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(May 1929)
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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MONTGOMERY NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. 0-36
PART I

PROPOSED PARKS
GENERAL
MONTGOMERY

LAST DATE ON TOP
IMPORTANT

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.

January 3 1935
424 S. Hull St.,
Montgomery, Ala.

Mr. Donald R. Lee,
Acting Chief Historian,
Nat. Park Service,
Dept. Interior,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lee:-

Thank you for your letters of Dec. 7th and 10th. I am indeed sorry of Mr. Chatelain's illness and hope that by now he is well again. If you are going to be as nice to me as I believe him to be I will have no complaint to make.

Mr. Landru arrived about the tenth. I had a most pleasant day with him. He SAID HE had a most interesting trip here for two days, I hope so. But our weather was so dreadful that I am afraid I was not as nice as I would like to have been and that I chattered much and snowed and told him little. Maybe I gave him a general idea of what I wanted and hoped to get from you-all however. Have you received his report as yet? I hope so.

I want the money to reclaim two or three of our historical homes the homes of the pioneers of Alabama who made the history of the state, became the state and national leaders. One the home of one of our first Governors who afterwards was President of the National Senate, Benj. F. Fitzpatrick, the son-in-law of John Archer Elmore for whom Elmore County is named. Then adjoining this, the home of General John Archer Elmore (the same man as above) of the Revolution and then of his son Judge John Archer Elmore, law partner of Wm. L. Yancy, the Secession leaders, for whom Elmore station is named, and also the old home of Major Albert Elmore of the Mexican war, and Major Vincent Elmore of the Confederate war (the father of Col. Vincent Martin Elmore of the Spanish American and World war, now retired Army Officer.

These two homes and acreage join, about 1500 acres, 12 miles out from Montgomery. Situated just across the river from the 7 acres of Fort Toulouse, owned by the state now, a French Fort later captured by the British, just at the point where the Coosa and Talapoosa rivers join and form the Alabama. It is very narrow here and a beautiful bluff.

If we could open these two homes as a state shrine or something of this kind. Also if we could reproduce this plantation as in slavery time, run it as then, put from 150 to 300 negro families on it, let them buy their homes, rehabilitate

them, let them farm, upon a supervision, cooperative plan, along with other occupations, especially for the aged, making baskets, yard furniture, cement blocks, sign-posts, cement well curbing and many such things it would be a God send to many of these good negro families who were now destitute and who cannot get on relief nor stay on it and no one to whom to turn and no place to go. Besides making a wonderful picture, and holding some of our manners, customs, history of our wonderful old south. This would also be right along in line with the Administration plan and ideas and endeavors. It would be advantageously and profitably worked out for all concerned. Your department even getting back most of the money if not all that they put into this reproduction as it could be handled upon a business basis and made to pay besides so many reaping benefit and a peaceful and good living and none therefrom. A beautiful idea too, combining it into a Park with the history of this vicinity.

A much needed road could be put through this property at little expense making a direct short cut through highway from here to Florida joining on the north at just a short distance with the regular Birmingham - Montgomery Highway, cutting off from this present one at least ten to fifteen miles, taking in several small towns down the regular L.&N. Railroad route, making a short cut for the farmers and traffic out in that section to come into Montgomery for their products and business and eliminating two dreadful hills that they now have to run.

All this would give a great deal of work of all kinds to all sorts and types of men in different trades, hundreds of them.

And if the politicians, their appointees, and the graft were kept out of the project it could be handled in a businesslike way by business heads and men in charge, and done on a very small amount put out, to be given or partly paid back to the Government and really have something worthwhile, beautiful, permanent and lasting and beneficial to our people, towns, cities, state and the country as a whole.

If about one million dollars is allotted to Alabama, if we could get \$500,000.00 at the most for this entire development it could be easily handled and no doubt upon a good deal less.

I have already the plan, figures, location and everything in the rough. It could be started as quickly as we could get the funds. It could be put through quickly and the families ready for their early spring farming.

Then we would like to have one of our beautiful city names reclaimed so that we could use it for something worthwhile but to remain as was and is for always. It would not take much to do this.

Mr. Lanaru saw these two Elmore names and acreage, Fort Toulouse location (this is the location of the missing French cannon, one of which the state has found and has now in their possession) and this old Pollard city name.

All this Elmore county locality is the original Indian territory. The Elmore family traded with them on this plantation in 1819. This is on old Mortor creek which derived its name from the Indians. Alabama has been under 5 flags you know besides the Indian possession. This part was at one time West Florida. Besides this locality being the

Capitol of the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis's home is here. This is the home of Col. (afterwards Mayor of Montgomery and representative to Canada and Paris Exposition) Warren Stone Reese Sr., personal Body-guard and Escort to General Joe Wheeler, whose horse was named Mary Elmore after the daughter of Judge John Archer Elmore (Yancy's law-partner) whose daughter he married, and carried Gen. Wheeler to safety when he sent him across the bridge, then it was burned by the Federal troops and Reese swam the river, his horse sinking so that he jumped off her and swinging by her tail carried them both to safety of the opposite shore. Reese ran for the Senate and defeated Morgan (of the Pettus and Morgan time after the war) but was counted out because he did not run on the Democratic ticket at that time and Morgan and the rest of them paid him \$7000.00 not to content it as he was so popular they knew he would win out. He was twice or three times Mayor and then counted out. A big cotton plantation owner and speculator, although he came out of the war between the states with nothing out a wife and a baby, Mary Elmore Reese. Warren Reese was the adopted son of Col. James R. Powell of Virginia whose home is here, who owned and ran the old stage coach from Talladega Ala. south and who moved to Birmingham giving the down town district for the business city and was called the Duke of Birmingham.

This Elmore family is the South Carolina, Senator Franklin Elmore who declined the port folio to the Court of St. James, family whose father moved to Alabama in 1819. I am the 5th generation and great granddaughter of Judge John Archer Elmore.

We have had many eminent men visitors to this locality. Several Presidents, it is the home town of prominent men in state and national affairs.

Please under no conditions allow the politicians to get hold of this, if you do we are lost, it would go as all else has so far, our subsistence homestead, benefit of the control act for the small farmer, and our rehabilitation relief program is not well under way yet, although they have had the money since last spring. Overhead and overlapping and too many in one family with jobs etc etc etc.

You know I have to get busy at other things if I can't help with this so please let me have a report right away as to what can be done, when and how. I am terribly interested in the perpetuation of the history end, the Park part, the business, work public road side and the many families that could be helped to a better living and time in reclaiming and keeping our wonderful old slavery time plantation and customs and prosperity on it for all.

I hope I have not bored you, and would like to tell you lots more about us and this locality. Let me carry out this beautiful historical idea and plan, no other locality or state has more than we have to offer in this one locality.

Hoping to have a very very early reply. By the way I am sorry that Mr. Landru did not see the buried French cannon but my notice was too short and the weather was too dreadfully cold that day, and he said he would rather get all this other history of places and locality than to wait just to see the duplicate of the cannon that the state now has. Ala. is not going to consent to the lost cannon going out of this state I don't think.

Sincerely,
Minnie Reese Elmore Richardson
Minnie-Reese Elmore Richardson.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Chickamauga--Chattanooga
National Military Park

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,
BUILDINGS AND RESERVATIONS
RECEIVED
JAN - 3 1935

BRANCH OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
61 Federal Bldg.,
Chattanooga, Tenn.,
January 7, 1935.

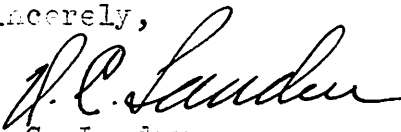
Mr. Verne E. Chatelain
Chief, Historical Division
Branch of Research and Education
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Chatelain:

Last Saturday I received a letter from Miss M. R. Richardson in which she enclosed certain material which I had requested on the occasion of my visit to Montgomery. Two copies of this information are enclosed with this letter. It gives a clear statement I believe of the program which Miss Richardson has in mind, a program which as I mentioned in my earlier report I feel is very important.

I am also sending a few photographs which I made while I was in Montgomery and which I think might be of interest to you. Photograph #1 is a view of the state capital used during the opening days of the Civil War as the capital of the Confederacy. #2 is a picture of the first frame house to be constructed in Alabama. #3 and 4 are views of the first white house of the Confederacy, the home of Jefferson Davis in the early days of secession. #5 and 6 show a beautiful old town home of the ante bellum period which is now rapidly falling into ruin and is used at present as a transient home. #7 is a view of one of the southern plantation homes now being occupied by the descendents of the original builders and which if it could be purchased would be, I believe, an excellent subject for the project suggested by Miss Richardson.

Sincerely,


H. C. Landru
Historical Technician

HCL/ale
Enc.

Could we reclaim the old home of one of Alabama's first Governors who was also President of the Senate of the National Congress and a Confederate Officer. One of the few old homes still standing. Benj. F. Fitzpatrick. Husband of an Elmore. Given this homestead when married, then a struggling young lawyer, by General John Archer Elmore, Rev. Gen.

Also the adjoining property, old home of General John Archer Elmore of Revolution, and Judge John Archer Elmore, Law partner of William L. Yancy, leaders of Secession, for whom Elmore county and Elmore station are named. Confederate officers and leaders of State history. This home and Elmore family are the pioneers of this locality coming here when then a territory etc. Plantation contains 700 acres in Elmore place. Both would be about 1500 acres.

This is just across from Fort Moultrie, French Fort. French were run out by British. This is where French cannon is. There were two of them. One has been found. Other can be gotten we believe. The two rivers, Coosa and Tallapoosa join here and make the Alabama.

Could we make a Park of all or part of this land. Houses open as Shrines or some such.

Could we reproduce this entire or just the 500 acre Elmore plantation as was in slavery time, and before, when Indians were there. Running plantation as during those times. I have a plan that could be worked out. Business and homes carried on as then yet be made to pay for itself, I believe. Also the negroes be allowed to purchase their homes. Yet supervised. Assisted. Trained. Business all run as an old plantation was etc. THIS CAN BE DONE AND IT WOULD BE SPLENDID AND BEAUTIFUL. How I would live to perfect this.

We have every claim to historical events both state, national and international and prominent and eminent persons for this locality.

We could open up a road, short cut south to Florida by this property. We could give hundreds of all types of people work. And from 150 to 300 negro families rehabilitated, as different departments trying to do already. We could combine many projects into one. We can do this all on far less money than any one of them are now doing.

I can give figures and all data at any time. Plan can be quickly worked out. Put into effect. People put to work in short time and families established in time for their spring planting on their little "Plantation Farm Homes".

The old plantation life, business, ideas can all be carried out beautifully and advantageously for all concerned, as well as for the state from the historical aspect.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

January 14, 1935

M. Kahle

Memorandum to Mr. Landru:

MA

We received a letter, dated November 26, from you concerning a trip to Montgomery, Alabama, at which time you contemplated contacting Miss Minnie-Reese Richardson. We have no record of having received a report from you in relation to the visit with Miss Richardson. I am attaching a copy of a letter written to Miss Richardson on December 7, a carbon copy of which was sent to you at the time. I am also attaching a copy of a letter received from Miss Richardson recently. Will you please let me have a report on your visit with Miss Richardson in December?

Verne E. Chatelain

Enclosure 508979

*Believe
attached
report in question*

January 9th 1935

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,
BUILDINGS AND RESERVATIONS
RECEIVED

JAN 18 1935

BRANCH OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Chatelain:-

I am hoping that by now you are quite well again and feeling fine. In fact so fine that you will soon be down here to see us. Because of course if you come down to Chattanooga you must come on over here. When will you be here?

Mr. Lanaru writes me that he has sent in his report to you regarding his inspection trip here. So I am wondering what you are going to do for me here, and when you will do it? Of course you have seen my recent letter to your Mr. Lee? Mr. Lanaru asked that I send it, we discussed such plans when he was here. I don't know that I did it and sold it to you as he wanted me to do out maybe he did along the same lines, did he?

You know I will be in the hospital or too old and decrepid to take any interest much less work or help with a project for us, for me, and for you here if you don't hurry up and let us have the money and let me get at it.

Just tell me what you want done, and by whom, here and I will see that it is done, provided you leave the politicians out of it. Except the new Governor, and his secretary, they are kin to me. I will put over the projects I mentioned to Mr. Lee all right if you will just give me the chance. The plantation reproduced, along the lines of rehabilitation. The park. The road. The bridge (You know we can get grants etc. and public works funds for this part, cant we?) The homes. Etc. If you will say I can do it I will get up the plans in detail and the lowest estimates for each thing at once and get busy on it all. But I certainly do not want to do one bit of this unless it is going through---I havent the time to waste that way.

Oh, yes, I am full of ideas. If one cant be done, or cant be a certain way, then we can do it another way or something else.

Let me hear from you soon wont you? and dont get ill again.

Sincerely,

Miss - Reese Elmore Johnson
424 S. Hull St.,

Montgomery, Ala.

Lee - Kahn

The suggestions of Miss Richardson
- contains - this material offer
some fruitful ideas - we have
nothing of historical nature
in Alabama? Should we
have anything? If so, what
should it be?

A study of the points of this
list of suggestions - & a covering
memo? - Thanks -

Chatelain

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

P.C. please -
espec. earlier comes.
with Mrs. Elmore
Richardson

RFL

February 1st 1935

Mr. Chatelain, C H
Nat'l Park Service
Dept Interior
Washington D C

*Mr. Taylor
Get the file
on closing the
reports of Hamilton
Chatelain*

Dear Mr Chatelain

I hope that by now that you have entirely recovered from your illness and hospital experience. I had hoped to see you in my city here by now.

May I hear from you as regarding the things in which I have been and am interested here, and had hoped that you too would be? Please note letter from me to your Mr Lee today and let me hear something favorable pertaining thereto. If a plan of some kind cannot be worked out at an early date? It seems to me that I made it broad and open enough for any and all suggestions and ideas from others don't you so think?

Thanking you for an early reply, I am,

Sincerely,

Minnie - Reese Richardson -

424 S Hull St

Montgomery, Ala

M. Ree

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,
BUILDINGS AND RESERVATIONS
RECEIVED

FEB 15 1935

BRANCH OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Feb. 13th 1935

Mr. Verne E. Chatelain, Acting Asst. Director,
Natl. Park Service,
U.S. Dept., Interior,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Chatelain:-

WONT you PLEASE let me know what the trouble is,
and hear from you in detail regarding SOMETHING we can do here
along the lines Mr. Landru and I have gone into.

My people need the work. We need the money. Many of us
want our lovely old houses and customs preserved. Will you
assist us in doing this? When? How? What amount of money
can we get, then we can map out our plans to fit the amount.

Our new Governor, my friend, is improving, building, putting to work, and
money-getting conscious so PLEASE let me do something about
these projects I suggested, ready to be worked out, and put into
operation, right away before the newness wears off or before all the
funds we can get for Alabama have been allocated?

May I hear from you in detail at once? Thanking you, I am,

Sincerely,

M. R. Richardson
Minnie-Reese Elmore Richardson.

424 S. Hull St.,
Montgomery, Ala.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

Brown
...

February 18, 1935.

Mr. J. H. Gadsby,
1401 Court House,
Miami, Florida.

0-36
Montgomery

Dear Mr. Gadsby:

Enclosed you will find copies of three letters regarding a proposal to restore a typical plantation home near Montgomery, Alabama.

I trust that you will contact Miss Richardson and see what she has in mind for this project.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Conrad L. Wirth,
Assistant Director.

Encl. 495386
NAE-fmd

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

Chatelain

March 9, 1935

✓
Miss Minnie-Reese Richardson,
424 South Hull Street,
Montgomery, Alabama.

0-36
Montgomery

My dear Miss Richardson:

Your letters of February 1 and February 15, addressed to Mr. Chatelain, dealing with the matter of preserving certain of the outstanding historical sites in the vicinity of Montgomery, Alabama, have been received by the National Park Service. This Service, which has jurisdiction over Federal historical areas, appreciates your deep interest in these problems, as was evidenced in our sending Mr. Landru to visit your region.

No doubt there are several historical sites of outstanding interest in and near Montgomery. We are aware, for instance, of the important part Montgomery played in the early stages of the War between the States, when it was for a time the capital of the Confederacy. Then, too, its place in the Cotton Kingdom, reflected in some of the fine planter homes of that area, is recognized, by historians generally, as well as its earlier importance in the period of French and English colonization in the old Southwest.

It is believed that the suggestions which you have made merit serious consideration and to that end we will be glad to give the question further attention at an early date. It may be possible for Mr. Chatelain to stop at Montgomery on his return from a southern trip about March 20. He will write you soon in regard to that possibility.

As you are well aware, there are many difficulties in the way of creating national historical parks and monuments, and this Service must deal with each proposal with great care, since only the most outstanding and available historical sites can be given national recognition.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD.) A. E. DEMARAY
A. E. Demaray,
Acting Director.

VEC:ICS