

Dear Father

Niagara October 10th 1783

D5/3/2

I received your agreeable letter of date
19th March last which acquaints me with the welcome
news of you and all friends being well. as also of
the birth of my young son and then called John -
I am happy happy to learn the satisfaction my young
family affords you, though at same time cannot but
be sensible of the great charge they bear and at
present must be to you. but the God that knows
your good disposition will render you that happiness
your deeds deserves for life and will put it in my
power to make a retaliation some time or other -
Since my arrival in that part of the world I have
been close confin'd to business having not been 20 Miles
from home since I came to Niagara, so that I am
deprived of rendering you that Satisfaction your
letter requires with regard to Curiosities or Poils
but as I am next Spring to return to the Indian
Country

and do a little business for myself, with advice of my present
employer (who is to assist me to that purpose). I hope to have
it in my power to render a minute account of some curiosities,
which will certainly entertain you, with regard to the
Inhabitants here, their appearance when dress'd, would afford
a man of penetration both myrrh and speculation,
but for me (who was but the mild Highland man) I was
afraid for many days to venture myself out of Doors, but
when reconciled to approach ^{them} I was made to understand, that
I was nearer connected ^{to them} than I expected, upon the interpreters
acquainting I was a Scotchman they begg'd to let me know
that they found one more of their lost Tribe, and gave
their Hollow which if heard by the Gremsey men would
make them jump over Hoy head, in trading they are
the most Justest of mankind never doubting, but the
Sowanas (as they call us) will do them Justice, on their
arrival with their product. they deliver the whole to the
Merchant, and will remain two days in the place before
they trade never has the least Idea, that their property
will be hurt, thus is what a Highlandman would ~~do~~
do to his Parson, and I believe he should not. thus unhappy
were, and as bad a peer has hurt them much being furnished
by Government with cloathing and provision but intirely deprived

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of their natural life. such as hunting and living in woods
when they feed on the best of victuals. our provisions has
Deppopulated them much. brought decays and fevers amongst
them which they formerly ~~was~~ ^{were} unacquainted with. but now
they will be happily restor'd. to their former state. A happy
people before the luxury of the Europeans cam amongst
them. its what most remarkable the prisoners they have
during this war taken. that they prefer staying with them
rather than return to his country again when taken by
them they immediately strip of his Cloathing which they
cut to pieces. cut his ears and bore his nose holes his
hair and paints him all over so that before they take
him to any Port he will in every shape be the Indian
a month after I cam to this place. I have seen them take
a young boy to this Port with his Father. Mother and his
two Sisters. Sculaps hanging about his neck which would
shock any Heart to see it. many other curious maners
which I at present will ommitt, but as I am to
be better acquainted I hope not fall to writing our
more particulars, which I hope will accompany some
Circulation

I am requested by a Captain David Belton who commands
this Lake of Ontario to be in the kindest manner remem-
bered to you and C^W Johnson and Family and begs you to
enquire after a sister of his that lives about Haillon or
Leed if she has any children Roman Boys that intends
coming aboard to write him next year and that he will
do for them and Hopes you will be ^{the} writer of the
letter and give him the news of the place I am very
much obligated to him since he understood I have been
a little acquainted in the Orkneys having dined with
him often on Board his vessel when he would be highly
entertain with the little news I could give of the
Orkneys. — I have enclosed to May a small Bill
on London which I hope with the rest of your Goodness you
will assist her to forward for assistance though it is small
I hope it will be look on as the widow's mite. as no great
wages is given here the first year to a Quil driver — by a
letter from I wish all friends at Quebec was there will
I hope they continue their former good correspondence with
you my best Esteem to you May's Sister Polly Kelly Leahy
Polly — Mr Mackay & Family hoping they will be kind to my
Young Family I remain your Obedient Son-in-law — John May

Original to Mr & Mrs Johnson
Copy to Mr William Talbot Esq
Copy to Mr & Mrs Kelly