

Charles Archibald Townsend [678]



Letter to his mother from Charles in Mesopotamia

201361 Pte. Townshend C.
No 8 Platoon, B Compy
1st/4th Devons Reg
MEF
October 27th Saturday 1917

Dear Mama,

Many thanks for your letters and please thank Father for his and for Daily Mirrors, Mails & Punches. I hate to keep on repeating it, but there's still absolutely nothing doing beyond the ordinary duties of a Garrison Batt: This morning we went for a route march across the other side of the river, and this evening there is to be a Military Whist Drive. Last night there was a cinema show in the Y.M.C.A., showing Indian troops in France and the night before there was a concert given by the Hants Concert Party which goes on tour amusing all the troops on all lines of communication. The

sports were run off the other day, but as I was inoculated just before, I was hors de combat and so couldn't run. A chap in my tent won the mile and the high jump. All bathing in the Tigris is now stopped by order, so its good bye to the "Panni" (water) till next year. Please thank Father for the cardigan jacket which arrived all safe; but don't send any more clothes as we get a good issue of warm clothes for the winter besides gifts from Lady Carmichael's Fund. Now I'm afraid I must stop, as there is no more news. With love to all, I am always your loving Son **Tubby**.

Letter from Charles at Twin Springs Ranch to his Father

Twin Springs Ranch,
Reids Centre,
Nr. Fort St. John,
Peace River Block.

9th June 1924.

Dear Father,

I believe it's your turn for a letter. Well the above will be my address by about 5 P.M. tonight D.V. Its been a much longer journey than I thought; though of course breaking it for two days at Montreal made it longer; but Edmonton to Peace River is a 24 hour journey and Peace River to Fort St. John takes three or four days up-stream in a motor-boat. The fare for this is \$15 and for latter \$8.67 which brings cost of overland route excluding grub to £11-8s-2d. On many parts of the journey one has to get grub when and how you can - sometimes at a cafe and sometimes taking it with you and cooking it on the stove in the train. This is a grand big country with rivers so wide you would think them lakes and whose banks are like the sides of mountains, sometimes bare rock or gravel slopes, sometimes clothed with brush; consisting of spruce, black poplar (exactly like those we cut down in the Mill Pond Field hedge) and occasionally towering cotton wood. Back in the swamps a lot of tamarac (tamarisk?) grows on a black peaty soil which will burn to a depth of eighteen inches if the wood catches and, as you can imagine, is very hard to put out. I've not seen much of the flora & fauna yet beyond roses and sweet smelling shrubs and goose-grass & vetch for the former. And for the latter, I've seen the big robins at Montreal and small crows with a red wing streak & an eagle nesting in the cliffs; and the first day out of Peace River we saw a jolly old porcupine muddling around on the shore. From the train I saw gophers like huge rats with projecting front teeth and the Arctic or jack-rabbits, which now have their summer coat, looking rather bigger than ours (which they call cotton-tails here) with fluffy hind legs. I managed to snap some lake and wood land scenes from the train but it was rather difficult and I can't tell you how they'll turn out till I develop. We help one another with the cooking on the boat here and sleep on shore at night usually travelling from 5 A.M. till dark at 11.30. Yesterday we saw a "Sun-dog" which is a small cloud near the sun acting as a prism all coloured, it's supposed to be a sign of storms. I took the wheel for a bit this morning, its quite tricky as one has to pick the still water avoiding mid-stream where the current is too strong and look out for snags, rapids, rocks & sand bars. Now I must stop with love to all from your loving **Charlie**.

Two letters from Charles at Twin Springs Ranch to his Mother

Grandhaven Post Office,
Peace River Block, B.C.
June 15th. 1924

Dear Mama,

This is the new address which is much shorter than the original. We have to fetch our Mail and despatch fortnightly, a distance of about 10 miles. Fort St. John is

about 13 miles. Well I'm here at last. I'm afraid it's very different to what we thought it and we have an idea that we have been rather done; also that the Cousins won't stick it. Anyhow there's one saving chance in Hart's conditions of sale, - that is, if there is any misrepresentation the deal is off. And the Cousins have only paid half the purchase money, which we consider would more than buy the place, particularly as the horses are all duds and one of them died before we got here. However, don't worry on our account, as Flatt and I are agreed to push off on our own if the Cousins' plan falls through, and we're busy prospecting land in case.....The Mosquitoes and Bulldog flies (rather bigger than Wasps) are rather a scourge, but will abate, we hope, when the Drought breaks. It is very cold at night, though hot in the day. Now I must stop! With heaps of love to all! Hilda, Daisy, Noel, Grace, Dick & Father & of course yourself from Charlie.

Grand Haven Post Office,
Peace River Block, B.C.
23rd September 1924.

Dear Mama,

Many thanks for your last long & interesting letter. Things have changed a lot since I last wrote, both in weather conditions and in other ways.....Cousin Maurice is with us now at last, and very disgruntled with the weather, the Ranch, and things generally. Apparently he only paid Hart £100 on account and was to clear the rest (which by the way was not £1800 but only £900) gradually. And he (Maurice) having received Flatt's £300, cannot now account for it. Maurice said that he intended to cut his loss with Hart and get out of it. But when asked to refund, Flatt said that he couldn't or wouldn't, neither did he intend to pay me anything for all the work we've done, - (to no purpose now that he's broken contract). So he meant to leave us with the Winter coming on, no occupation and no money, minus capital, and minus what has been spent up to now on food &c. Well, we just faced him with the facts, and said that if he didn't pay, right up, we should put it in the hands of the police. He also meant to dodge all bills for timber for the House &c with people up here. Well we've scared him into cabling for Money, and the rest he will have to pay with note of hand to be collected in England. Even when we've been squared up to that extent, he has left us in a rotten position, with all kinds of means of employment gone, by the board.....With love to all and lots to yourself from your very loving Son Charlie.

Letter from Captain Thomas Flatt to Edward Mansel Townshend [630]

Fort St. John, B.C.
December 16th 1924

My Dear Mr. Townshend,

Many thanks for your kind letter & for your cheque for 10/6 for my son Tony. I'm sure I thank you very sincerely on his behalf.....As regards the mix up with Maurice Townshend, I consider he and his wife have sailed perilously near the edge of the law, the way they went to work never intending to put a penny into the place is really dirty, also they still owe me \$1500 odd, also Charlie \$275 to say nothing of several folk about here, who supplied timber etc., who collectively they owe about \$600. I sincerely trust you will get after the old reprobate, he has signed notes of hand for all of us which he should honour this 1st Dec 1924; whether he has or not I don't know, as my solicitor is presenting them. He did not want to pay Charlie any wages, but I set about when he was here, and made him sign the note of hand for Charles for \$275. If he has not paid up please tackle him, & her, because I am more afraid she will not play the game than he. As regards this place Twin Springs, its useless making any plans about it, for we don't yet know what action Hart will take. He may settle

with Maurice out of Court, or he may fight, if so the case won't come up before next Sept. 1925, or the Crown may step in and seize his soldiers Grant, because he (Hart) committed perjury; it's impossible to say. And if Maurice gets it the sooner I get out the better, as I won't have any more dealings with the old humbug.... You will please forgive me if I have expressed myself rather strongly of Maurice T. I assure you I'll do my best to help Charlie & pass on any information I receive. With many thanks for your kind letter, the cheque for Tony and the papers, & all good wishes for Xmas, & the New Year to You and Yours. I am Yours V Sincerely **Thomas W. Flatt.**

Letter from Maurice Townshend [263] to Edward Mansel Townshend [630]

Freshford Lodge, Freshford, Somerset.
12th August 1925.

Dear Mr. Townshend,

I am sorry to hear about Noel, we suspected he was not very well as he did not answer our first letter for a long time but did the second; perhaps he was not strong enough to fulfil the position. My solicitor in Peace River, is working the case against Hart and hopes to recover sufficient money to pay off all the money spent on the house which these bills represent. Captain Flatt has of course given them approximately and I also hope to get enough in the shape of damages to pay off Captain Flatt. Charlie of course had no share in the venture but by his own suggestion was to receive 10% of the nett profits before a division between Capt Flatt and us, instead of any wage; all this was his own suggestion and it was very bad luck that it turned out so badly for us all. Of course my wife's £50 and my £50 will come last. I have told my solicitor in Peace River who is a Limerick man to keep Capt Flatt acquainted with the position and any progress and shall write him again today, but it takes a long time to get an answer. I return Capt Flatt's letter. It is hard to follow your figures as Charlie had no share in the ranch. Does Charlie mean to take over the ranch? but as Capt Flatt suggests it does not belong to any of us, as the title was not good which was not discussed until after he had gone out and Charlie. With kind regards, Yours sincerely
Maurice F.S. Townshend