

Letter to: Allan Stewart
62 Thistle Street,
Edinburgh, Scotland

From: Alexander Stewart
Township of McNab, Upper Canada

April 13 1835 (It appears that this letter was returned for U. States postage)

Township of McNab Upper Canada

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I'm not sure if this red ink will stand it's of our own making

Dear Brother

I doubt not but you are thinking long and almost despairing of hearing from us any more from this remote part of the world, but still we did not forget you yet and though absent in person very present in mind so we still hope to see each other in the land of the living and of hope (if Providence ordain) and we expect to be better here in the course of a few years than were in. — but still pleasure cannot be enjoyed here that could in dear Scotland on account of Scotland being our native land and being open so that a person could see a far distance from — the winter is long and cold in this country but it is far more pleasant than it is in Scotland for there no rain here in the winter time but keen frost the most of the time between the 20th of Nov. till the beginning of March or a little after, it at least it was the case this last winter and the snow is not entirely away yet this being the middle of April we are told that the snow was all away almost a month before this time last year we did not hear of any that were frozen to death this winter but one Robert Robertson from Port na Craig got his hands a good deal touched an a wedding now people that have been 16 year in the country say that this was the coldest winter known since they came and last summer to be the hottest.

Now to tell you of our circumstance here we and A. Stewart and Margaret are in the clearance aluded in my first letter (if it reached you) A and I went to Beckwith and brought 3 cows and a yoke of oxen home have 3 and ½ acres of new land cut down we made between 45 and 50 lb sugar and expect to make a little more yet. James R and Jane are in the first place 11 Lot 3 Concession have a cow and are both keeping healthy and likely to do well. A and black and comely Amy is still with Capt Labriatain [Lebreton] March (March the name of the township) 7 miles on this side of Bytown. I was down seeing her in the beginning of Jan'y and she was well and well pleased the Capt and his wife are very kind to her we expect to bring her home in a short time.

Now Dear only Brother if I were to tell you not to come to this country I believe it would be a heart breaking sentence to you and to us all, to say that we should never see on another anymore (and the wise ruler of all things only knows) but trusting in Him we will expect you out this summer if you did not change your mind and if you did may the Lord be your guide and comforter wherever you go but if intend to come you will bring a good deal of Molskin for trowsers and Cotton for shirts for cloths are very dear in this country especially in this part but in Montreal it can be got almost as cheap as in Scotland and bring some knives and forks if you could get but an ounce or two of right rye-grass and rub-grass (or as we call'd it in galic bodch-dubh) which I think would be very good for pasture what we have here for rye-grass is Timothy and it is very good for cattle and instead of diminishing in the ground it increases every other kind of grain is the same as in Scotland but the pease it is all white pease they use here the Bushel of pease is from 4s6d to 5s wheat the same oats from 2s and 6d potatoes 1s to a and 6 barley from 4 to 4 and 6d flour from 4 dollars to five a barrel. I scarcely need tell you all the kinds of wood that grows here but the most valuable which is the oak and the red pine and good bird-eye

maple its out of the maple sugar is made there are many more kinds 2 kinds of birch two kinds of ash 2 kinds of beech 2 kinds of elm and so on

I would advise you to take the ships provision if you can or get a nice and an honest family to cast your lot in with for cooking on a vessel is very troublesome if you should have your own provision be sure and have potatoes and red herring you can take that when you can take nothing else and any other thing you can think to suit you best we are of opinion that any thing will keep on the sea as well as on the land have a pint or two of good whiskey you would require to keep yourself very clean you need not buy an more of fine clothes as coarse wearing clothes is the only thing here and if you could get a chance of a good second handed 2 barrel gun a man that can use a gun may have deer venison enough I killed only one since I came but I did not mind them much. I made a good progress in shoe making I made ourselves 5 pair of half-boots and 5 pair of shoes for other people and have 3 pair lying beside me just now the soles pins or as they call them pegs I did not try any of the Wellington boots as yet I would have you to bring a little steel if you could get it convenient I suppose you would not be sorry for it afterwards any little money you have accumulated you will bring it in silver or in gold as English Bank notes are for no good here, the sovereign makes 24s here and in Montreal 24s4d If you have not a particular errand to Atholl I would not advise you to go but write them after you receive this and tell them our news and that we are far better pleased than we were at first I did not express much discontent in my letter to them as I did to you but I hope it did not greive you much you will bring all your old cothes with you perhaps any axes the axes used in Scotland are for no good here out axes are made in different shape and far better for chopping you will bring 2 yards of figured net and some laces such things are very dear here bring some flannel for shirts.