

# LETTERS

AND

## EXTRACTS OF LETTERS

FROM

**Settlers**

IN

## UPPER CANADA.

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LONDON:

MERCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT, FENCHURCH-STREET.

1894.

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# L E T T E R S,

ETC. ETC.

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(COPY.)

No. 8, Market-Lane, York, Upper Canada,  
June 27, 1833.

DEAR SIR,—It was with much pleasure that I received a few lines from you in my father's letter, and I desire to congratulate you on the increase of your trade and family—an increase of trade is a good thing, but it may possibly decline again; an increase in family is better, for if you should come to America with so many souls to assist you, your fortune is secured. I should suppose you would do much better with the addition of L.'s trade, which was considerable. The new retail which you refer to I hope will answer your expectations, but I think it unlikely to equal H.'s. If it should prove that you are at length *doing well*, I should say let well alone; that has always been my maxim. But though I thus write, it is not because I think less favourably of this country than I did—on the contrary, a year's residence in it has confirmed the good opinion I had formed when in London.

It is my decided opinion, that if you are not doing really well, you are (to use a rather vulgar expression) only humbugging your time away by remaining in England any longer.

You say if you come you will take my advice, and make yourself master of the malting-trade, or bring with you a man well acquainted with it—say nothing about the or—my advice is, make yourself master of malting, but not for a moment to think of bringing over any one under the idea of working for you. If you want a maltster you can get one here. There is no advantage in bringing a man over, excepting that you may be acquainted with him; but there are many disadvantages—you would have to pay the man's passage, and keep him when

you get over, and you could not expect to get settled under a month or two, perhaps longer—your man would, in the mean time, get land if he had money, or perhaps engage with somebody else.

A gentleman with whom I am acquainted, who was a considerable farmer in Suffolk, came over with me in the same ship; he brought out with him a number of farming men, I think as many as twelve or fourteen, with their families, and ploughs, and other agricultural paraphernalia in abundance; the men kept with him, but they had every thing to learn; they knew nothing of chopping, logging, and raising log houses; half a dozen yankees or old settlers would have done more work and have done it better; his ploughs, &c. are entirely useless, not being calculated for use in a field full of tumps. If he had hired men to do the work, which his men have now accomplished, it might have been done at a quarter of the expense. So much for bringing out men. Mr. N. is hard to be persuaded that £3: 10s. is sufficient to clear and fence an acre of land—but it is true. His idea of drawing the timber off makes me smile—it is burnt on the land. With respect to seeds and vegetables, you need not trouble yourself about bringing them out, we have quite enough here. This is a flourishing country, and not in want of so many things as people are led to believe. It is laughable to hear some of the new comers from the old country talk of enlightening the natives; they think of setting the Thames on fire, and seem somewhat surprised that people don't come and drag them out of the steam-boats; they think themselves such an acquisition to the country. Many emigrants come out with very extravagant notions, and are consequently disappointed. You wished to know what account I give of the winter; you feared a chilly one. I can only say the winter is to me extremely pleasant.—The snow covers the face of the earth, and the roads are excellent at that season; it is a very busy time, and sleighs are travelling in all directions. The cold was not so intense as I expected; the thermometer was very seldom below Zero, and I always felt quite warm enough in my great coat when walking; I had a fur cap as it kept one's ears warm; I wore cotton stockings all the winter. What do you think of that? The houses in town are warmed by stoves, and can be made very

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clearing  
or plant

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comfortable; in the country they keep fires fit to roast an ox. I thought I should find the summer too hot to be pleasant, but though the glass was up to ninety-two at times, it was generally accompanied with a pleasant breeze. I like the climate better than that of England—we have no fog, I may say, for I only recollect a slight mist on two or three mornings in September, and the rain falls principally in spring and autumn, yet we have a few showers in the summer. The more snow we have in winter the better; people like it—it makes good sleighing.

The timber on the land is not generally more than eighteen inches or two feet in diameter, excepting pines, which are three or four feet diameter, and very lofty. Pine-land is of bad quality generally. The best land is covered with beech, maple, oak, elm, bass, white-ash, &c. To give you some idea of the quantity of timber on an acre, I counted the number of trees as well as I could, reckoning all those above three inches diameter; of that number eighty of them were not nine inches thick, and the largest not more than about thirty inches; there were very few that size. In clearing land the first thing is to cut down the underbrush—the trees are then cut down three or four feet from the ground, the branches are lopped off, and the trunk cut up into lengths of about twelve feet; a yoke of oxen draw the logs together into heaps, the brush is piled on the top and the whole is burnt.

A good hand will chop an acre a week. Some logs that are suitable are split into rails for fencing; they are about twelve feet long and five inches square, and are placed one on another in a zigzag direction: after the land is fenced, all you have to do is to sow the seed and harrow it in; it does not require the plough at first: in the township that I am in you will get thirty or thirty-five bushels of wheat per acre, but in many townships not more than twenty-five bushels.

The hops we get are not near so good as the Kentish hops, but they answer very well: I have had some very good beer of my own brewing, although I say it, better than my Green-street delicious, which you used to laugh about, and the beer is not to be complained of. I am not able to give you a particular account of the quality of the water, as I have not sufficient skill to analyze it—it appears to me to be much the same as in England—there is no scarcity of it. I gave up brewing in

*Summer*

*Timber  
good to*

December, because I could not get any more malt, it was so scarce. The brewers made use of wheat. Brewing paid me so well that I intend to tackle it again when I can make it convenient to malt my own barley; however, I do not brew now. I immediately got employment at a merchant's warehouse, a Mr. Russell's; when I had been with them about two months he sent me with goods to a place called West Gwillimbury, near Lake Simcoe, to trade with the Indians and other queer geniuses. I am out here by myself, (for I write this letter at West Gwillimbury,) but you will write to me according to my address at York; my sister Hannah, and Robert carry on my grocery concern while I am away. If my father and mother should not have sailed before you receive this (but I hope they will be here by then), be pleased to tell them to hasten their departure that we may have time to get settled before winter, and by all means to write us a letter, if they have not recently written, to put us out of our misery, for we are anxiously looking for their arrival, and when the time draws nigh for their arrival, we shall be in a sort of purgatory till we see them. I forgot to tell them to bring out as much flannel as they may require for a year or two. It will be a saving. In the next place I should like, when my father comes, to take land, for that is a safe and profitable speculation, and put up a small brewery on the farm—we should make a noble living that way; or we might establish a store on the farm: a brewery will answer any where, and so will a store.

The people of this country are mostly from Great Britain and Ireland; they are by no means so rough and uncouth in their manners as I was led to expect; for my part I have uniformly met with civility, and during the time I have been here, I have acquired a somewhat numerous acquaintance, and I hope a few friends. One friend offered me a share in his business as a storekeeper—this I declined, for I wish to keep myself at liberty till the arrival of my father, as he will need my assistance. Another talked of starting a brewery—he find money and I judgement—but I intend to keep on as I am for the present. I am not doing badly, for I think I have saved more money in the last six months than I ever did in any six months before; my expenses it is true are but small. I live very comfortably in a log house, (and I am not writing at York,) and

want for nothing but beer. We have tea and meat for breakfast, the same for dinner and supper: it is the custom of the country to make but three meals a day. Whiskey is very cheap, it is about  $7\frac{1}{2}d.$  a quart, and many drink it to the ruin of their health and circumstances, not that the expense ruins them, but the loss of time. But since the establishment of Temperance Societies this evil has very considerably abated. Land is generally selling at 20s. an acre in eligible situations, but by going back you may get it at 5s. an acre. Remember me to all friends.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours, very truly,

THOMAS DRURY.

(Signed)

P.S. I have just received a letter from my father; if he should not have sailed be pleased to tell him to endeavour to arrive early in September, when it will not be so very hot, and if he can be well accommodated in a ship, he may as well come by way of New York. If persons have no merchandize, which pay heavy duty, New York is the best way—if you bring goods, Montreal is best. I hope you will send me a letter—do not put it in the Post Office, but send it by the New York packet. I think the letters are received at the North and South American Coffee House, Threadneedle-Street. If you send it by New York, it will only cost 2s. 3d. but if by the Post Office, it will be longer in coming, and cost 5s. 3d. I forgot to mention there is plenty of opportunity for sporting; you may fish with good success, and if you were in the woods you would say there were pigeons in galore: there are other sorts of game, but, being no sportsman, I cannot give you the particulars. I have seen a few small snakes, but they are harmless. Bears there are very few. They are a few straggling wolves and foxes in the township; they sometimes run off with a sheep or goose, but never attack a human being: but this township is newly settled; there are none of these animals near York. People think nothing of them.

To Mr. G. Thompson,  
White Hart Brewery,  
Bethnal Green.

*Game*

(COPY.)

Hamilton, Gore-District,  
Upper Canada, 25th July, 1833.

DEAR SIR,—My father desires me to write you respecting the true condition of this country; he is at this time engaged in taking a farm, and having an opportunity of sending a letter by a gentleman, we have embraced it. If I were to enter into a detail of the different blessings we are here favoured with, the difference there is between the old country and us, and the happy release we appear to experience in coming to this country; my pen would fail, and my paper fill, long ere the subject could possibly have its due; I shall, therefore, be very brief, as I have many letters to write. We are here placed in a land of liberty, which is far from the state of England: we have no taxes, no tithes, no rates; farmers have no rent to pay, because they all farm their own land, and here we can borrow or lend a neighbour a horse, or any thing that we have, without being afraid; here we have fruit of all kinds, growing wild, and the country is very delightful, far preferable to the old; for my own part, I should be sorry to come back again. I intend myself going to farming as soon as I possibly can, for farming is the best trade here; but, in short, all trade is good here; every person is well off here; I have only seen two poor people since we have been in Hamilton. Land in the bush is from two to three dollars per acre. Here is no distress; the longer we live here the better things get. I would advise no one to come out here; but I should say that if he stopped in the old country, he denied himself of that relief and comfort which he feels that he wants at home and cannot get it. There are great difficulties in coming across the great Atlantic: we were eleven weeks in coming over; had a very bad passage. Now if you or any of your friends think of coming out next Spring you will apply to Mr. Rider, Steeple-Bumpstead, he lives at Halston-Hall, and he will read you a letter I sent to him. If any of you should come over bring all kinds of the best seeds, and good slips of the gooseberry-bush, for vegetation is here in an infant state.

I remain, your sincere friend and well-wisher,

(Signed)

WM. GREEN, JUN.

To Mr. Gumpson, Sen. Gardener,  
Linton, Cambridgeshire.

*Extracts of a Letter from a Half-pay Officer settled in the Newcastle District, Upper Canada, to his Friend in London, dated 24th November, 1833.*

If you could take a trip out here next Summer, *via New York by all means*, you would learn more of the actual state of this part of the colony in a few weeks' time than from all the books that have been written about it for the last ten years, and, I may add, from any one who has resided in it. Formerly, *your informant's* statements, however true they may have been, to a certain extent, several years ago, are now totally inapplicable to *Upper Canada*, or at least to this part of it, at the present day. I have had much conversation regarding the former state of the colony with the older settlers, and they all agree in stating that, until within the last four or five years, they were obliged to take goods in exchange for their wheat, &c. from the merchant; now, however, the case is totally altered, and MONEY can be readily obtained for most articles of *farm produce*. When the farmer happens to be in their debt, however, as *at home*, they frequently compel him to take goods in part payment, and allow a smaller price for their grain. Even making allowance for the difference of times, *your informant's* statement that not even value in *any shape* could be obtained for produce, I cannot help regarding as a great exaggeration. If this was the case, I would ask him how the inhabitants of the colony managed to *clothe themselves*. As to *your informant's* other opinions, which only show his ignorance, I shall merely answer them by facts, which I engage myself to establish by the soundest of all proofs, viz. L. S. D. Your own doubts, I own, are only natural, but, from the arrangements I have made in your favour, you will not have me to blame if you do not discard them. There is one thing I should state, which I believe I formerly mentioned, viz. that, notwithstanding the rapidly increasing value of land in most parts of the province, it will never do to force a *sudden sale*, as in such cases property is often sold at 1s. 3d. below its market-price. Yesterday I completed a purchase for you of 227 acres of land, viz. 127 acres in Hamilton, about four miles to the eastward of Cobourg, and 100 acres in Haldimand, about nine miles east from Cobourg and two miles and a half from the

village of Grafton, near the shore of the Lake. The first mentioned place is to cost £600 currency, and the last mentioned £200, in all £900 currency, or, at the present rate of exchange, about £760 sterling. Each of these places contains about 70 acres of cleared land, free from stumps, and has small orchards of apple-trees, log-houses, barns, &c. My bargain with Mr. C., the seller, is that, if you are not pleased with your purchase, he will take back the land, and will return the price in two years, with 10 per cent. per annum for the use of the money. I have also had a lease drawn, subject to your approval, which will not be binding till the 1st of April next, in favour of Mr. ———, an experienced and substantial English farmer, who will take all the land for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, for the yearly rent of £80 currency, or nearly 9 per cent. on the purchase-money. Mr. ——— will at any time give up the lease on being paid at a fair valuation for his improvements. If you do not wish to take possession of the property for some years, I would strongly recommend you to grant a lease for seven years at least, as you must be well aware that justice will never be done to the land on shorter leases; and, on his own account, the tenant, in this case, will find it his interest to make improvements, which will cost you nothing, and the land be, consequently, increased in value, independently of the progressive increase in value in the lands in this part of the province, which I have formerly stated at 25 per cent. per annum, and which I still think I have not overrated. The country around these estates is beautiful, well cleared and fully settled, and the soil is generally excellent, particularly for grain crops. There is little expense and no uncertainty in titles in Upper Canada, if properly attended to. In the Lower Province it is otherwise. I have had the transfer duly effected, and shall forward you the title-deeds, if you desire it; in the meantime I send you a certificate from the Register-Office at Cobourg, where the transfer is recorded, *which alone* assures your title. By paying 1s. 6d. at this office any person can ascertain whether any mortgages affect any property within the district, and at this office all transactions regarding land must by law be duly registered. The whole expense of transfer and recording is only £1:5:0 and lease 10s. You will perceive that I am most anxious to give you every satisfaction and security in the purchases I have

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effected for you, and I regret much that I could not venture to make any further purchases, at a time when there is a little temporary embarrassment in business, from a foolish panic, arising from a report that the British Government had refused to confirm the charter of the York Bank. Both of the places command a view of the Lake, and the scenery around is very beautiful. Lake Ontario has every appearance of a great ocean, with the exception of being less troubled, and the scenery on the shores of a softer character. The country through which the water communication will pass, between Lake Huron and Kingston, is generally very fine, and the difference of climate between it and the neighbourhood of Cobourg is hardly perceptible.

I shall now give you some account of my own proceedings since I wrote last, and detail my *future prospects*, in which I feel assured you will lend me your assistance, which I am determined to merit by the manner in which I shall conduct any commissions I may receive. Some time ago, by the death of a relation, I came in for a legacy, which enabled me to make some most desirable purchases of land at a sale of Government lands; I bought 200 acres of wild land in Douro, adjoining part of my grant which I had taken up in that township. As none of the neighbours who knew the land would oppose me, I got it at 20s. per acre, and immediately after the sale I was offered £2 per acre by a land speculator. I have contracted for clearing twenty acres and building a log-house there, where I intend to fix my future residence. I have sold my farm here for £200 and 800 acres of wild land, which is worth at least £400 more, in all £600, being better than double what my farm here cost a year ago. You will say *this is pretty well*; but I have been favoured by the circumstance alluded to. I now come to my future plans, in which I think you can materially assist me without incurring any kind of responsibility. I propose, in conjunction with my brother-in-law, to undertake an agency business for investing money in *improved* lands for capitalists in England who may honour us with commissions for that purpose. My plan is shortly as follows; to make no purchases *until a good tenant is found*, who will pay a rent of from 6 to 8 per cent. on the price of the land for any term of years not exceeding twenty-one years. The price of the lands would

not be payable until the purchase was effected, and clear titles made out and duly registered. We propose charging three per cent, on all transactions, with travelling expenses, which last would not be great. It would obviously be our interest, and we should make a point of managing the business in the most economical manner for the parties employing us. My brother-in-law has been several years employed by the Canada Company in locating settlers, &c. &c. and from his experience as a farmer is well qualified to form a correct judgement of the soil and situation of the lands, &c. As I have formerly stated, *wild lands* rise much more rapidly in value than improved lands, when judiciously chosen; but their ultimate rise in value, though certain, proceeds at a different rate, according to circumstances in different situations. Of course if employed to make purchases of wild lands, which is not a part of our immediate plan, we would require to examine the lands particularly, which would be attended with considerable difficulty from want of roads, &c. and greater expense than in the first case. I should feel particularly obliged by your mentioning our proposal to any of your friends who might wish to purchase land in Canada (that is to say, in the neighbouring districts as regards Cobourg). I should state that, in *the first instance*, I would undertake to invest £5000 in land paying from 6 to 8 per cent. in rent in the immediate neighbourhood of Cobourg, Port Hope, &c. &c.; our future proceedings must be determined by circumstances. The society in the neighbourhood of your farms is much better than where I am. By-the-bye I should mention, that though one of the farms is called 127 acres in the deed, it is supposed actually to contain about 150 acres. I trust my arrangements will give you satisfaction, and  
I am, &c. &c.

N.B. During last winter one house in Cobourg paid £4000 in *cash* for the article of wheat alone.

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Huron Tract, South-east Hope,  
Upper Canada, July 20th, 1833.

MY DEAR BROTHER-IN-LAW,—I hope this will find you and my dear sister in good health, as we are all here at present; we find ourselves tolerably well settled, though so short a time

in the country. We have all got an hundred acres of land each, at seven shillings and sixpence per acre, and that the best land possible, and have got about four or five acres a-piece clear, with crops that look tolerably well; the money for the land required to be paid in five annual instalments, with interest. We expect to have thirty or forty acres cleared by next spring, most of which we will sow with wheat, potatoes, and vegetables. Those who have time can make abundance of sugar from the maple-tree, which is very plentiful; likewise salts from the ashes of the burnt timber, which sells well; in fact, any one that is but moderately sober and industrious need not fear to do well here, but whiskey is so plentiful and cheap, it ruins many. We have got a great many Irishmen on the tract, who are good neighbours and settlers. We had a good passage here of four weeks, yet was near being lost in a squall of wind; the cholera raged very much when we arrived, taking numbers off in every quarter, yet we all escaped, thank God, nor have we had any cases of it since last fall. Our friend Daniel Hanly parted with us at York, and am sorry we have not heard from him since; I would wish, if he writes home, you would let me know where he is, and how his father, and mother, and brothers are. We met with John M'Guire and his wife in York, whom we were very glad to see; they treated us well; they told us Cumunham was working here as a labouring man; can do as well as any man here; he can get from twelve to sixteen dollars per month, besides his board; provisions are very dear here in the summer, but if he saves a little money he can provide for himself and family by laying in a store in the winter, which is the most reasonable time, as provisions are not above one-third of the price then. Girls can get from four to six dollars per month, with every thing else they require. If you should think of coming here at any time, of which notion I should be glad, don't attempt to set out in the beginning of the season, as it is then if not all the most of the danger is; the latter end of May or June is the best time, the latter to be preferred. Give my love to all our friends and neighbours, and with love to you and my dear sister, I remain your affectionate brother,

JAMES PAYTON.

To John Costello,  
Lakefield,  
County Roscommon, Ireland.

*Price of*

*John's*

*Extract of a Letter from a Person who emigrated to Upper  
Canada, Township of Fullarton.*

OUR crop of turnips is very fine, as is also our wheat. The last of our spring wheat was sown on the 29th May, and appeared to be better than what was sown on the 12th. Our potatoes were planted in the beginning of June, moulded in July, and ready for use by the second week in August. They are as good as any that I have eaten in Ireland. Our crops are put into the ground much later, and our harvest is earlier than in Ireland; and I may here tell you that all the garden seeds which I took with me grew very well. In our garden we have five kinds of cabbages, carrots, parsnips, celery, parsley, leeks, onions, olives, and almost every kind of salad; about a quarter of an acre in melons and cucumbers, also peas, French beans, beet-root, and mustard; but what will surprise you most of all is that I intend sowing half an acre in sunflowers from the seed of my own which I brought with me; but to unriddle this seeming folly, be it known to you that half a pint of this seed in the day is sufficient to fatten a sheep in six weeks, and make it fit for use. We also feed our fowls on this seed; in short, any man who can and is willing to work should not hesitate to come here if he can, being sure, in a few years, to be independent. Female servants get four dollars by the month, beside excellent diet.

No. 44, First Concession of North  
East Hope, Huron tract, Upper  
Canada, North America, *Avon*.  
12th January, 1834.

MY EVER DEAR FATHER,—I received your letter of the 28th of April on the 30th of July last. I wrote two letters to you on the 17th of July, one by post, and the other by the Canada Company's Agent. I hope you received either of them. Since then I was waiting for an answer, but I feel the time so tedious without often hearing from you, I resolved not to let this opportunity pass without writing. One of the commissioners has come up to visit the settlers, and he is kind enough to send this letter, with others, to London. My dear father, in my last letter I endeavoured to give you an account of the climate of this country. I hope it was satisfactory to you. I cannot either add to or diminish any thing I have said about

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it, and from all that I can learn from the older settlers and the natives it was correct. My dear father, the demand for lands in this settlement was so great that the lots I thought to have kept for you were purchased last summer at an advance of 2s. 6d. on the acre, but I have now an opportunity of getting them again, as the owner wishes to go further up the country to live near some friends; it is just the same kind of land that I have, and joins it; he has made several improvements on it, which, with the advance, comes to about £60, and the purchase-money for the 200 acres is £87 : 10s. to be paid to the Canada Company in six years, by instalments; this latter sum he has nothing to do with; the £60 is just for his interest; he has about four or five acres clear, and about ten more partly done, the first crop of which will pay back more than he requires; I have engaged it conditionally for you, and perhaps in ten years I could not suit you better in a farm; he promises to hold it for me until May. If you could have his part placed to my credit in the Canada Company's Office, London, the commissioners here would hand it to me for him; by doing so you would have no trouble on your arrival but to get up a house, which is a trifle, and I will have every thing necessary for it before you arrive. The Company are now about to rise their land again, and the difference next spring may be more on 200 acres of wild land than the improvement on the farm I speak of is now, together, perhaps, with going a mile or two into the woods to live, as all the lands on this road are taken up. My dear father, do not lose this opportunity; I know you would rather the whole of it be on the next farm to me, along with the advantage of a public road, and a good river running through it. If I had the money myself you should know nothing of it until you came here; all my capital went in the purchase of stock, provisions, hire, &c. since I came here; but, please God, my farm will soon repay me the fruits of my labour; I could at this moment sell it for four times what it cost me. My dear father, it will be so late in the season before you receive this letter, you can scarcely have another before it would be time for you to embark. Some people prefer coming by New York, as being the safest and most expeditious voyage; others Quebec, as it is something cheaper. I have just got an account from a Mr. Linton, a Scotch advocate, who landed at New York, and from that port came here:—

	Miles
From New York to Albany, by tow boats in less than twenty-four hours .....	145
From Albany to Syracuse, by Erie canal .....	171
From Syracuse to Oswego, by canal.....	38
	354

*from  
hto  
ilton*

From Oswego in about thirty hours passengers and luggage conveyed by a schooner to Hamilton. He says, "I paid in the summer of 1833, £1 : 6 : 3 for passage from New York to Hamilton, for each grown person, and 100lbs. and for every other 100lbs. over and above, 3s. 4d." My dear father, you can calculate your expenses as far as Hamilton, within sixty miles of me; from thence it is by waggons one dollar for every cwt. By Quebec it is very near the same, but a great deal more tedious; but wherever it is you land write to me. My dear father, before you agree with any captain or owner of a vessel, enquire well into the character of both, as of the crew, and see that the latter are smart active men; examine the vessel also; there may be some bad characters on board that will try to raise disturbances. Do not let — — have any thing to say to them: it cannot hurt you if you have to board yourselves; come well prepared as I mentioned to you in my first letter, and every article I mentioned in my other letters you will have occasion for, particularly strong boots and shoes, warm and fine clothes, strong linen and flannel, and a few pair of strong furze cutting gloves; all sorts of clothes here are very dear, and hard to be got; tailors' wages are by far higher than the price of the cloth. Desire the girls to bring plenty of good clothes for themselves, as well as tapes, threads, pins, needles, ribbons, trimmings, checks, &c.; these may appear trifling, but when you come to want them you would be glad to have brought them. Since I wrote the above I have made some more enquiries as to whether Quebec or New York would be the best route, and every person says New York.

My dear father, I must conclude this scrawl with most affectionate love to my dear sisters and brother. May the Almighty be your pilot through the briny deep, and may I shortly be able to receive you all in this new world.

I remain, my ever dear father, your affectionate son,

JOHN STINSON.

*Extracts of Letters written to various Friends by a Naval Officer settled in the London District.*

Beachville, Oxford, West, London District,  
Upper Canada, 30th November, 1333.

YOU will have heard from my brothers of our safe arrival across the Atlantic, and my having settled in this part of Canada, with which I am greatly pleased; on the whole, indeed, I am delighted with the Upper Province, which, instead of disappointing, has much exceeded my expectations, and my only regret is that I did not take the important step of coming here a few years earlier, when I should have got land, particularly my Government grant, on much better terms than it is to be had now; still it is almost absurdly cheap yet, when the luxuriance and exhaustless fertility of the soil are considered: I paid five dollars an acre (or about one guinea sterling) for my first purchase of 200 acres, but then there are twenty cleared, with an excellent new log-house upon the farm, where I, with my nephew and servant live, about a mile from the farm house which I have taken part of for my family till I build my own proper mansion next year: the adjoining 200 acres of wild land I bought for 13s. an acre, so that I have now 400 in one lot, which is a very snug compact property: my Government allowance will add about 300 acres more to this; but I intend taking some time to look well round me that I may make as judicious a selection as I can of land for my grant. I am happy to say that I am already fairly installed as a farmer, for I have got my little crop of wheat and rye into the ground; I am owner of a capital waggon and team of oxen, and I have bought and sold both live and dead stock in a small way. I certainly have accomplished as much as I expected to do, and am very well satisfied with my labours, hard enough as they are from morning to night: how delightful, indeed, is my life of vigorous exertion now to the drudgery and harassing cares I left behind me in England. This is not yet a country where much money is to be made except by those who can afford to speculate largely in land, and wait for some years for a large return upon the outlay; but then the finest land is so cheap yet, (though it is rapidly rising), and the necessaries of life are to be procured so easily, that after the bustle and discomfort of getting settled are over, a man with a family, who has a little capital to begin with, feels a perfect load shaken off his mind and spirits, and he breathes in an atmosphere of ease and cheerfulness, to

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which, in England, he was an *utter stranger*: these, at least, have been my sensations, and I do not think I am of an over sanguine disposition. It is, to be sure, not all sunshine here, for we have very considerable disadvantages to contend with, such as the want of good servants and the general scarcity of labourers; but these evils are decreasing yearly as emigration goes on, and really in this country a person is thrown so much upon his own ingenuity and resources, that he soon learns to be much less dependent upon the help of others than at home. On the score of respectable neighbours we are very fortunate, for I can count eight or ten naval or army officers, with their families within a few miles of us: we are to have a large importation, too, next year, for Admiral Vansittart is coming here with all his establishment, and will bring a clergyman with him, who is to have the new church which my friend Captain Drew, R.N. is building, about a mile from where we live, which I look upon as a great comfort and blessing to us. In the way of provisions we are much better off than I expected; we have excellent beef at 3*d.* and the finest venison at 2*d.* per lb.; our bread, butter, and milk, are not as cheap in proportion; but next year I shall have my own dairy establishment, and send my own grain to the mill, which will remedy that. On the whole, I consider I have greatly bettered my circumstances by coming to this part of the world, and though I should hardly like the responsibility of *advising* others to follow my example, I give my candid opinion on my own case, and I should further say that if the advantages of Upper Canada were understood and appreciated in England as much as I value them, thousands instead of tens would come out here.

To C. I.

I. G.

6th Dec. 1833,

I am now master of 400 acres of beautiful land; it is fortunately all in one piece, though I purchased it at different times; the whole cost me about £320 sterling, and I am well pleased with my bargain, which is considered a very good one, for land situated only a mile from Dundas Street, (or the Governor's Road, as it is called here), having twenty acres cleared, and a good log-house upon it. I have not yet availed myself of my Government grant, as I intend taking plenty of time to look round for the choice of some very eligible location, which I may think likely to rise into importance soon. I continue to

be greatly pleased with this beautiful country, and am fully satisfied with my progress as yet, which has been quite equal to my hopes and expectations when I left England; at that time I was very desirous that I might succeed in making a purchase of land, settling myself upon it, and doing a little before the winter set in, and all this I have managed to do, for I put some acres under crop last month, and I already number among my live stock an excellent yoke of oxen, a cow, and about a dozen pigs; I have, too, a first rate waggon, and I am now thrashing out two stacks of wheat and oats, which I purchased: all this looks well for a first start, and I intend clearing thirty or forty acres this fall, so that I shall have, I hope, in the course of next year, a clear farm of fifty to sixty acres under crop, which will supply my household with much of the needful, besides something over for the market. The life I lead is really delightful and exhilarating, and so completely am I occupied and engrossed with my labours, that of my three guns which I brought out with me I have not put a charge into one of them since I landed; there is no lack of game either, as we have deer, squirrels, racoons, and wolves, in abundance; the first three are excellent eating.\*\*\*\*\* Money goes much further than in England, \*\*\*\*\* I like my farming and clearing operations very much, and I look forward with delight to the life of constant vigorous activity I am entering upon; much do I lament the shortness of the days at present, for I feel, if they were ten times as long, I should have work enough to crowd into them. I intend to buy another yoke of oxen if I can get them cheap, so much have I to do with clearing land and other jobs.

*To I. M. I.*

I. G.

7th January, 1834.

WHEN I came down to breakfast this morning I found the bread, meat, mustard, cream, and moist sugar all frozen: this certainly was practically convincing as to the degree of cold, and much more so than my own feelings apprised me of, for, though I am very little more warmly clothed than I should be in England, I have not by any means experienced what I should call extreme cold, and was greatly surprised to hear some of the people say this was one of the sharpest days we might expect during the winter: the particular bitterness of it arose, I observed, from the cutting westerly wind, and, had

the day been calm, we should have scarcely felt it, for the sun has considerable power at mid-day.—\* \* \* You request details which may assist your friends in their way hither, and I shall be glad to be of any use in that way. As a general caution, let me advise all who intend coming here to call into requisition a little of their common sense, and not expect in this New Country all the comforts, natural and artificial, of a highly polished society, for such anticipations can only terminate in disappointment, and more probably in disgust. Greatly indeed do I wish that I could inoculate all Emigrants with a spice of my own liking to Canada; a liking, perhaps, much strengthened by finding that the rational plain sense hopes with which I started, have been in no way disappointed, but rather exceeded. I certainly think that most writers upon Canada have understated the sum which is necessary for a gentleman with a family to set out with comfortably, and there is a vague sort of impression amongst the public that if a person lands with a few hundreds in his pocket he is at once comfortably provided for: this is a gross mistake, and must lead some into intolerable difficulties, for a time at least, when they may at last struggle through and succeed: but I should say with less than £1000 or £1200 much hardship and privation may be expected by those who have brought up their families genteelly in England: to be sure some people can bear these things better than others, and there must be different degrees of suffering according to habit and disposition in the parties; but in this country, even in the smallest way, with a few acres of your own, there is a feeling of independence a thousand per cent. better than the *exterior show* of comfort at home, while one is really pressed to the very earth with positive want and embarrassment. Those people who have grown up boys have a great advantage; they are so much wealth or money saved in the shape of labour, that is if they are under good discipline and made to be useful in the various ways they can be here.—\* \* \* In the way of equipment, a very large wardrobe is not necessary. My strong ploughman's boots are very useful, and a pair of fisherman's boots up to the knees have been *invaluable* to me. Grown up persons should bring a moderate stock of good substantial clothing for summer and winter; and for growing children stuff should be brought, to make up in this country.

From I. G. to R. H. I.