

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, July 31, 1902

July 31, 1902. Dear Mabel: —

Enclosed please find letter from Lina with two notes from Mr. McCurdy. I don't know what to say about the matter, and think whole thing depends upon you.

It may be that Lina is attached to her place and would be happier there than anywhere else. Of course the purchase of the whole place need not necessarily disturb her at all. I have no doubt that any purchaser would be glad to rent her the place she has just as she has it now. I doubt whether they would be willing to sell it, as it cuts into the property, and the alianation of this small strip might injure the market value of the whole.

1st. point: — Does Lina desire very much to own a place of her own, or would she be satisfied to rent. If the latter, there is no need of doing anything, a purchaser would certainly would be glad to rent, on a term of years.

If Lina's heart is set upon owning a place — is it set upon that place, if not, why should she not purchase another place.

If she is desirous of buying the place on which she lives, and cannot afford to buy the whole of the property, then the only solution is, for someone else to buy it, and sell her what she wants. Are you prepared to do this? We have more real estate here than we want, and on general principles I am opposed to buying any more property here, excepting the ponds you want; but, if Lina's heart is set upon that bit of property and you want to help her, why don't you buy the place, and then sell to her what she wants. I can readily see that Mr. McCurdy — in justice to his children — must sell that property in order to raise

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funds for their further education, and he cannot well sell less than the whole 2 without damaging the value of the remainder.

It is simply then to my mind a question of your wishes in the matter, and the extent of your desire to help Lina. If you wish to help her and make her happy I have no objections to your making the investment.

Your loving husband Alec

July 30, 1902. Dear Alec: —

Can you help me a little about these letters. I don't quite know what to make of Mr. McCurdy's proposition — that is what motive he has in view. For if I had thought it wise to buy his whole property I would have made the offer early in the summer.

I think it would really be easier for me to pay \$5,000 down than to burden myself with a mortgage and debt, don't you?

I want very much to buy my cottage, and also to have some right to the water — I could go as high as \$1,000 — \$2,000 — though I should not care to spend more than \$1,500 — and would like as many acres as that amount of money would buy.

Now, can you tell me whether it would be wiser to simply say I cannot afford to buy so large a place as the responsibility would be too great — or shall I say that, and also make a counter offer — and if the latter, won't you please tell me what you think would be the best way to express myself.

It would be fun of course to own a large property with a large income — but with a small one if I could not rent or sell the big house, I'm afraid it would be a dead loss? Also the taxes might be very heavy.

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I think possibly Mr. McCurdy has had an offer and wishes to give me the opportunity to decline so that he can say he has given me the first chance? In which case it might be wisest to simply decline, and buy some other land.

I might offer to buy the land near the marsh that wouldn't break into his property quite so much, and build a house there.

Do you think if I took the whole property there would be any way of earning money from the land itself.

Affectionately yours, Caroline G. M. Curdy