

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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January 14, 1938

Walter B. Clark, Esquire
Town Clerk
Houlton, Maine

Dear Walter:

I agree with you that we may write back and forth can in any way change the situation which exists relative to recording marriage licenses. Why the law was made the way it is, I cannot see. It would seem to me much more sensible to require the original certificate issued by the town clerk to be returned to the office of the town clerk when the marriage has been solemnized and there kept as a permanent record.

Possibly this is something the next Legislature should consider. Why don't you take a few months off from your duties and come down to the Legislature as a representative from your town? I am sure you would enjoy it and have no doubt it would be a valuable and interesting experience for you.

I have discussed this matter with Dr. Coombs of the Department of Health and Welfare who has charge of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, and he says he can see no reason for the law being as it is and agrees with me that it should be changed. He also called my attention to the fact that the way the present law is in regard to recording records of births and deaths, the original goes to the town clerk who may record it in his book and furnish a copy of his records monthly to the Bureau here. No provision is made relative to the preservation of the original certificates and, as far as the law provides, the town clerk may destroy them after he had made his own record. Dr. Coombs thinks that these originals should be preserved and either retained by the town clerk or, better still, send in to the Bureau in Augusta.

If you give this matter some thought I should be glad to have your reactions to that proposition.

Very truly yours,

Franz U. Burkett
Attorney General

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