VOICES FROM THE PAST:
A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE
SCOTTISH EMIGRANT EXPERIENCE
(1830-1856)

Scotland experienced many changes between 1830 and 1860. The growing pains associated with such change caused many Scottish inhabitants to become disenchanted with the political strife, high unemployment, poor housing, inadequate public health, unsanitary living conditions and the religious turmoil of their native homeland. As a remedy, the government removed restrictions on passenger travel and encouraged many influential individuals to establish companies that specialized in, and promoted, the large-scale export of these disenchanted and displaced Scottish people to colonies such as those in British North America.

Since letter writing was one of the primary mediums of communication in the Victorian era, the ‘act of emigration’ led many to record the unforgettable details of their actions, interests, regrets and attitudes in family correspondence. Even in the context of high illiteracy, individuals could be found to write and read family letters. Cameron et al. notes, “…the fact that these letters were widely circulated within the community reveals that literacy was not invariably the atomizing and alienating force that communications theorists have assumed.”

Letters are a rich source of historical information that offers fascinating glimpses of the personal, historical and social contexts of pioneer life, the family unit and social customs of the nineteenth century.

For the purposes of this study I have chosen various collections of Scottish family correspondence, written between 1830 and 1856, as a primary means of reconstructing the
experience of the Scottish people who immigrated to Upper Canada during the nineteenth century. Represented in this selection will be the Anderson, Beattie, Brough, Cormie, Gair, Good, Houston-McNeely-Blair, Kirkwood, and Smibert families. For the most part, the authors of this collection of letters were literate writers who wrote eloquently and frequently. As an archival collection, this correspondence, which can be found in the ‘Archival and Special Collections’ in the Wellington Room of the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph, represents a commonality between, and a context for, the family members who immigrated to Canada and their relatives in Scotland by reflecting a shared heritage. As a social history, these personal narratives document the daily lives, working conditions and social interactions of the Scots. As personal records, this private correspondence reveals a personal insight into the attitudes and struggles of those individuals involved in the nineteenth century popular Scottish migrations. Since these letters were not written for public viewing, these ‘pure’ ‘untouched’ literary pieces, which were written at the grassroots level, make for fascinating and illuminating reading by bringing colour, texture, energy, honesty and a human element to a life lived long ago. The following will provide a bird’s eye view of the Scottish emigrant experience as seen through the words of emigrant letters.

During the nineteenth century the idea of immigrating to Canada became popular with the Scottish people. But since the transatlantic voyage between Canada and Scotland was often perilous and long, and many emigrants knew nothing about ocean voyages or their ships, an emigrant’s troubles started even before they reached the Canadian shores. Although letters home alluded to the length of the trip, many ignored such ramblings and looked only to the better life that Canada offered. For many sailing ships, the westward crossing of the Atlantic against prevailing winds stretched into prolonged storm-tossed voyages of two months or more. In an 1841 Report on Emigration, Lord Sydenham notes:

The average length of the passage of 237 vessels, [...] has been over 48 days: 101 were at sea over 40 days,
43 over 50 days, 23 over 60 days, 13 over 70 days, 3 over 80 days and 2 over 90 days. The average [...] during the month of August was 70 days.ii

This same report suggests that the unusually long passages, the overcrowded state of the ships, poor sanitation and the lack of provisions, resulted in much sickness and distress among the emigrants bound for Canada.iii In an 1841 letter to his brother, mother and sister, James Good describes his family’s unpleasant nine-week passage to Canada. He writes:

...[there is] great sickness amongst us...June 1st a most terrific storm...we could get no vitels cooked great fear of going to the bottom all passed a sleepless night...water running down the hatches...We are in a very uncomfortable situation...

Vessels were bound by law to “…furnish daily a pound of bread and 50 gills of water for each passenger...” but passengers were expected to bring other kinds of food themselves.iv Even though shipmasters were required to sign, by the Act of Parliament, declarations that not only claimed there were sufficient provisions, water and space for passengers but also guaranteed the ship’s seaworthiness, many masters of vessels and ship brokers did not comply.v For example, on June 20, 1841 Good notes, “Provisions getting very scarce water 8 gills in 24 hours” and again on July 9th he writes,

Captain is going to put us on an allowance of water.
He is afraid we will be 6 or 7 weeks...Provisions very scarce, one half pound of biscuit for every adult in 24 hours with 8 gills of poor water so you see that we could not get very fat.

The lack of fresh food, water and proper cooking facilities often led to illness and death.vi Good sadly reported, “One of the passenger’s wives bore a child. [on July 9th] The woman that had the child died for want of cordials, her child died and one older that was mother and two children were thrown overboard.”vii An Emigrant Department Weekly Returns Report confirms Good’s suggestion that the water furnished to the passengers was “…frequently so bad as to be sometimes
quite unfit for use. In his January 1841 despatch to Lord Russell, Lord Sydenham noted that emigrants bound for Canada were:

...insufficiently provided with clothes, with bedding or provisions...they have about them the seeds of disease, arising from the destitution and misery in which they have been living previously to embarkation [consequently] great sickness and mortality occur on the voyage, and immediately after their arrival in Canada.

Frequently emigrants were kept huddled in the hold of the ship designed for cargo, where a neglect of proper ventilation, light and cleanliness and a lack of facilities ‘necessary for the purposes of nature’ resulted in ‘fetid exhalations from the hold’ and the rampant spread of disease between passengers and crew. In addition to this, cockroaches, vermin and rats were frequently among the passengers fighting for morsels of food. Emigrant agent, A. C. Buchanan and medical superintendent at Grosse Isle, Dr. G. W. Douglas reiterated these claims in their reports. As a result, Sydenham proposed amending the existing Passenger Act whereby new measures to protect and assist emigrants from the perils of emigration would be implemented. Although there appeared to be a marked change in the general conditions of the transatlantic passage by 1843, mortality, destitution and distress continued to be a problem as late as 1847. Many captains, who were interested in extending an already sizable profit, engaged in fraudulent activities by delaying their departure deliberately, or by extending the voyage itself, in order to sell extra rations at exorbitant prices. Good’s letter suggests that there were other means by which passengers could obtain goods. For instance, when the rest of the passengers were “…very badly of [sic]…” James Good was able to acquire provisions for his family by working in the place of a sailor who was “…very bad with the ague.” Furthermore, the exorbitant cost of passage prohibited many from travelling to Canada. As Beattie reveals in his letter to his uncle George, some passengers were able to travel to Canada for free, but others like
William Glennid paid ninety pounds for passage.\textsuperscript{xvi}

In spite of the perilous ocean voyage and the ongoing abuse of immigration legislation, emigrants continued to pour into Canada. Family correspondence indicates that many were willing to chance poor conditions and possible death in order to join their friends and relatives in Canada for either a visit or long term residency. In a letter addressed to friends in Canada, Agnes Kyd makes reference to Robert Blyth[?]'s impending trip to Canada. She notes,

> Mr. Thomson and all his folk is away (going away) her mother is away too she is very old woman about seventy-eaght [sic] years of agge [sic] my Father thinks he will not be of much use but to look after the oxen and cows he is scared at the sea [?] then [sic] is no saying but we may come we have not much to keep us hear [sic] now and we may get a little place then brought in and ready and we could be very happy every little place…\textsuperscript{xvii}

On April 28, William Aitken writes, “John Graham should come out which I believe he intends doing so next Spring if spared life and health till that time, indeed we would not mind much coming all out together, as Mary is very anxious for it…”\textsuperscript{xviii} Many also believed that Canada was the land of opportunity where everything was moving forward. For this reason, Arthur Houston contemplated sending his son Andrew to Canada for two or three seasons so that he could “…Study Medeson [sic] and when [they went] out to Canada he could be a farmer and Doctor both.” He also stated, “The [sic] are nothing stopes [sic] the people of gowing [sic] out to America but want of means…”\textsuperscript{xix} Many believed that the new revolution in transportation methods made the trip between Canada and Scotland much easier than it had formerly been and understood that if things did not work out in Canada, they could simply return home. From the emigrant correspondence under investigation, it is possible to ascertain that some people could not afford to return home because their letters were rife with requests for funds from those who remained in Scotland. Furthermore, many
who chose to remain in Canada sent letters back to Scotland requesting that family members join them in Upper Canada. Thus throughout the nineteenth century, a constant flow of personal letters, which expounded upon the positive attributes of Upper Canada, encouraged potential settlers to emigrate.

Selected family correspondence illustrates the fact that emigrants who sailed from Scotland between 1830 and 1856 were not only connected by time and space but were also connected by a shared desire to maintain ties with family and home. Immigration altered the family bond, but it did not destroy it because the familial bonds were maintained despite the vast distances that separated the families. Loneliness led many authors to assume the role of chronicler, as they regularly updated family members on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean with family news. For example, on February 13, 1843 James Good sent a letter to his brother, sisters and family informing them of the birth of his new daughter. He wrote:

We are all well at present but Magdalene she had followed Agnes and Mrs Hucheson’s example for she had a daughter upon the 9th of February. She is to be Magdalene the second. Magdalene equally missed her female friends for Angus Campbell’s wife has been very badly this some time and could not attend but Mary, her sister, and myself had to officiate.xx

The fact that Good assisted in the birth of his daughter is unusual because most men did not participate in such activities at this time. Good’s participation therefore suggests that, once they arrived in their new home in Canada, many emigrants were forced by necessity into unfamiliar activities and roles.

In another letter, prodigal son John Anderson provides an interesting and detailed account of his travels in Upper Canada:

…leaving Guelph I walked to Hamilton from thence to Toronto taking the stage I came to NewMarket and then to (?) I remained thear [sic] being in several places about twelve month I am now working in NewMarket.xxx
Weather updates were also a way of keeping family apprised of life in Upper Canada. For some, the weather conditions were ominous, but for others it was merely a continuation of what they had already experienced at home. In 1843 Good described the weather in Canada to family in Scotland as:

...so very cold. The snow in the woods is above 3 feet deep. It is not very cold in the day but in the night it is most shocking. There is a kind of dryness in the air that makes it very cold but neither cold in winter nor the heat in summer is any great change for a Scotch man.xxii

Sometimes emigrants posted letters to family to request items that would enable them to continue their trade in Canada. For instance, James Good, weaver, acknowledged receipt of ‘reeds’ from his brother in Scotland. He explained,

...the reeds, is all very good but 500 and the 6 1/4 are too light. They ought to be stout for it is very heavy work. The shuttle is far to small, it should be one inch and one forth thick, one inch and three forths broad and 14 inches long. The nails is good if you had put a few glass eyes of the largest size...

Since he started with no loom and only one reed, he had to rely on people in Scotland to ship, or bring, any items he could not either make, or find, in Canada.xxi In another letter, John Kyd sent thread and buttons to his sister in Canada so she could continue her dressmaking business.xxiii These two examples are also indicative of the fact that some emigrants continued to ply their trade in Canada with some degree of success. They also provide additional proof that the connections between Scotland and Canada were not merely familial they were also economic.

Since Scottish emigrants wished that their family and friends would join them, their letters were filled with accolades of Canada. Good remarks, “We spent New Year’s day with singing and dancing…I owe nobody anything…Every tree down gains something but at home every Saturday made us poor as ever. We have more peace and pleasure
than ever we had…”xxv Good also explains,

I never was happier and Magdalene was never happier in all our lives, money is scarce but meat is plenty…A Canadian farmer is the happiest man in this world…I had almost forgot, if you would come here I would reckon you would get a man and a farmer and Ann Brown too. J. & M. will give you your meat till you get a husband.xxvi

In a later letter he declared, “Magdalene would not come to Paisley for the world, all that she is sorry for is that she was not here 18 years ago.”xxvii For as much as emigrants in Canada wanted to let those left behind know about Canada’s positive attributes, family members in Scotland, who were suffering in “…a world of sorrow and trouble…helpless creatures, whose lives [were] very uncertain…”xxviii also wanted as much information about Canada as possible. Some simply asked, “…do you think it desirable to emigrate do you find yourselves more comfortable…”xxix Many were interested because they hoped to emigrate there one day. And, the individuals who emigrated were more than happy to provide the information with the hopes that other family members would join them in their new country. Many heeded their friends and relatives’ words because in 1844 three quarters of the emigrants who arrived in Canada joined relatives. Two hundred and twenty of those who joined relatives were women with their children (854 persons) who were joining husbands in different sections of the province.xxx

William Beattie requested that his brother George forward him information about banking, the soil and the possible returns accrued from farming in Canada before he made any decision to sell his property in Scotland and emigrate to Canada.xxxi Thomas Smibert asked his Uncle James to:

…begin his description with the very pavement of the streets… houses outside and inside, shops, churches, dresses…Then a farm, from the house to the fields… All these things, though familiar to you, are novel to us, and a great mass of our population are most anxious to know what comforts of a place they may emigrate to.xxxii
James Brough’s father demanded to have a complete picture of what his son’s life as an independent male was like in Canada. In a letter dated April 7, 1834 he asked,

...write us immediately on receipt of this letter...as I mention in my last I wish you to give me a detailed accout [sic] of everything concerning yourselves and your place particularly I wish you to answer the following questions what like is your house how is it furnished how is the boys employed how is jeanie [sic] employed what is the food you principaly [sic] use what is the common price of cows oxen and sheep what kind of soil does your land cheifly [sic] consist of dry or wet have you any good springs in it, is there good wood on it and what kinds, have you good neighbours, how is the Sabbath spent there, how do you do for public worship if you have no settled minister, how are you supplied with School-masters in your Township, how far are you from James Robinson, what is the number of your lot, what is good fish near you...xxxiii

Since the first few years in Canada were the most difficult, some correspondents tempered their encouragement with cautionary advice by suggesting,

I do not think there is just now a finer field for the exertions of a man with a small income, a labouring man, or a mechanic, than this country lays open; but it must be entered upon with a mind fully prepared to meet serious hardships, and to overcome them.xxxiv

As a result, some residents of Scotland were adamant that family members who travelled to Canada return home. The Brough family letters are filled with examples of lonely relatives and friends trying to convince the new Canadian residents to return to Scotland. In a letter to his cousin James, John Brough proclaimed,

I think you had better come home to one [job] here & by your own labours you could support yourselves very well as work is now quite plenty here...I do not
know how I would have been if I had been in Paisley but I think it would not been so well with me and family for we have almost all we would wish.xxxv

In another letter, Marget Brough suggested to Canadian resident Jeany, “…if you think your Brothers can make a living out of it & if your Mother and Brothers thinks it would be better to try and sell it and come home we would do what we could to make you as comfortable as we can…”xxxvi

Although family ties, obligations and affection played an important part in an emigrant’s life, neighbours and passers-by sometimes acted as a surrogate family when blood relations were absent. James Good explains, “We are on the road between Newhope and Preston so that we get too many visitors in summer for drinks and in winter to get warmed. Instead of being dull we have more visitors than ever we had.”xxxvii In addition to this, Good’s Pennsylvanian Dutch neighbours visited his family often even though they spoke very little English.xxxviii

Among the greatest preponderance of letters between Canadian and Scottish people were the ones that exhibited a preoccupation with death and health. It may be argued that letters that announced the news of the death of a loved one were simply a way of including relatives who lived far away. Furthermore, it is also considered a common form of letter writing etiquette to inquire about the health and welfare of the letter’s recipient. But, since death played an elaborate symbolic role in the Victorian era, and because death was a common domestic fact of life, melodramatic death and the rituals that surrounded it infiltrated the literary world of the emigrant.xxxix One of the best illustrations is Arthur Houston’s account of his mother’s death:

She closed this Mortal Scene on Thursday evening…She fell into a quiet Slumbering that she shill remained quite sensible except for a few minutes after she would awake out of a long sleep. She smiled at the prospects of death and her Exite [sic] was full of the Happiness of a well grounded hope. The Saturday following her corpse were numerous and
respectably attended to Kilrea Church Yard and intered [sic] in the grave of her loving Father and Mother.xl

One of the most interesting examples of this fascination with death, however, can be found in a letter written by Hellen Elliot in November of 1842. In this letter Elliot writes, “I have heard of no deaths here” but in an effort to continue the narrative on death, she explains, “…there was one down in Dumfries had two died [sic] the doctor thought it was much owing to improper treatment by confining them”.xli One woman simply stated at the end of her letter that there were simply too many deaths to mention.xlii This preoccupation is taken to extremes when correspondence reflects not only a desire or an expectation that death is imminent any day but also a strong religious conviction that life everlasting depended on a virtuous life. John Kyd confides,

I need not expect to be very stout now my days is near a close...that we may be all Prepared for our latter end and be found among the ordained of the Lord may the Lord Bless you and all your family may we all mind that we might all die.xliii

In another instance, William Bethune notes,

I will soon have to depart from this world altogether - Are you prepared for this removal. Are you living not for time but for Eternity?...Hoping that you are daily endeavouring to live a life of faith in the Son of God, and that your desire to glorify him on earth.xliv

Another common theme found in most of the emigrant letters under study was a plea for the recipients to write soon and often. But information was not always disseminated during the first half of the nineteenth century because postal rates were very high, and the service was exceedingly slow and irregular due to poor delivery techniques, weather, road conditions and imperfect addresses.xlv For example, some of the family letters studied here mere noted ‘Upper Canada’ as the address of the recipient. Others such as William Beattie’s letter to his brother in Nichol Township were very explicit,
noting the name, lot and concession number, the district as well as Upper Canada and North America. The regular charge to carry a letter from England to York was $1.12, but by way of New York, it was only forty-one cents. Therefore, many people sent their mail via the United States, which was an illegal practice at the time.\textsuperscript{xlv} In a letter to his brother James, John Brough mentions another common practice that the Brough family and other settlers used for mail delivery so that they could avoid the high cost of postage. He writes, 
“…when you receive this [letter] you will do by Peter and Christian Robison who are to leave Blinkbony this evening for America.”\textsuperscript{xlvii} This practice of sending letters with other travellers often resulted in letters being miscarried.

In 1842 a daily line of mail-stages began. The mail delivery took place five times a week, but the stage seldom arrived on schedule. The ocean mails to Canada were carried in sailing ships even after the steamship was used for ocean travel. Even though in the 1830s letters between Liverpool and Quebec took only fifty days, a considerably shorter time than the earlier years, emigrants complained about the slow delivery and worried when no word was heard for extended periods of time. In a letter postmarked August 12, 1836, John Kyd complains to his son and daughter, “We are very uneasy to hear from you. We have had no letter from you since he had one that was dated Oct 18 1835. I sent a letter to you a few weeks after we received yours and have not heard since.”\textsuperscript{xlviii} In another letter, Thomas Smibert’s opening lines in a letter to his brother notes,

\begin{quote}
It is now more than five years since I heard from you…I have written you twice since then, once by Alex Pringle …about three years ago, about two years ago by a gentleman who went to New York – whether you got any of them I cannot say.\textsuperscript{xlix}
\end{quote}

Prior to 1851, no postage stamps were used in Canada and envelopes were not used because the letters were usually folded into the shape of an envelope and closed with sealing wax and addressed. Ink stamps, sealing wax and folding are all visible on this study’s Scottish emigrant correspondence.
Letter postage was usually paid in advance to the postmaster and there was sometimes a charge at both ends. Some emigrants even apologized to the recipient for postage rates. In a very illegible Anderson family letter the author writes, “...sorry to put you to so much expense in paying for my letter.” Anna Jameson gives an emotional account of the destitute and homesick emigrants who:

... have not been long from the old country, round whose hearts tender remembrances of parents, and home, and home friends, yet clinging in all the strength of fresh regret and unsubdued longing, sometimes present themselves at the post offices, and on finding that their letters cost three shillings, turn away in despair.

Sufficient capital was a problem for many new emigrants to Canada. Thus many of the letters exhibited a preoccupation with money. There are continuous references to losses, loans, debts, defaults and costs that are intermingled with references to cash gifts and bequests. It is difficult to know why emigrants discussed so freely financial matters that we consider ‘private’. It is equally difficult to estimate the exact amount of capital that each emigrant brought to British North America. But it is possible to ascertain from reports that it was not easy for the new emigrants to get re-established and that the affluence of the Scottish emigrants varied from year to year and ship to ship.

In Scotland where many individuals were not eligible for parish relief, the assistance of landlords or weavers’ societies and public subscriptions were the only form of emigration aid practiced. Probably the largest amount of financial aid for emigrants came from Scottish landlords. One estimate suggests that about 14,000 inhabitants of the Highland region were supported in their passage in the entire period c. 1800 to 1860. In this study, however, none of the emigrants implied in their letters that emigrant societies, landlords or private philanthropists assisted them on their voyage to Canada. As a matter of fact, it would appear that many were not completely destitute. For instance, James Good engaged a boat to take
his family up the Rideau Canal to Kingston for two pounds and paid an additional 6 or 7 [illeg] for his luggage to be transported.liv Good, however, contradicts this assumption that he had capital upon arrival in Canada when he indicates a reversal of fortune in an 1842 letter. He states, “In Paisley I was owing everybody, nobody owing me but here [In Canada] it is everybody me.”lv

What the letters do indicate is that appeals for financial aid between Canada and Scotland existed on a wide-scale basis. In some cases, the aid was granted but in others, it was denied. James Smibert simply states, “...it is not in my power to [give] you the assistance you needed so much.”lvi On the contrary, in a letter dated April 4, 1834, Jas Brough informs his son, “…we are sending you some money by James Stevenson on Smalholm who is going out to see his brother William in the same ship and Captain you went with…”lvii The following week, Brough indicates in a letter that if Mr. Stevenson was not able to meet with son James, he would leave a Mr. Burnet with “…15 sovereigns which will pay your first instalment & enable you to purchase a cow…” but he also adds, “…and it is the last you may expect from us.”lviii Could the later part of this reflect the fact that James’ father did not have the money to send or does this indicate the finite end of family obligations and James’ father’s unwillingness to further support his son’s new life in Canada? John Brough’s cousins received similar family aid. While writing to cousins in Canada Brough offers,

…I hope the land you have bought will do you good and as I believe that money is very scarce with you we must try what we can do to help you with the first instalment which will be [pounds] 20 due at this time twelve months and afterwards you will maybe get on by yourselves. I have no doubt that you will be able to make your own bread in America although I doubt if you will make any money…lix

On page two of a letter addressed to his brother, James Good requests a loan of a ‘five note’, which he promises to pay back in the fall. An additional letter dated the same day
offers insight into the contemporary interest rates and the use of capital when Good asks:

If you could lend me the money and I will give you six per cent that is the rule of this country. If you lend it it will enable me to get along in the winter and get seed and other things in the spring. It will come to me free of expense by sending it to the Canada Company in London and be returned the same.lix

It is interesting to note that on February eighteenth, the following year, Good acknowledges receipt of the five-pound note and expresses relief that it arrived. He also explains that by sending it via the Canada Company he was able to save nine shillings sterling for delivery.lx

Of prime importance to the Scottish emigrants was the retention of independence and the acquisition of land. Land was available from both the government and land companies. On September 13, 1833 Thomas Anderson paid the first instalment on lot number 16, Concession 1 in the District of Guelph from The Canada Company, which was rooted in Scottish connections.lxi This entitled him to take possession of the lot and to hold it, subject to the condition that if the five remaining promissory notes were defaulted, the Canada Company would take possession.lxii James Good mentions that he met with an Emigration Agent upon arrival in Canada in 1841 to discuss land, but he made no mention of the details other than the cost and the location of his land. He explains,

I have just been up to the Huron track and bought a 100 acres of land in the township of Downie on the banks of the river Theams [sic] 5 miles from Stratfoord [sic]… My lot goes within an 100 yards of the river and has a spring…I have to pay 3 pence per acre the second year and rises 2d pence per acre for 12 years and they I get a free Deed…there is nothing to pay the first year. …for my land I have to pay 32 shillings the first payment and 48 shillings the second 64 the third and 16 shillings every year…The 13th year I will have 40 dollars to pay. It comes to 16/- per acre. I have wrought 1600 yards since September and I have got about 16 dollars in cash…lxiv
Land in Scotland and England was considerably more expensive than in Canada. In a discussion about moving to a new farm, Maddalina Brough notes,

…[John] would like to get a small Farm if he could but that is not easy to be had neither in Scotland nor England […] Land has been letting very high in this neighbourhood…Farms have been letting for above ther [sic] values…

By 1854, land prices in Scotland had risen considerably. According to James Good Jr., “Land that was two dollars and a quarter is now ten dollars per acre…[his] father’s lot was now worth twenty five hundred dollars, a considerably large sum.”

Upon arrival in Canada, Good took what money he had left from the voyage (he states that he only had one dollar and 25 pounds of oatmeal when he landed in Newhope), left his family and went to Newhope in search of a house. Good states that he pretended that he had plenty of money so that offers of land and houses for sale were plentiful. When he went to the mill to purchase a half dollar’s worth of wood, the Millar extended credit so that he could purchase flour, butter and potatoes so that his family would have something to eat. Although staples had a monetary value, cash was always scarce. Thus, the pioneer economy relied heavily on barter and most staples were purchased by trade. But not all emigrants in Canada were as fortunate as Good and many had to rely on the kindness and handouts from neighbours and relatives. Like James Smibert, many emigrants believed the immigration propaganda posters that suggested Canada was a place where everyone “…has plenty to eat drink and to wear and there is none of us all that is overloaded with riches but has plenty and to spare.”

Many emigrants used their letters, which were rife with stories of plentiful food supplies, to tempt their hungry relatives. For instance, according to James Good, the food in Canada was both less expensive and more plentiful than in Scotland,
Meat is not easily got in Paisley but it is very cheap here [Canada]. I bought 224 lb beef for 3 dollars per 112 lb. which is little more than one penny per pound, pork is from 2 dollars to 2 1/2 per 100, flour 2 1/2 dollars per 100, potatoes 1/4 dollar per bushel butter 10 cents per lb. sugar that would cost 9d in Paisley is 10 cents here, Maple sugar is 8 cents per lb. cheese 10 cents. 100 cents is one dollar, one dollar is 4/- sterling Tea is one dollar a pound, so you see that one can live here, and if mother would but come here...she would not need to work any more, in fact leave all care in Paisley.\textsuperscript{lxix}

In one letter Good even compared the variety of items served at their family meals to a wedding feast in Scotland. Good’s wife Magdalene had to learn how to cook in Canada for “…she knew nothing of making pies, puddings, sauces, cakes…[but now] Magdalene fires her loaves and pies for it is very different here.”\textsuperscript{lxx} This account can be contrasted with one given by John Brough, which suggests that Scotland in 1847 was experiencing “…a year of great scarcity…almost a dearth…the greatest that ever [John] saw.”\textsuperscript{lxxi} He continued on to suggest that the only thing that saved the poor was the fact that there was plenty of employment and good wages.

In Upper Canada, wages without board for most occupations in 1842 ranged from 6s 9d for millwrights to 3s 4 1/2 d for carters.\textsuperscript{lxxii} According to Good, millers, shoemakers and teachers were in demand in Upper Canada because people with qualifications to do these jobs were scarce.\textsuperscript{lxxiii} In addition to this, the Emigration Agent’s 1844 Report noted a decreased demand for agricultural servants and farmers of all classes and an increased requirement for mechanics and labourers that could be used to work on public works and construction projects such as the development of much needed gristmills. These mills opened another avenue of income for the Scottish pioneers.\textsuperscript{lxxiv} Robert Kirkwood’s 1841 letter to his father in Scotland outlined his plans to build a mill in Paris Upper Canada and requested that his father promote the sale of his flour in Scotland.\textsuperscript{lxxv}

Although food prices presented few problems for the
settlers in this study, the acquisition of clothing was a greater challenge. Good notes, “Clothing is very dear here...in fact everything is about the double in the clothing by what it is in Paisley. Shoes is the only thing that is the same price.” As a result, many emigrants requested and received clothing from their homeland. Margaret Brough’s note to Jeany in 1839 outlines the contents of a box of used clothing:

...the frokes [sic] you can given them a little alter-
ation yourself there is 3 shifts you can give your
Mother one is town if she need them there is also a
pair of Boots that will answer her and some capes
there is (?) things for yourself you can make them
up the best you can there is a suit for each of the
Boys there is a strong coate [sic] for your Father and
4 shirts and a good deal of other things...

In a subsequent letter, Margaret again makes reference to

...a paresul [sic] of clothes...which will be a great
benefet [sic] to you all...the dark gown will be a good
winter one for you [Jenny] i think this is as much
cotton as will be a shift to you[r] Mother and [for]
you Jenny...

In the Brough family alone, 3 parcels of clothing plus separate shipments of shoes, dresses, straw bonnets, boots and stockings arrived in Canada for family members.

Home building was one of the most formidable tasks facing settlers next to the long and arduous job of clearing the land. While most settlers constructed simple, one-room log cabins, other with significantly more capital purchased ready-made farms. The Good’s first resided in a [rented?] house located in Hamilton. While the rest of the family waited in this home, James employed two hired hands to underbrush 12 acres on their land near Stratford so construction for a home for his family could begin in the spring. Good describes his new community as:

...a fine village all Scotch about 500 inhabitants,
three miles from Preston about 300 inhabitants
mostly German, 12 miles from Guelph about 600
inhabitants mostly Irish. The village of Newhope is a small place...the inhabitants is all Dutch but seven, two English, two Paisley bodys, their name is McKarcie, three Irish. There is a saw mill and whiskey distillery, four weavers and a blacksmith. The village is on the banks of the river Speed. My place is one mile west of the village. I have one acre of land...on the road between Newhope and Preston...

The social life of the pioneer community centred in the church and the school and the clergymen and the teacher were often the same person because these two positions were difficult to fill and fund. While education was important, it took second place to family duties and religious instruction. James Good confirms this when he explains, “I had to take [William] out of school this quarter to plough and harrow [the wheat] for he is a good ploughman and I will have plenty to do with hay and harvest and will soon have to hire a man [farmhand].” Contrary to Scotland, children in Canada during this period were not required to go to school. In Canada it was considered a luxury to be able to send children to school and many communities were “...in want of a teacher [in their] school...Good teachers is very ill to be got here [Canada]...”

The prospect of obtaining a respectable clergymen sometimes brought multi-faith neighbourhoods together. Family members’ letters from Scotland exhibited concern about the lack of ministers in Canada and chastised emigrants for their lack of spiritual leadership and what they saw as a neglect of their devoutness. John Brough wrote,

I am afraid you will be neglecting your spirituale [sic] interests for you say that Education Is much wanting, and a Gospel Ministry too. ...I hope better things of you as severall [sic] of you were taught to read your Bible before you left this highly preveleged [sic] country, and surely you don’t fail to peruse now, and as there is portions of that blessed Book that suits all the circumstances in which we can be placed...I hope that the day is not far distant when the Sun of
righteousness shall arise in meredinall splendour
upon that hitherto dark corner of the world where it
is now your lot to dwell, for we of this country are
now contributing...to the support of missionaries to
be sent amongst you...for the dark places are full of
the habitations of horid [sic] cruelty.lxxxii

Many communities not only found it difficult to find and
keep clergy, but they also lacked formal churches. At first
religious services were held in the homes of church members
where family members provided lengthy sermons. But once
the emigrants were settled into their new communities,
they worked together to erect a church. Quite often, the
church, or ‘meeting house’ was the first public building in a
community.lxxxiii The Good family letters suggest that in the
early years there were three meeting houses within one mile
of the Good family home but there was no regular preacher.
They did, however, have a variety of visiting preachers. Good
notes,

....there are a preacher every Sunday in each of them
[meeting houses] and in Preston there is the Church
of Scotland, that is three miles, and in Galt, that is
four miles, but I am sorry to say that they are not
well attended.lxxxiv

Farming was also an integral part of the lives of those who
traversed the Atlantic en route to Canada. From emigrant
letters it is possible to garner an understanding of early Cana-
dian farming practices. For newly arrived emigrants, “...the
first object...[was] to acquire the means of subsistence.”lxxxv
Thus an emigrant’s mere existence was dependant upon the
acquisition of livestock and the planting of crops. The first
crops were usually planted as soon as a small portion of
forested land was cleared of its thick covering of trees and
matted surface.lxxxvi In the beginning emigrants planted only
enough to ensure the survival of the family, but as time
passed, the production of surplus produce enabled emigrants
to trade or sell them at markets. Cereal grains such as wheat,
rye, oats and barley were important crops. Wheat soon
became the most important of all these grain crops. In a letter
home, Good explained the importance of wheat for anyone living in Upper Canada:

I expect I will have a 150 dollars worth of wheat to sell by then. Wheat is the only thing that brings money here. It sells from three to four shillings sterling per bushel and always paid cash and without a man can raise wheat he will never get on. There is some has been here these ten years and never sold a bushel but always in the depth of misery but there is others again only been here for three years and can sell three or four hundred bushels.

Although wheat was the chief crop, it was not the only one. For instance, in 1844 along with eight acres of wheat, the Good family planted one and a half of potatoes, one and a half of oats, one of peas and one of Indian corn. Several Anderson family letters indicate that this family’s main crops consisted of potatoes and turnips. In the second year additional crops of wheat, hay and grass were planted on approximately five more acres of cleared ground. At this time pioneer farmers such as Good, were in a situation to adequately provide for their much-needed oxen and cow. Good explained in one letter that his cow lived on ‘brous’ (small twigs of trees) and “…1000 of hay…”

The acquisition of farm stock usually began with the purchase of a yoke of oxen. Cows, pigs and chickens were usually next. But until a farmer was able to produce enough crops to support the farm and his family, he had great difficulties financing the yoke of oxen he required to do his work, the cow that supplied his milk and the pigs and chickens that provided both eggs and meat for the table. Additionally, the financial aspects of living on a farm in Upper Canada could be complicated. James Good explains,

Our cattle is a yoke of oxen and two cows, one year old heifer or quey [sic] and a calf, three sheep and two dogs…the oxen I bought them from Squire Fin. I get one year to pay 20 dollars and I am to pay the rest at the end of the second year, They are 65 dollars in all …All the rest is paid already so that I
owe no man anything. I have paid the first instalment of my farm...xxii

But as the Scottish emigrant farmer planted the roots of both his crops and his new life, he retained the roots of his homeland that firmly connected him with the family, friends and the heritage he would continue to nurture in Canada.

This historical study has offered an intimate glimpse into the personal lives of the nineteenth century Scottish emigrants who traversed the Atlantic Ocean and eventually settled in Upper Canada. Though the use of their private family correspondence this study has attempted to piece together the personal, the historical and the social contexts in which the family life of these early pioneers took place. In this respect, it has been most successful. This report has suggested that many factors worked together to bring about the changes that encouraged the Scottish people to immigrate to a new land. Although the reasons were many and varied, individual circumstance, necessity and a push to acquire employment and/or the desire for a better life were usually the driving forces behind the emigrants' decision to leave Scotland. These proud and determined people endured perilous, long and sometimes heart-wrenching voyages in order to realize a new life. Since kinship bonds were enduring and strong, some individuals were willing to chance poor conditions and possible death in order to join their friends and relatives in Canada and some Scots never gave up trying to coerce or tempt family to cross the waters. But their letters also suggest that the decision to immigrate was generally made with the idea that someday these displaced people might return to the place of their birth. Although this was not always possible, emigrants in this study continued to exhibit a tremendous loyalty to their homeland, and this feeling intensified as the distance between kinship groups widened.

Loneliness and a shared desire to maintain connections with family and home led many authors to assume the role of chronicler. This suggests that letters were a way for separated family members to reach out to the ones they loved. For those in Canada, letters provided the security, encouragement,
guidance and support they needed to help them adjust to their new home. For those in Scotland, family correspondence provided assurances that all was well with their loved ones in the new world. Letters allowed correspondents to share a certain amount of intimacy such as the birth of a baby or the death of a loved one. Letters that advertised the advantages of living in Canada served as a medium for the emigration process. When the isolation of the Canadian wilderness led many family members to encourage those at home to join them in Canada, emigration and the population of Canada grew exponentially. Opening endearments and closing salutations indicate that even after long years of separation family bonds remained strong.

On the surface, the Scottish preoccupation with death, so prevalent in this collection of letters, appears to be connected to the profound fascination that Victorians had with death. Researchers might assume that the poignant descriptions of death and dying that infiltrated emigrant letters could be attributed to the fact that death was a common domestic fact of life. Thus writing about death was a way for emigrants to cope. But it is also possible that since emigrants and their families were extremely devout, their strong religious convictions prompted an obsession with death. Consequently, the act of writing about death reminded both the sender and the recipient that not only was life precious but also that living a virtuous life ensured ‘Life Everlasting’. Since letters have traditionally been the source of information about births, deaths and marriages, it could be that relatives were merely providing each other with important familial information. But, could these discussions about death can also be viewed as a metaphor for the death of their life in Scotland. Did the Scottish emigrants mourn the loss of their homeland like they would mourn the loss of a loved one?

The Scottish life or death struggle with money, so apparent in emigrant letters, might have resulted from long years of unemployment, the high cost of living and a prolonged lack of capital. Money may have simply been the subject of idle chit-chat. But, money matters can also have a more intimate significance. The exchange of money can bind people together
in an intimate way. Asking for money is one way of saying ‘I need you’ and providing money to those in need is a way of saying ‘I care about you and I want to improve your circumstances’. The fact remains that many did not have much money. And since the emigrant’s overriding desire for a better life included the acquisition of more capital, because materialistically speaking, more money usually meant a better life, it is not surprising that family letters exhibited anxiety about money.

As demonstrated above, letters by their very nature, tend to emphasize the daily preoccupations of their writers. Thus, since the writing of letters is an act that tells only the story and the information the author wants to impart, and because the information in each narrative suggests that it was important enough to document, emigrants’ letters have the ability to enhance the growing body of work whose concentration is the emigrant years. Literary transmission of the emigrant’s settlement experiences not only demonstrated the appropriateness and need of communicating this experience to other family members but they also serve to remind us of the precariousness on which the emigrants’ existence depended, particularly during their early years in Canada. These letters tell us about the writer’s perceptions of the emigrant experience, the issues that warranted the most concern, and give us insight into the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and trivial reflections of each chronicler. Therefore, we can ascertain that the contents of letters written at the grassroots level provide invaluable and intimate information about the ordinary folk.

There are, however, problems inherent with the use of these particular letters as a source for historical information. Additionally, recapturing the full spectrum of the Scottish emigrant experience is a complex challenge. The fact that dramatic social changes between 1830 and 1856 were taking place for the emigrants and those they left at home in Scotland only further complicates such an endeavour. As a result, this study is by no means complete and leaves plenty of room for future investigations.

Nevertheless, this particular account is the story of the
Scottish people who made their way to Upper Canada and left their mark in that part of the world. These people, who were very similar to today’s refugees, had little material assets but somehow they managed to find the drive to make a new life in the Canadian wilderness. Although necessity forced these pioneers to discover skills they had never been aware of, they exhibited a natural ability to adapt and put down roots while at the same time they stayed firmly connected with their homeland. The unforgettable details of this volume of letters indicates that many emigrants attempted to replicate the social conditions of their homeland and as such brought new ideals, traditions and a new way of life to the Canadian frontier. Therefore when the Scottish emigrants arrived in Canada during the early stages of the nation’s genesis, they left their footprint on Canada’s national character, their imprint on its heritage, and gave many who call themselves ‘Canadians’ an identity rooted in the Scottish tradition.

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Endnotes

i Wendy Cameron; Mary M. Maude; Sheila Haines; JI. Little. “Assisting emigration to Upper Canada: the Petworth project, 1832-1837 [English immigrant voices: labourers’ letters from Upper Canada in the 1830s],” Canadian Historical Review, v.83 (1) (March 2002) pp. 105.

ii “Correspondence Relative to Emigration To Canada.” Correspondence Relative to Emigration To Canada Vol. 15. [Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers. Shannon Ireland: IUP, 1969], pp. 77.

iii Ibid. pp. 77.


vi “Correspondence and Other Papers Relating to Canada and to Immigration in the Provinces 1847-1848,” pp. 235.

vii Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated 1841 to brother, mother and sister regarding the Good family’s perilous nine week passage to Canada

viii Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada, pp. 22-23.

ix Ibid., pp. 72.

In the holds, passengers were frequently confined to beds that were “…shallow wooden boxes, usually in tiers of two or more, made of rough wood rudely knocked together.”

Frank, Emmerson Scots. (Tantallon: Four East Publications, 1987)

xi Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada, pp. 57.

xii Cormie Family Ancestry File: General emigration information compiled by the Cormie family.”

xiii Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada, pp. 611.

xiv Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated 1841 to brother, mother and sister regarding the Good family’s perilous nine week passage to Canada”

xv T. M. Devine. Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1992), pp. 94. In the 1840s and 1850s over 10,000 Highlanders were assisted by private landlords to move to Canada during the potato famine.

xvi Beattie Family Correspondence: Letter from John Beattie, Broomhill Farm to uncle George Beattie Nichol Township.” Written September 29, 1838 regarding lease problems, crop failures and emigration.
Anderson Family Correspondence. In a packet of letters from John and Agnes Kyd,” dated April 5, 1834, to Thomas Anderson, Agnes Kyd gives an update of activities in Scotland and puts forth the suggestion that some friends and family members may be travelling to Canada in the near future.

Anderson Family Correspondence. Letter from William and Mary Aitken (?) dated Loanhead (?), 28, April 1834 to Thomas Anderson regarding receipt of letter, Mary gave birth to a son named Alexander, possible travel to Canada and deaths of friends and neighbours.

Houston-McNeely-Blair Family Correspondence. Typed copy (on Dr. Houston’s letterhead) of the letter from Arthur Houston dated Glasgow, 9 April 1832 to his brother in Carleton County regarding the death of their mother, financial settlement with brother James in Ireland for keeping mother, difficult financial times, contemplation of sending son Andrew to study medicine to be useful in Canada.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 13 February 1843 to his brother, sisters and family informing them of Magdalene giving birth to a daughter, friendliness of Dutch neighbours, land payments and the snow.

Anderson Family Correspondence. Letter from John Anderson dated NewMarket, February 22, 1837 to his parents apologizing for his past conduct and giving them a rundown of his activities in Canada.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 13 February 1843 to his brother, sisters and family informing them of Magdalene giving birth to a daughter, friendliness of Dutch neighbours, land payments and the snow.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated 11/12 January 1842 to brother in Scotland about the independence of owning land and the price of a pig in Canada. Also advising the best time for James’ mother to emigrate.

Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 23 November 1842 to “Dear Sir” describing his initial difficulties in Canada, describing Newhope’s location, credit in Canada, the lack of supplies for his weaving business and the local wildlife.

James also indicates, “I went and bought as much wood as I wanted without paying anything and commenced making my loom, lay, pinn, wheel, shuttles and shafts which surprised my neighbours… they pronounced a first rate weaver and carpenter.”
xxiv Anderson Family Correspondence: In a packet of letters from John and Agnes Kyd, dated April 5, 1834, to Thomas Anderson, Agnes Kyd gives an update of activities in Scotland and puts forth the suggestion that some friends and family members may be travelling to Canada in the near future.

xxv Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated Downie, 11/18 August 1844 to brother and sister regarding sale of potatoes, production of sugar, a description of the Downie farm and the positive attributes of Canada.

xxvi Good Family Correspondence: Letter from J. & M. Good dated at Newhope 23 September 1841 to brother in Scotland about new life in Canada, which they very much like.

xxvii Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated 11/12 January 1842 to brother in Scotland about the independence of owning land and the price of a pig in Canada. Also advising the best time for James’ mother to emigrate.

xxviii Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from John Brough dated Nenthorn, 22 May 1838 to brother James regarding the receipt of a letter confirming the arrival of ten pounds, Robert contracting measles, and the letter concludes with a religious tract about sin.

xxix Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from [illleg.] dated Edinburgh 30 March 1835 to “Dear sister” regarding baker’s wages, shoemaking and emigration to Canada.


xxxii Beattie Family Correspondence: Letter from William Beattie, Broomhill Farm, Strathdon Parish Aberdeenshire, Scotland to his brother George Beattie in Nichol Township. Written June 13, 1836 regarding conditions at Broomhill Farm and arrangements for emigration.

xxxii Smibert Family Correspondence: Letter from Thomas Jr. to uncle James Smibert dated 30 September 1840 informing James of the death of Thomas Sr.
xxxiii  Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from Jas Brough dated Nenthorn, 7 April 1834 to son James regarding money sent to purchase a cow and a request for a very detailed update on every facet of life in Canada.

xxxiv  Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from John Anderson dated NewMarket 22 February 1837 to his parents regarding books, McKenzie & radicals and the first few years in Canada.

xxxv  Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from John Brough dated Nenthorn, 24 May 1841 to Cousin James Brough regarding financial assistance, James Robinson’s past visit to see James, encouraging James to return to Scotland.

xxxvi  Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from Margaret Brough dated Nenthorn, 24 May 1841 to Jeaney sending regards and hoping the farming season goes well and if not then extends an offer to return to Scotland.

xxxvii  Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 23 November 1842 to “Dear Sir” describing his initial difficulties in Canada, describing Newhope’s location and the local wildlife.

xxxviii  Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 13 February 1843 to Brother, Sisters and family informing them of Magdalene giving birth to a daughter, friendliness of Dutch neighbours, land payments and snow.


xi Houston-McNeely-Blair Family Correspondence: Typed copy (on Dr. Houston’s letterhead) of the letter from Arthur Houston dated Glasgow, 9 April 1832 to his brother in Carleton County regarding the death of their mother, financial settlement with brother James in Ireland for keeping mother, difficult financial times, contemplation of sending son Andrew to study medicine to be useful in Canada.

xii Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from Hellen Elliot dated 18 November 1842 to her sister Margaret Anderson regarding her journey home, bad winter roads near Guelph and the death of an unknown person and Mr. Pringll Spear’s child.

xiii Letter from John Kyd dated Kennoway, 12 August 1836 to Thomas Anderson expressing concern that no letter has been received since October 1835 and news about the Graham family inheritance.

xiii Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from Alex Kyd dated 28 September 1838 to Peggy Anderson sending pleasantries and asking for a reply.

xiv Anderson Family Correspondence. Letter from William Bethune dated Kennoway, 24 January 1838 to Thomas Anderson regarding receipt of letter, allusion to rebellions in Upper Canada, local animals, inquiry about Canadian cities and religion.

xv Edwin C. Guillet. Early Life in Upper Canada. (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., Ltd., 1933), pp. 606. In the early part of this period, letters posted in England or Scotland in November seldom arrived at York before the following spring; while under the most favourable conditions of later years at least two to three months was necessary.


Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from John Brough dated Nenthorn, 24 May 1840 to James mentioning that he is glad James received the box of goods from a previous letter, that he is sending information via two travellers who are leaving for America, regrets that James is ill and ends with religious thoughts about healing through God.

Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from John Kyd dated Kennoway, 12 August 1836 to Thomas Anderson expressing concern that no letter has been received since October 1835 and news about the Graham family inheritance.

Smibert Family Correspondence: Letter from Thomas Smibert to James Smibert dated 14 August 1828 updating James on family news, outlining his concern about not having heard from James and his economic troubles with the tannery.


ii *Anderson Family Correspondence*: Letter from [illeg] dated Christmas Day 1842 to “Dear Friend”.


iv Devine, *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*, pp. 94-95.

v *Good Family Correspondence*: Letter from James Good dated 1841 to brother, mother and sister regarding the Good family’s perilous nine week passage to Canada.

vi *Good Family Correspondence*: Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 23 November 1842 to “Dear Sir” describing his initial difficulties in Canada, describing Newhope’s location and the local wildlife.

vii Smibert Family Correspondence. Letter from Thomas Smibert (Peebles Scotland) to brother James Smibert (London, Upper Canada) dated 29 March 1825 regarding an inability to provide funds and Thomas’ letter tanning business.

viii Brough Family Correspondence. Letter from Jas. Brough dated Nentorn, 7, April 1834 to his son James in Otonabee Upper Canada regarding sending money and updates to friends in Scotland.
Brough Family Correspondence. Letter from Jas Brough dated Nenthorn, 7 April 1834 to son James regarding money sent to purchase a cow and a request for a very detailed update on every facet of life in Canada.

Brough Family Correspondence. Letter from John Brough dated Nenthorn, 8 March 1843 to “Dear Cousins” offering money and expressing concern of neglect for educational and spiritual activity in Canada.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Downie, September 9, 1843 to his brother and friends regarding crops, livestock and finances in Canada. He also adds a request for money so that he is able get along in the coming winter.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Downie, 18 February 1844 to his brother acknowledging receipt of money. It also provides details of life in Canada including clearing the land, intemperance, Canadian misfortunes. Good also requests his brother forward a song book from Scotland.


Anderson Family Correspondence. September 13, 1833 Agreement to purchase lot in Guelph.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated 11/12 January 1842 to brother in Scotland about the independence of owning land and the price of a pig in Canada. Also advising the best time for James’ mother to emigrate.

Brough Family Correspondence. Letter from Maddalina Brough dated Wooden Mills, 5 April 1849 to her sister about a visit from William Robison, hard times at Nenthorn and surprise at lack of minister in Canada.

Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Jr. dated Downie, 7 October 1854 to his uncle informing him of his marriage to Jane McEwan and the rising price of land in Scotland. James Sr. informs him of the death of a friend. His daughter Ann married James Chawens.
lxvii Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 23 November 1842 to “Dear Sir” describing his initial difficulties in Canada, describing Newhope’s location and the local wildlife. “Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada,” pp. 431.

lxviii Smibert Family Correspondence. Letter from James Smibert dated London 5 March 1846 to his nephew Thomas regarding a family inheritance, banking, the situation in Canada and family news.

lxix Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good (no date) to his brother and sister regarding the cost of food in Canada, a family update, religious instruction in Canada, and a list of items he would like sent for his weaving business.

lx Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James S. Good dated Newhope 23 November 1842 to “Dear Sir” regarding business and life in Canada.

lx1 Brough Family Correspondence. Letter from John Brough dated Wooden Mill, 31 May 1847 to Mr. Dear regarding living near Kelso, not having a farm, the Corn Laws and commodity prices. Attached is a letter from M. Brough about family updates.

lxii “Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada,” pp. 431.

lxiii Good Family Correspondence. Letter from John Good dated 1 September 1850 to his uncle in Scotland informing him that James has been ill since April, success of crops, loss of some livestock, and an outline of trades that would do well in Canada.

lxiv “Reports Correspondence Returns and Other Papers Relating to The Affairs Of Canada,” pp. 827.

lxv Kirkwood Family Letter. Letter from Robert Kirkwood in Paris to his father Andrew Kirkwood in Scotland dated 8 December 1841. The letter describes the plans for a mill that Robert and his partner are building in Paris. It also discusses finding a market for their flour and exporting some to his father in Glasgow.

lxvi Good Family Correspondence. Letter from James Good dated Newhope, 13 February 1843 to his brother, sisters and family informing them of Magdalene giving birth to a daughter, friendliness of Dutch neighbours, land payments and the snow.
Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from Margaret Brough dated Nenthorn, May 1839 to Jenny regarding a box of clothes sent along with the letter.

Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from Margaret Brough dated Nenthorn, 7 May 1842 to Jenny about a parcel of clothes that was sent and an update about friends.


Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James dated Downie, 6 February 1853 to brother recounting the visit of J. Burns, their growing livestock herd and crops, the need to hire a farmhand, success of the Canada Company.

Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated Downie, 1 August 1851 to brother informing him that he is still ill, that potatoes are a complete failure, of a flood, and of the loss of their minister and the lack of a teacher.

Brough Family Correspondence: Letter from John Brough dated Nenthorn, 8 March 1843 to “Dear Cousins” offering money and expressing concern of neglect for education and spirituality in Canada.


Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good (no date) to his brother and sister regarding the cost of food in Canada, a family update, religious instruction in Canada, and a list of items he would like sent for his weaving business.

“Correspondence Relative to Emigration To Canada,” pp. 69.

Ibid. pp. 69.

Good Family Correspondence: Letter from James Good dated Downie, September 9, 1843 to his brother and friends regarding crops, livestock and finances in Canada. He also adds a request for money so that he is able get along in the coming winter.
Letter from James Good dated Downie, 18 February 1844 to his brother acknowledging receipt of money. It also provides details of life in Canada including clearing the land, intemperance, Canadian misfortunes. Good also requests his brother forward a song book from Scotland.

Anderson Family Correspondence: Letter from John Kyd dated Kennoway, 12 August 1836 to Thomas Anderson expressing concern that no letter has been received since October 1835 and news about the Graham family inheritance; Letter from M. Anderson dated 22 May 1843 to Thomas regarding receipt of letter, parental advice about a debt owed to Thomas by John Pearson, and news of marriage of Peter Orn; Letter from David Anderson dated Kennoway, 18 March 1834 to his brother Thomas regarding death of mother, family updates, commodity prices, and possibility of coming to Canada.

Letter from James Good dated Downie, 18 February 1844 to his brother acknowledging receipt of money. It also provides details of life in Canada including clearing the land, intemperance, Canadian misfortunes. Good also requests his brother forward a song book from Scotland.


James Good to his brother and friends, 9 September 1843.