Sincerely & Respectfully Yours,

Thomas L. Osgrace
Rsp. of St Paul

PARTIAL TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

St. Paul, Minnesota
March 22, 1873

Charles Ewing, attorney in law
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Large Number of the Indians are already baptised Catholics and that the entire caste of mixed blood Indians the descendants of the Old French voyagers who intermarried with the natives, are Catholics, with scarcely a single exception. These mixed bloods are quite numerous had a common life with the Indians intermarrying with the and their influence among the g tribes is very great.

The Chippewas retain traditions of the Jesuit missionaries who labored among their tribe at a very early date. From time to time the visits of missionaries among them were continued from the borders of Lake Superior. Bishop Baraga had a missionary station in the St. Louis River, Mar Fond-du-lac in Minnesota in the year 1836. But it was not until Minnesota was enacted into a Diocese, 1850, that the missionary among the Chippewas were regularly attended. Rev. Mr. Balcourt was stationed that year at Bemina, and Rev. M. Piers at Crow Wing in 1852. Since then without intermission these Indian missions have been in charge of three, four, and ~~sometimes~~ sometimes as many as six priests.

The shifting of the Indians from place to place and particularly the want of means, prevents the building of mission houses and schools, there are at the present time six priests devoted to the missions among the Chippewas in Minnesota these priests have made themselves well acquainted with the language of the Indians and speak it fluently.

Several Protestant missionary enterprises were attempted by the American Board in Minnesota in the 1832 '33 and 35 but they were given up after some years of effort and not in existence several years interior to 1850. They left no perceptible priests. The Episcopalians made attempts to establish mission at Gull Lake and Luck Lake in 1853 '3. My abandoned them a few years later, with the exception of retaining one half breed teacher (now deacon) named Johnson, for some time at Crow Wing, and at present at White Earth, Much credit is due however to bishop Whipple of the Episcopal Church for his zealous advocacy of the Cause of the Indians before the Government in Washington, his exposure of the wrongs toward the Indians under former septas, and denunciation of the frauds practised upon the Indians by Government officials. His voice was constant where a Catholic

would not be listened to.

I have repeatedly in the last 14 years proposed to the Indian agent in Minnesota and to the department in Washington, to send priests and Sisters to take charge of the education of the Indians if houses were provided for them and the simplest maintenance allowed them. These proposals though made in every instance at the earnest solicitation of the Indian chiefs were never even considered so far as I am aware, and this discouraged me from making further efforts to entertain even hopes. I am willing and ready to send clergyman and Sisters to reside at any of the agency in Minnesota and assure their full competency to take charge of the schools and all needful duties among the Indians.

There are three Reservation with resident agents, I believe, in Minnesota, one at Luch Lake, one at White Earth, and one at Lac-qui-Parle. It would be but want justice to Catholics to allow them the agency at White Earth. When Indians and mixed-bloods professing the Catholic faith are perhaps most numerous. The Catholic Priest Rev. Ignatius Tomazin has commenced the erection of a Church at White Earth with what means I can afford him and he can collect from the faithful of the Diocese.

Sincerely & respectfully yours

Thomas L. Grace
Bishop of St. Paul

VERSO OF NEXT DOCUMENT

Letter from Bishop
Grace of Minne.
stating that the
U.S. Senator Ramsey
will assist in
obtaining a Catholic
Agent for the Chipp.
at White Earth.
Minnesota.

Richard J. Grace
Feb. 20/93

St Paul
March 27th 1873

Dear Sir:

In my hurry
to close my letter
Saturday last, I
forgot to thank
you for the kind
interest you have
taken in the cause
of the Catholic
Indians in Minnesota,
and for your letter
to me upon the
subject. I have

His day ² Antem to
 Senator Ramsey, and
 have every reason
 to believe that
 he will readily
 assist in obtaining
 the appointment
 of a Catholic as
 Agent at White
 Earth. The Senator
 is well acquainted with
 the subject of our
 mission and with the
 sentiments of the
 Indians in Minnesota.
 With renewed thankfulness
 I remain, Sir, & truly
 Yours
 + Edward Grace
 Bp. of Rome
 Co. Rev. Fr. J. J.
 Marquette C. L.

Letter from Bishop Coe
 of Minnesota stating that
 U. S. Senator Ramsey will
 assist in obtaining a Catholic
 agent for the Chippewas
 at White Earth.

TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

DC ECIM

Deshon and Grant and Board of Indian Commissioners or Protestant missionaries
1873

In my hurry to close my letter Saturday last, I forgot to thank you for the kind interest you have taken in the cause of the Catholic Indians in Minnesota, and for your letter to me upon the subject. I have this day written to Senator Ramsey, and have every reason to believe that he will readily assist in obtaining the appointment of a Catholic as agent at White Earth. The Senator is well acquainted with the subject of our mission and with the sentiments of the Indians in Minnesota.

Grace, Bishop Thomas L. to Charles Ewing, St. Paul's Church, N.Y. 3/24/1873.
B.C.I.M. Archives Minnesota, 1873

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VERSO OF NEXT DOCUMENT

Rev
J. B. M. Genin
Dec. 1. '74.
Duluth Min

States the Sioux, on
whose land the Mission
of the Holy Cross, was located,
gave to said Mission the
land & hay sections of land -
unsurveyed - Buildings
Churches &c have been
erected thereon -
These lands have been
entered by other parties
A bill has been introduced
to protect the Mission
&c &c

0 2 3 0

L. F. C.

Church of the Sacred Heart

M. F. J.

Duluth, Minn., Dec. 1st 74

1874

General C. Ewing
Washington D. C.

Honorable Sir,

I take the liberty of writing to ask your help in the following matter:

Some seven years ago, quite awhile after I had commenced my mission establishment at Holy Cross, in the Valley of the Red River of the North, right on the old war-path of the Sioux Indians, the same Sioux on whose lands the mission was principally located although a part of it was on Wisconsin, the Red River only being between, gave to that mission Said of Holy Cross a piece of land one Section & 1/2 Square, as an encouragement for the purpose of helping the new establishment its Church, Schools, orphan Asylum, all of which were in existence, & a future hospital. The same lands were not yet surveyed, & there was apparently no treaty yet between the U. S. & the Indians bearing upon same. The Gov^{ts} Survey was made in 1869, and at that time, already a Post Office had been established there, by one, under

over

0.9.3.1

2^d page

the title of Holy-Cross, P. O. I was the regularly appointed Post Master of same by authority of the U. S. P. M. General Hon. Mr. Crowl who granted it to me on a/c of many half-breed families & a few white families being settled there around the mission, to what place they had come upon the notice being given them that a priest lived there; that the soil was good and that the Indians on a/c of the priest did not molest the whites settling there. Later, when the treaty of the U. S. with the Sisseton & Wahpeton bands of Sioux took place at Big Stone Lake, Mr. L. Smith Junior, Mr. Forbes & Mr. Adams being the duly appointed Representatives of the U. S. The Indians made known under form of a petition to said Commissioners their wish to see the U. S. approve the land grant already made by them to my mission. The mission was then the exclusive & quiet proprietor or at least settler of same said land a large part of which was improved by me. A farmer was kept there, buildings were put up in different places for Church School, orphan asylum etc. etc.

The number of settlers in the vicinity having increased some became covetous of said lands, & as there was no act of legislature yet obtained by which the title we have was made perfect, they intruded on same, notwithstanding

3, 2 page

my notifying them, ^{3.} by myself & even by the Sheriff
of the County of Cass in Dakota, in which County the land
is situated. They nevertheless have persisted, & lately
have entered same lands at the local land office of Fargo.
— A bill was introduced in Congress at the Request of
Hon. Mr. Armstrong of Dakota, of Hon. Senator Rumsey
to, etc., providing for the Relief of the Mission of Holy Cross.
This bill was introduced last year, was read twice & referred
to a Committee of which I understand Senator Averill
of St. Paul is Chair-man. It is, therefore, now, during
the ~~pending~~ debates of the same Committee, & only lately
that these intruders have filed their preemptions or
homesteads on our land at Holy Cross. Mr. Armstrong
has or must have all the papers relating to this property
as sent to him last year by Hon. Commissioner Smith
Junior of St. Paul. Mr. Averill also knows about it for
Mr. Smith told me he had seen the Hon. gentleman
about it. Hon. Senator Rumsey knows the best
the whole thing, and he is more over well acquainted
with the affidavits of all the first people who settled
around me, at Holy Cross, testifying that I was there
the first ahead of other Indians or white I mean as a settler
whose affidavits include in their number that of

4th page

Miles A. Fletcher a Cousin of the Murgins of Loure⁴
who had as a friend come to live close to me in my poor
mission & who died, & is buried there, along with over
50 to 60 other persons, in the Cemetery which surrounds
the Old Mission Cross. The same affidavits were taken
& executed in the time of the Gov^t Survey by one of
the Chief Surveyors Mr. C. B. Fraley, Notary public
and are now at the Indian Bureau or the Gen^l Land
office, where they were forwarded last winter by the
officials of the land office at Pembina, D. T. When
they also forwarded a request to be enabled to postpone
demands of filing on said lands, then already presented by
the said invaders.

Now, Hon. Sir, other missions, like
v.g. the Episcopalians at Crow Wing & others elsewhere have
obtained such privileges from the Gov^t; and I understand
there is a law giving a section of land to advanced missions
on such reasons as ours in this case.

I therefore, most respectfully beg of you to present
and my Request to the Government of the U. S.
Confident of the result

I remain, most truly,

Your obt. Serv^t

[Genin]

J. B. M. Genin, D^y,
a. m. i.

Supplement

5.

I must add that I am continually exposed in that mission to the vexations of said people invading the land. Continual & extensive depredations are committed by them. Even my farmer & his family are threatened. I can hardly approach either the old church building or the Cemetery, the whole of which they now claim is on their presumptions and they style it a nuisance. It is very painful & hard for me, after expending there all I could spare, & thus opening the settlements there to white people, to thus see myself deprived of all the fruits of my labors, of all my improvements, and even see my life threatened & that of my farmer. I do most earnestly beg that the Hon: legislators will take us out of this very unjust trouble & doing us justice will pronounced definitely & promptly upon the validity of our title to that property.

Yours Very Respectfully

[Genin]

J. B. Mc Genin, Jr.

[Vid, Minn, Duluth, Genin]

Missionary

TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

U.S.V.
M.I.

Church of the Sacred Heart
Duluth, Minn, Dec. 1st, 1874.

General C. Ewing
Washington, D.C.

Honorable Sir:

I take the liberty of writing to ask your help in the following matter:

Some seven years ago quite awhile after I had commenced my mission establishment at Holy Cross, in the Valley of the Red River of the north, right on the old war path of the Sioux Indians. The same Sioux on whose land the mission was principally located although apart of it was on Minnesota, The Red River only being between gave to that mission said of Holy Cross a piece of land one section 1 1/2 square, as an encouragement for the purpose of helping the new establishment its church, schools, orphan asylum, all of which were in existence and a future hospital. The same lands were not yet surveyed and there was apparently in treaty yet between the U.S. and the Indians Ceding(?) upon same. The General Survey was made in 1869 and at that time already a post office had been established there, by one, under the title of Holy Cross P.O. I was the regularly appointed postoffice master of same by authority of the U.S. P.M. General Ben McCroskel who granted it to me on a/c of many half bred families and a few white families being settled there around the mission, to what place they had come upon the notice being given them that a priest lived there, that the soil was good and that the Indians on a/c of the priest did not molest the whites settling there. Later, when the treaty of the U.S. with the Sisseton and Wahpeton band of Sioux took place at Big Stone Lake, Mr. J. Smith, Junior, Mr. Forves and Mr. Adams being the duly appointed representatives of the U.S. The Indians made known under form of a petition to said Commissioners when wish to see the U.S. approve the land agent already made by them to my mission. The mission was then the exclusive and quiet proprietor or at least settler of same said land a large part of which was improved by me. A farmer was kept then building were put up in different places for church, school, orphan asylum etc, etc.

The number of settler in the vicinity having increased same because covetous of said land, and as there was no act of legislature yet obtained by which the title we have was made perfect, they intruded on same, notwithstanding my notifying them, by myself and even by the sheriff of the County of Cass in Dakota in which County the land is situated. They nevertheless have preserved and lately have entered some lands

TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

2

at the local land office of Fargo.

A. bill was introduced in Congress at the request of Hon. Mr. Armstrong of Dakota, of Hon. Senator Ramsey etc, etc. providing for the relief of the mission of Holy Cross. This bill was introduced last year, was read twice and referred to a Committee of which I understand Senator Averill of St. Paul, is Chairman. It is therefore, now during the debates of the same Committee, and only lately that these intruders have filed their preposterous or homesteads on our land at Holy Cross. Mr Armstrong has or must have all the maps peters relating to this property as sent to him last year by Hon. Commissioner Smith Junior of St. Paul. Mr. Averill also know about it for Mr. Smith told me he had seen the Hon. Gentlemen about it. Hon. Senator Ramsey know the best the whole thing, and he is more over well acquainted with the affidavits of all the fast people who settled around me, at Holy Cross, testifying that I went there the first ahead of the either Indians or white I mean as a settler which affidavits include in their number that of Miles a Fletcher a cousin of the Marquis of Lome who had as a friend come to live close to me in my poor mission and who died and is buried there along with over 50 to 60 other persons, in the cemetery which surrounds the old mission Cross. The same affidavits were taken and executed in the time of the Gov't survey by one of the chief surveyors Mr. C. O. Foley notary public and are now at the Indian Bureau or the Genl land office, where they were forwarded last winter by the officials of the land office at Pembina, D.T. when they also forwarded a request to be enabled to postpone demand of filing on said land then already presented by the said invaders.

Now, Hon. Sr, other mission, like v.g. the Episcopalian at Crowing and other elsewhere have obtained such privileges from the gov't and I understand there is a law giving a section of land to advanced mission on such reasons as our in this case.

I therefore most respectfully beg of you to present anew my request to the Government of the U.S. confident of the result

I remain, most truly

Your Obt Serv.
J.B.M. Guin, O.M.I.

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TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

2

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Your Obedt Serv.
J.B.M. Guin, O.M.I.

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TYPESCRIPT OF PRECEDING DOCUMENT

Supplement

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Yours very Respectfully

J. B. M. Guin, O.M.I., missionary

Archives and Institutional Repository - Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions