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**Letter from the Secretary of War, accompanying a memorial from citizens of Wrangel, Alaska, asking for the establishment of courts of justice in that territory.**

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

ACCOMPANYING

*A memorial from citizens of Wrangel, Alaska, asking for the establishment of courts of justice in that Territory.*

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JANUARY 12, 1877.—Ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*January 9, 1877.*

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the United States Senate a memorial from citizens of Wrangel, Alaska, received through the military commander of the Department of the Columbia, asking for the establishment of courts of justice in Alaska.

J. D. CAMERON,  
*Secretary of War.*

---

FORT WRANGEL, ALASKA,  
*November 8, 1876.*

SIR: I beg to inclose memorial to the United States Congress, and respectfully ask that it may be sent through military channel at your earliest convenience.

I beg to remain, your obedient servant,

JOHN M. VANDERBILT.

Capt. E. A. BANCROFT, U. S. A.,  
*Commanding, Fort Wrangel.*

[First indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS, FORT WRANGEL, ALASKA,  
*November 8, 1876.*

Respectfully forwarded to general commanding Department of Columbia, recommending inclosed memorial to the favorable consideration of the authorities, in view of the manifest necessity for and the manifold advantages certain to accrue to this community from a certain and reliable dispensation of justice in compliance with civil law.

E. A. BANCROFT,  
*Captain Fourth Artillery, Commanding Post.*

[Second indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIA,  
Portland, Oregon, December 4, 1876.

Respectfully forwarded to the assistant adjutant-general, Military Division of the Pacific, approved, and concurring in the views expressed in the foregoing indorsement.

O. O. HOWARD,  
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

[Third indorsement.]

JUDGE-ADVOCATE'S OFFICE,  
MILITARY DIVISION OF THE PACIFIC,  
AND DEPARTMENT COLUMBIA.

Respectfully returned to adjutant-general of division.

Additional legislation by Congress being necessary to carry into effect the wishes of the petitioners whose names appear on the accompanying petition, for the establishment of courts at Fort Wrangel, Alaska, I respectfully recommend that the papers be forwarded as requested.

H. P. CURTIS,  
Judge-Advocate, U. S. A.

SAN FRANCISCO, December 12, 1876.

[Fourth indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS DIVISION OF THE PACIFIC,  
December 29, 1876.

Respectfully forwarded.

IRVIN McDOWELL,  
Major-General Commanding Division of the Pacific.

[Fifth indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
Washington, January 4, 1877.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

W. T. SHERMAN.  
General.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States :*

The memorial of the undersigned, citizens of California, Oregon, Washington Territory, Alaska Territory, British Columbia, and other parts of the Pacific coast, now stationed at Fort Wrangel, Alaska Territory, respectfully shows:

1. That Fort Wrangel, Alaska Territory, is situate upon an island at the mouth of the Stickeen River, which river has for the last three years been navigated by British steamboats, and is the only accessible means of communication with an extensive gold-mining region in British Columbia, known as "Cassiar."
2. That in consequence of the rush of miners to Cassiar, Fort Wrangel has become, and now is, a place of considerable trade and commerce, the river-steamboats all clearing from Fort Wrangel for Cassiar, and being the terminus of ocean navigation, so far as the mines are concerned.
3. The mining population of Cassiar, during the season of 1876, is esti-

mated at two thousand, exclusive of Indians, being an increase upon each of the two previous seasons; and there is every reason for believing that the year 1877 will see as large a mining population in Cassiar as the year 1876, and that the camp will be a steady one for years.

4. That during the winter season nearly the whole of the mining population leave the mines for their respective homes in the States, British Columbia, and elsewhere, returning to the mines in the spring; and thus Fort Wrangel in the spring and fall has a continuous passing population of miners, who are compelled to pass through Fort Wrangel, and such passing population is frequently detained at Fort Wrangel awaiting ocean-steamers.

5. That there are four river-steamers constantly plying during the summer between Fort Wrangel and Cassiar, and there are five ocean steam-vessels constantly plying between Portland and Fort Wrangel and Victoria and Fort Wrangel.

6. The fixed population of Fort Wrangel is about 800, *i. e.*, 300 whites and 500 Indians, independently of which a large foreign Indian trade is continually kept up; from 500 to 700 foreign Indians constantly visiting Fort Wrangel for the purpose of trading and proceeding to the mines, many of whom remain at and about Fort Wrangel during the summer.

7. The receipts of merchants and others at Fort Wrangel during the year are estimated at \$250,000, and the receipts of ocean-going vessels, by reason of Fort Wrangel trade, at \$100,000 annually.

8. The estimated cost of private improvements at Fort Wrangel during the last three years, is \$75,000.

9. Goods and provisions to the extent of 1,200 tons annually, for use and consumption in Cassiar, pass in transit through Fort Wrangel, and are bonded there.

10. The amount of goods imported into Wrangel for sale and home consumption is estimated at 1,500 tons annually.

11. Extensive credits are necessarily given by the merchants of Fort Wrangel to the merchants and miners of Cassiar and to the other merchants and the inhabitants of Fort Wrangel, and large deposits of gold-dust are from time to time made, by miners and others passing through Fort Wrangel, with the merchants and residents of that place, and it is estimated that at times as much as \$500,000 is so placed on deposit.

12. Alaska Territory, including Fort Wrangel, is under military rule, but at present no legal tribunal exists, either civil or criminal, although civil disputes and controversies are arising daily, and the want of such a tribunal is keenly felt.

13. Such want of law creates much dissatisfaction, and is calculated to lead to oppression, and to induce unscrupulous and dishonest persons to do or omit doing what the law would restrain them from or compel them to do, and is also calculated to tempt those who conceive that they have grievances to take the law into their own hands and convert might into right.

14. In cases of a criminal character, the delinquents cannot be brought to justice without being sent to Portland, a distance of 1,000 miles, and thus, in cases of minor offenses, the party accused must go unscathed, or, whether guilty or not, receive a punishment exceeding the offense charged against him.

15. Your memorialists respectfully submit that in the absence of judicial authority there is a complete failure of justice in Alaska Territory.

16. Your memorialists further submit that the military rule is highly conducive to the preservation of order, and in granting relief under this petition would wish that the present rule be in no way changed, as the

presence of a military staff prevents disorder and bloodshed, which too frequently occur in places where military government is wanting and a police force is necessarily small.

Your petitioners therefore pray—

That a tribunal may be constituted for the purpose of adjudicating upon and enforcing rights, civil and criminal, either by extending to Alaska Territory the jurisdiction of the courts of Washington Territory, and causing circuit courts to be held in Alaska at stated periods, or by constituting a court of separate and original jurisdiction for Alaska Territory;

That two or more justices of the peace may be appointed for the Territory, with jurisdiction in civil causes to the extent of \$500;

That there may be allowed to practice as advocates in such court of extended jurisdiction, or in such court of separate jurisdiction and before a justice of the peace, any person being an attorney of any of the supreme courts in the United States, or a barrister or attorney of the supreme court of British Columbia;

That proper regulations for the practice and procedure of any such court, or before a justice of the peace, may be made and passed, and that such further matters may be done as the premises require.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will every pray, &c.

John M. Vanderbilt.  
 Henry E. Cutter.  
 M. C. Ireland.  
 J. W. Waydelich.  
 A. H. Dennis.  
 W. K. Sior.  
 G. H. Church.  
 George Fairbrother.  
 James McCloskey.  
 John Burns.  
 Frank Hobin.  
 Gustav Hauck.  
 Daniel Dixon.  
 William Kirkpatrick.  
 Jules Carl.  
 Theodore Davis.  
 James Shobroyd.  
 C. F. Jones.  
 John Williams.  
 John Grant.  
 J. Fletcher.  
 William Wright.  
 George Livingston.  
 Charles H. Hall.  
 A. S. White.  
 John O'Donnell.  
 John H. McCormick.  
 R. W. Colvin.  
 I. Frohman.  
 J. Watson.  
 R. R. Clark.  
 T. J. Stephens.  
 R. Tennant.  
 W. I. Stephens.

Thomas Ardiel.  
 George Rath.  
 Lewis Hart.  
 John McKenzie.  
 Vivian George Brodie.  
 Robert Stevenson.  
 W. Humphrey.  
 L. W. Gifford.  
 Robert C. Dore.  
 A. MacCrellish.  
 R. H. Wood.  
 Levi Stacy.  
 Paul Kereloff.  
 C. G. Cogan.  
 James Moore.  
 J. B. Hugo.  
 Charles Daicker.  
 M. S. Richards.  
 H. Kemrostan.  
 Reuben Albertstone.  
 E. E. Stark.  
 James C. Fox.  
 Bernheim & Mans.  
 Henry Gerke.  
 James C. Parker.  
 J. C. Dennis.  
 John Allen.  
 A. McInnes.  
 T. F. McIntyre.  
 A. D. Fraser.  
 J. Juneon.  
 George Davison.  
 W. W. Russell.  
 M. Powers.

C. B. Panel.	J. A. Gardner.
A. Martin.	Oscar B. Cooper
J. F. Hixon.	A. O. Old.
Alex. McFarlane.	R. S. Boyd.
Samuel Johnston.	H. Gaillard.
Frank Kelley.	Frank Mahony.
G. W. Ramsey.	P. Liberty.
W. G. Standish.	Edwin Jenkinz.
E. Underwood.	Charles McVitter.
William Read.	Robert Kent.
James Rosowell.	Thomas J. McCully.
James Smith.	Thader Renley.
John Boyd.	W. H. Bennett.
J. S. Brown.	James Stevens.
Edward Donehue.	Thomas O'Conno.:
Thomas Russell.	William Smith.
George H. Fox.	G. Fitzstubbs.
John J. White.	Oliver Price.
Wm. A. Simmons.	John Schmidt.
D. L. Shoemaker.	A. Choquette.
Robert Hicks.	John Vere.
Jörges Lorensen.	A. Beedy.
Rob Burns.	W. Meridith.
James Hade.	Clarence S. Doan.
Edward Francis.	E. P. Hess.
Walter T. Dunson.	Albert Herman.
A. Meridith.	J. A. Workman.
John Lajlune.	P. McGieney.
Alexander Mathieson.	William Sanders.
William Waring.	Edgar Blain.
Charles Grant.	H. Jones.
T. C. Knauff.	H. B. Colfax.
Richard Fish.	S. P. Maclyn.
Richard Welsh.	W. R. Hull.
James McEntee.	E. W. Boville.
W. Dunton.	And many others.
E. G. Riley.	