562 Trigo Street, A-2
Santurce, Puerto Rico
April 14, 1963

Mr. Douglas S. Middleton
7170 East Nevada
Detroit 34, Michigan

Dear Mr. Middleton:

Back in May 1958, I wrote you of the projected visit of Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Church to the Kirtland's Warbler country, and you were able to direct them to a breeding colony. They were, you remember, successful in finding the bird.

Now, it is entirely likely that my wife and I may be in Michigan for a few days late in May or early in June. If it is at all possible, I should like very much to visit a colony of the warblers myself. It should be quite an experience, after exactly 40 years!

Could you send me exact particulars about the location of one or two colonies of Kirtland's last year? We shall probably be staying at Flint, and I should be most interested in a colony, or colonies, as near there or as readily accessible from there as possible.

What I will need is directions as precise as possible, for I shall probably not be able to spend any appreciable time in the field. It will be almost a matter of driving directly to where the bird is or missing it entirely. Professor Wood, in 1923, was able to give me such exact directions that I found the bird within five or ten minutes of arriving where he told me to go (two and a half miles north of Oscoda, Iosco County.) Perhaps you could send me a marked county map, as you have in the past, or perhaps a verbal set of directions would be better.

Thanks in advance for any help you can give me. Perhaps you would verify your street address and send me also your telephone number in case I have a chance to get into touch with you directly.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Leopold

562 Trigo St., A-2
Santurce, Puerto Rico
May 15, 1963

Mr. Douglas Middleton
20553 Fairport
Detroit 5, Michigan

Dear Mr. Middleton:

I can't begin to thank you for all the time and trouble you have taken in sending me such complete material on the location of the colonies of Kirtland's during the 1962 season. A man would have to be blind not to be able to follow such fine, clear directions.

And until yesterday it looked very much as if I would be able not only to avail myself of the information you supplied but also to attend the meeting at Mio, June 1, and perhaps have the pleasure of your company in finding one of the nesting colonies.

But yesterday my plans had to be changed very suddenly. My wife and I are leaving for Europe on May 28. So I'm afraid the Kirtland's trip is off for this year. I am hoping very much that I can get to Michigan in June 1964.

If the trip becomes possible next year, I'll certainly communicate with you well in advance and see if we cannot arrange a trip together.

Meantime, thanks again for all the trouble you have taken.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Leopold

Nathan Leopold

December 27, 1963

Professor Maurice Brooks
Division of Forestry
West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia

Dear Maurice:

The Christmas card from you and your wife reminded me of something I had been wanting to ask you for sometime.

Several years ago Dr. William Van Eck, of the Department of Agronomy and Genetics at Morgantown, wrote me that he had seen a number of Kirtland's Warblers in an extensive sandy pine area in Newaygo County of Michigan, which is just a little outside although near the known breeding range of the warbler. Dr. Van Eck's observations were in 1954.

Prompted by his letter, I visited the area once - although it was a few years later - and did not find any warblers there. At my suggestion, Larry Walkinshaw also visited the area and did not find any warblers there. However, I found the Prairie Warbler common in the area named, and I wondered if Dr. Van Eck might not have been mistaken.

As you and I know, all of these little fleeting yellow-breasted warblers look and sound alike to people who are not real bird students. And that brings me to my question. Is Dr. Van Eck a person who would know the various species of warblers apart readily? This matter was brought back to my attention a few weeks ago when he wrote me pointing out that I had not included Newaygo County in the range of the warbler in my monograph, even though he had reported it. In reply, I told him that I had simply included the areas in which nests had been found. And no nests have been reported from Newaygo County.

As a person who has been sifting through the reports of others for many years, you will appreciate keenly the difficulty of appraising a sight record from a stranger. Of course it is quite possible that Kirtland's Warblers were in the area mentioned in 1954, but not in some later year Larry or I looked for them.

Could you give me a personal opinion?

Sincerely yours,

Harold Mayfield:eh

River Road, R.F.D.
Waterville, Ohio

OWENS-ILLINOIS

GENERAL OFFICES (I) TOLEDO 1, OHIO

November 29, 1963

Dr. William Van Eck
Department of Agronomy and Genetics
West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia

Dear Dr. Van Eck:

I remember our correspondence about the Kirtland's Warbler very well, and subsequently asked one of my friends who lives in Michigan, and is a long-time student of the Kirtland's Warbler, to check the Big Desert area in Newaygo County. Later I also visited this area at the height of the nesting season. Neither of us found the bird there. Therefore, I am uncertain if the birds you saw were merely wandering through rather than nesting.

In the area you mention, I found a substantial acreage of Jack pine but the ground cover seemed very scanty and far from ideal as judged by our knowledge of the birds' habitats.

Thanks for writing me.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Mayfield

Harold Mayfield:eh

River Road, R.F.D.
Waterville, Ohio

Singing males (several) were seen on several days in June and July of 1954. My judgment is based on 21 years of "birding"!

Regards

Wm Van Eck

July 7, 1963

Mr. Earl H. Frothingham
4702 Valley Road
Long Beach, Cal.

Dear Mr. Frothingham:

I have lately spent a considerable amount of time trying to determine the exact location of the first nest of the Kirtland's Warbler, found by Norman Wood on July 8, 1903.

I believe I have read all of your writings on the subject, and have had access to all of Wood's writings, including his pencil-written journal and pocket notebook, and have written an article on the matter which was published in the Jack Pine Warbler, the quarterly bulletin of the Michigan Audubon Society.

It is only recently that I have learned your address, through the Alumni Office of the Univ. of Mich. (I am also a U. of M. graduate - 1908 Eng.)

If this letter reaches you, and you would enjoy reading my article, I will gladly send you a reprint of it. I would be immensely interested in having your opinion on some of the guesses I had to make.

Sincerely yours,

E. H. Frothingham
4702 Village Road, Long Beach 8, California

POST MARKED AUG. 1, 1963
1963, LONG BEACH
Aug.

Dear Mr. Holden:

I was delighted to receive your letter of July 7 about the Kirtland warbler, and would have answered it earlier except that I mislaid it and found it only after a rather hectic search. Finding it was a great relief as I of course had no other clue to your address, and failure to answer it would have been a great disappointment to me.

Yes, I would very much enjoy reading your article in the Jack Pine Warbler, quarterly bulletin of the Michigan Audubon Society, if you can spare a reprint of it. I,too, am a member of the Audubon Society, and a year or so ago sent the "Western Tanager", bulletin of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, a letter describing our discovery of the breeding colony of Kirtland warbler; which was never even acknowledged (being pretty far afield from the activities of the local chapter.)

It's quite likely you have seen the article by John Calkins, "Strictly for the Birds", in the June 1963 issue of American Forests, but just in case you haven't I'm mailing you my copy; and I'm sending you also a reprint of the article by Norman Woods and myself which appeared in the The Auk for January, 1905. You needn't return them.

T. G. Gale, who was my associate on the Au Sable trips, passed away at his home in Arcadia, California, in February of this year. He was a Michigan graduate, 1903, Eng.

Thanks for your letter; it was a pleasure hearing from you, and I hope you will write again, perhaps telling something about your own interest in the birds of the upper Au Sable region. I keep my memory of them alive with an album of the Cornell bird song records.

Sincerely,

E. H. Frothingham

Aug. 7, 1963

Dear Mr. Frothingham:

It was with great pleasure that I received your letter of Aug. 1 and the reprint of your article in the Auk of January, 1905. I had seen the article, but to have a reprint for my file - and autographed by the real discoverer of the breeding place of the Kirtland's Warbler - it will be one of my prized possessions.

I am enclosing with this letter a reprint of the paper I mentioned, and am also sending under separate cover a photostat of my map on a larger scale than the one used in the article. This photostat is a reduction of my original map which was to a scale of 4 in. to the mile. An artist altered the original somewhat in preparing in for printing.

As I said in my earlier letter, I will be tremendously interested in having your comments on this paper. You can clear up many points that I have guessed at or wondered about, such as:

1. Where did you and Gale camp ?

2. " " " hear and see the first Warblers ?

3. " " Gale shoot the specimen ?

4. How nearly correct was the story Van Tyne told me ? Memory is a very tricky tool and the story was probably distorted a little in each retelling - mine, Van Tyne's, and by whoever told him. But the story must have had some foundation.

5. How come you had a shot gun along on a fishing trip ? Or was it Parmalee's ?

6. If you camped at Area C, how come you started from Parmalee's on your trip to Fraser's - did you leave your horse (or horses) at Parmalee's ? Was it a livery rig or Gales ?

7. Was Gale living at West Branch that summer ? In the Alumni Office file Gale gave his address as Saginaw except for one 3 x 5 card which said West Branch, Mich. but with no date or other information.

8. In driving to Luzerne you probably went straight north from W.B. throught what is now called "The Lost City of Damon". Your description of the countryside in the Auk article is very well done. I drove that route a week or two ago and you would be amazed by the changes. In many places the forest canopy almost makes the road a tunnell. I made it about

twenty seven miles from West Branch to Luzerne. How long did it take you by horse ?

9. Maybe you can tell me who Dr. Hinsdale was.

Well, I will not bother you with any more questions at this time but will probably fire another barrage later. I am being urged to write up your trip as a companion piece to the paper on Wood's Search ..., not from a scientific standpoint - you have done that beautifully - but from a historical angle. But you have all the facts and I think you should be the one to do it. I can be of some help probably in getting it published etc. However, if you would prefer that I do it and are willing to feed me the facts, I will gladly undertake it and will have you check the MSS at every step.

One or the other of us should get this story together, and soon, as time is running out for both of us.

Sincerely yours,

P.S. My addresses are:

From May first to Oct. first:

From Oct. first to May first:

4702 Village Road, Long Beach 8, California

Aug. 27, 1963

Dear Mr. Holden:

I have been tremendously interested in your letter of August 7 and in your article, "Wood's Search for the Type Nest of the Kirtland's Warbler". How I wish I could help you in your efforts to reconstruct all the events surrounding the discovery of the nesting colony and the first nest of the warbler; but I am afraid my attempts to answer your questions will be very inadequate. My memory of what took place is practically nil. I am enclosing five prints from an old photo-album which may or may not be of some interest to you, chiefly from the titles and dates. The titles in pencil were put on before the prints were mounted in the album. The gummed labels show titles written under the pictures after they were mounted. The dates and places of these pictures, coupled with the meagre account of our trip in the Auk article, would seem to warrant the following answers to the questions contained in your letter:

1. Gale and I staid at or close to the Parmalee's from the evening of June 13, 1903, to the morning of June 15, "the second day following our arrival" (2nd. paragraph, p.40, of Auk article). On the morning of the 15th. Jim Parmalee ~~probably~~ drove us to the camping site shown in the picture and labelled "East fork of the North Branch of the Au Sable River". Probably Jim then returned to his home with the team, with the understanding that he would return for us on June 18 (or possibly June 19). It is probable that he boarded the team for us, since we would have had no facilities for it.

2. We heard and saw the warblers for the first time on June 15 "about 300 yards from the river", before starting for the camp site, Jim Parmalee being ~~probably~~ the driver of the rig which had brought us from West Branch.

3. I was familiar with the songs of most of the warblers, and had a strong suspicion that this unfamiliar song might be that of the Kirtland warbler, though it hardly seemed likely because of the abundance of the bird. So, after having "heard the song at six or eight places along the road during the first hour of the drive" (of seven miles!) I asked Tom to shoot a specimen. We must have been then close to the spot where we were to camp. From then on we saw no more of the warblers.

I regret that the statement attributed to me by Mr. Wood was an incorrect one (see quotation from Wood on your page 88: "I never thought of its being Kirtland's Warbler"). I don't doubt that I made it, but I was not strictly accurate in doing so because of the "strong suspicion" mentioned in the preceding paragraph. But it's a very minor point.

4. Mr. van Tyne's account doesn't jibe with my own in the Auk article (p. 40, paragraph 2) and I would be inclined to credit my own account, namely, that the specimen was collected during our drive to the camp site.

As to the Van Tyne story that I "hung the skin on the tent flap to dry", I hardly think that this could have been the case. I was rather proud of my fancied ability to put up bird skins in a competent manner, and I don't think I would have hung the skin on the tent flap to dry. I remember, however, that the flies were terribly bothersome while I was at work on the skin, and that I deferred finishing it for that reason. I think I must have been the one who told the story, since Mr. Gale was not easily available, as I was, and was not especially interested in the incident.

5. We didn't have a shot gun; we used my .22 calibre rifle with shot cartridges for collecting birds.

6. I think we staid at or near Parmalee's from the evening of June 13 to the morning of June 15, and didn't camp at Area C. In your article I see no reference to the "East Fork of the North Branch of the Au Sable River", which our photo prints indicate as our camp site, close to a dam. What is this "East Fork"? Should it have been titled "Big Creek"? But we have a picture titled "Big Creek".

I don't know who owned the conveyance and horses in which we travelled from West Branch to Parmalees. Tom's father was president of a lumber company with headquarters ~~had a sawmill~~ at West Branch, and it may be the rig was an appurtenance thereof.

7. Gale's home at that time, I believe, was Saginaw; but he may have spent the summer at his father's lumber company headquarters, at West Branch.

8. I think we probably did go through the "City" of Damon en route to Parmalee's from West Branch. Anyway, we returned that way, as witness the picture dated June 19.

9. I can't identify Dr. Hinsdale, but was acquainted with Dr. Reighardt.

By all means, you should be the one to write any further paper on Kirtlandi. The paper of which you sent me a reprint is extremely well done. Shall be glad to be of any possible help.

Sincerely and gratefully
E. H. Frothingham

E. fork of
N. Branch of
Au Sable River, 6-17-09

Camp

F8040
8

The east branch of the north branch of the Au Sable, looking north-east; tent and dam.

E. fork of N. Branch of the Au Sable River, looking NE. 6-17-'03

The east branch of the north branch of the on Sally, looking north-east; out and down.

Big Creek – Forming

Big CREEK
6-17-'03.
T. G. Gale, CENTER

Big Creek – Tawing

Big Creek
6-17-'03.

Old logging dam in front of Camp.

Blondie Dam
East Fork, North
Branch, AuSable
River, 6-17-'03

Old hogging down in front of barn.

"Homeward Bound"
Damon
June 19, 1903

Dear Mr. Frothingham:

The pictures you sent me are perfect documentation. Blondie's Dam is a well known landmark - some of the piling is still in place - and with your photographs I can pin-point the location of your camp within a few feet. The stream is Big Creek. The only places I ever saw it called E. Br. of the North Branch are on your captions and on an old map of Crawford Co. (corrected to 1917). Now, all maps and highway markers call it Big Creek, as did Wood in his notes. It is probable that Parmalee preferred E. Br. etc. because the Big Creek draining the Luzerne area joins the Au Sable a short distance below his place and he was constantly being confused by so many Big Creeks.

The location of your camp is just off the N W corner of my map. For the article I will make a small map which will tie the area of your camp site to the larger map. Do you want the pictures back? I would like to use one or two - maybe all of them in the article.

In the summer of 1960, after my article on Wood's Search .... had gone to the printer, I stopped on my way through Toledo and called on Jim Parmalee and his wife. One of the questions I asked him was where you camped and he said Blondie Dam, but his memory was so far off on some of his other answers that I was afraid to trust him. For instance, I asked him what Wood did with his boat, and he said that Wood didn't come down the river by boat. But we know that of course he did and that when he left he had Parmalee or someone else take him by wagon back to Roscommon. They probably took the boat back to Roscommon with them, but I hadn't thought of that simple solution when I talked to Parmalee.

Parmalee seemed to have been well acquainted with Tommy Gale. Had Gale been up there on other fishing trips, or how did you and he happen to pick that spot? Perhaps, as a boy, he had been up there with his father who may have, in his younger days worked in that neighborhood in the old lumber days. Parmalee told me that you and Gale drove up from West Branch. Later I saw your Auk article which confirmed that statement. P. also said that Tommy's father was a well-to-do- lumberman in West Branch. This led me to guess that Gale might have gone to U. of M. Search of the files confirmed this and gave me your address.

Now, I believe I have an adequate idea of your movements after you left West Branch except for what you did on the morning of June 15, before the hour of 11:00 A.M. You arrived at Parmalee's after a drive of about 30 miles. The next day, June 14, you may have fished a little but mostly you rested - particularly the horses.

On the morning of June 15 you decided to go and establish a camp. Now if you will look at my map you will see up-river from Parmalee's there are only two places where you can drive right up to the river - barring those places where you would be camping in someones front yard, such as at Parmalee's, Redhead's or Fraser's. Those two places are at Area C and at Blondie's Dam. Could it be that you drove up to Area C and looked it over but decided that you would rather go where you could pitch your tent right at the water's edge. At Area C your camp would have to be 50 feet or more above the water - a beautiful site but not convenient.

Could it be that it was here that you first heard the Warblers? Here the jack pines cover a ridge and come right up to the river. We know that Wood spent July 6 and 7 at this spot and I have a strong feeling that Wood knew where he was going when he started out on the morning of July 6 and that you had told him about this spot. Wood said 4 miles west of Parmalee's and ¼ mi. from the river - smack in the middle of Area C. You would have had plenty of time to go back and pick up Parmalee and leave for Blondie Dam at 11:00. In your first published report you say that Gale shot the specimen "in a slashing close to the border of Crawford Co." That is the same general locality as that where Wood found the first nest, and is about two miles from Fraser's and from Blondie Dam. Beyond the County Line you would have left the big jack pine area. You would cross and skirt a few smaller patches of jacks which contained Warblers in subsequent years but which, in 1903, had few if any. Wood, in his trips between Fraser's and the first nest saw or collected no Kirtlands along that two miles. (At least that is my impression from his notes).

Now, a few questions and I will end this rambling epistle.

1. How long had you known Gale and how did you get acquainted?

2. Had you planned the trip long in advance?

3. Did you go mainly for the fishing or to collect and study birds? Did you have a private collection or did you just collect for the Museum?

4. Did you visit Fraser's while you were in camp? I would guess that you did and that your favorable report to Wood influenced him to stay there during part of his sojourn. He seemed to like Fraser's.

5. Where were you living at the time of your trip, and how did you get to West Branch?

6. In the picture of your rig at Damon the vehicle looks like what was called a buckboard - a platform with a seat mounted on springs, - a very suitable rig for such a trip. Does your memory check with this?

Well, I think this is enough for this time. Let me have any recollections that your subconscious dredges up no matter how trivial they seem. By this time I am so familiar with the lay-of-the-land down there that I may be able to fit unimportant looking information into the jigsaw puzzle.

Sincerely yours,

4702 Village Road, Long Beach 8, California
Oct. 10, 1963

Dear Mr. Holden:

I was glad to know, from your letter of September 16, that the pictures enclosed with my letter of August 27 were of some use to you. You are welcome to keep them. I think they are too fuzzy to reproduce well. I tried to find the negatives, but no soap. I have pictures of Jim and Mrs. Parmalee, Frances and Mable, and their house which you can have if you wish them, but I don't imagine they'd be of any use to you.

I'm quite sure your hunch is right: that Tom Gale had stopped with the Parmalees on previous fishing trips, and that this is why we went there. The Au Sable was old stamping grounds to Tommy. While my subliminal has not been cultivated to the extent of bringing up out of the vasty deep the tenuous pearls of information you suggest may be lurking there, with the aid of your letters I am able to reconstruct just a little of the story - a very little. I'll answer as many of your questions as I am able to.

1. I first met Tom Gale in the fall of 1901 or the spring of 1902. I had transferred my credits from the Medical to the Literary Department of the University, and soon after I was pledged to the Delta Upsilon Fraternity, of which Tom was a member. I didn't keep a diary at that time, so can't be sure of dates.

2. I can't say how long in advance we had planned the trip. I had got a job as assistant at the museum, in connection with which I had done some collecting in the neighborhood of Ann Arbor - chiefly field mice, voles, and such. When Tom suggested the trip to the Au Sable I fell for it enthusiastically, partly for the fishing but largely to collect for the museum.

3. I had a private collection (a small one) of mounted birds and skins at my home in Chicago, but the collecting was all for the Museum - that is, the collecting on the two Au Sable trips.

4. I don't remember having visited Fraser's, but we may have.

5. At the time of our trip Tom and I were sharing a room in the home of a family named Hawxhurst, but I have forgotten the street address. I suppose we got from Ann Arbor to West Branch by train, but I can give you no particulars.

o. Yes, I'm pretty sure the rig we travelled in between West Branch and Parmalee's was a buckboard.

Tom and I kept a log of our trip down the Au Sable August 8 to 23 ~~t~~, and I made a shambles out of our accessory storage space (the garage) trying to find it, on the off chance there might have been something in it about the earlier trip. Not being able to find it, I think I must have turned it over to Tom sometime during the past ten or fifteen years. My old album contains quite a lot of pictures taken during that trip, one of which I enclose to show the can of formaldehyde, for snakes, fish, etc., and a museum case for skins of mammals and birds. We set out a line of small traps at most of our camping stops, in which we caught deer mice, lemmings, and such.

I am truly sorry I cannot supply you with further information; but as earlier intimated my subconscious is definitely not functioning. If you have any further questions I would be delighted to try to answer them.

Sincerely,

E. H. Frothingham

Dear Mr. Frothingham:

Here is a rough draft of the proposed article. I have not received a reply from my last letter to you and have guessed at some of the answers. If I have guessed wrong, the MSS can easily be changed.

The whole thing is perhaps, too long and needs condensing. I am sending copies to Mayfield, Middleton and Berger for their criticisms. If there is anything you wish to add, cut out, or change. just mark it up or rewrite any portion you wish. I already see places that I think can be improved.

When all the suggestions are in, I will rewrite and send you a final MSS before sending it out. I propose giving it to the Jack Pine Warbler as it is of interest mostly to the birders of Michigan.

Will anxiously await your comments.

Sincerely yours,

AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
Compliments of Craft Press, Ann Arbor
Printers of
University of Michigan Museum of Zoology Publications