

Addressed to: James Johnston

From: David Geddes

Stromness 1st March 1787

Dear friends,

I rec^d your much esteem'd favour of the 9th Nov^r last. I shall be always happy to learn that you & the rest of my friends at Quebec enjoy perfect health & happiness. The account of the sudden death of my cousins affected me greatly as it must have done all those who knew them. The situation of their poor mother must have been truly lamentable but there is no avoiding trouble & misfortunes in this world. My cousin John Johnston can inform you of a loss that happen'd to this small place this winter from a sloop that went out to kill seals on an island ten leagues to the westward of this. A gale of wind drove them to the Isles of North Ferro where they all perished but three young lads. They were about twenty drowned who have left a number of helpless widows & young children almost destitute, & the greatest part of them within call of my door. I proposed going out with the sloop for amusement & nothing would have prevented me but a cut I got in my leg a little before. This they tell me was good luck. I since fell on my right hand and thought to have lost the use of it but it is growing better than I imagin'd & with care may do. It may likewise be the means of preventing me drowning myself in a little boat I sail in by myself & ventur'd sometime too much. Mr Halcro built a fine one & thought to bet me but he was disappointed, for you know we pride ourselves as much on our boats sailing as a Canadian does on his horse trotting. I flatter'd myself with the addition of Mr Halcro to our little society in other respects but he seems not fond of company, which I am in moderation, & always with the best, tho' we sometimes do get merry.

I am sorry to hear such bad accounts of my brother George. I hope they will not turn out so bad as you seem to imagine. I believe the situation of America with regard to trade has disappointed many of more extensive knowledge than him. When in America I supply'd him with a sum so much as I then thought convenient to spare & which he thought would be of great service to him. My present situation will not admit doing anything for him. My small family are increasing, I have lately got another son Andrew, & must endeavour to provide for them as well as I can, as circumstances will admit, & leave the rest to providence. Last summer I try'd a cargo of corn to Norway, deals to Ireland which turned out pretty well. Have likewise got my hands in the building a house for my father & one for myself on a wharf where I am to have a dock for the sloops, etc.

I am glad to hear my young cousin J.P. Johnston is coming on so well & that he has got over the trials of the small pox & teething. M^{rs} Geddes joins me in good wishes to Mrs Johnston, your good selves & all other friends and I ever am with due regard

Dear friends

Your much obligd hble Se^r

Da^d Geddes