

Addressed to: Mr Joshua Johnston, Stromness

From:

D^f Uncle,

I rec^d yours of the 5th Jan^y about a forthn^t ago. I have but just got the franks for conveyance as well for the Orkneys as returns to bring up letters for Quebec. As to gaining any certain intelligence of the destination or course of the transports for Quebec, tis merely impossible, tis a matter that remains entirely in the brests of the Admiralty at such times as these. Not even the commanders themselves know what course they take until they are ready to sail, & then their orders are to follow their convoy. Therefore the only advice that can be given Mrs Halcro is to hold herself in readiness to embark on the shortest notice if any come that way, which probably may happen as is generally supos^d. But as before there is no certainty.

Cousin John would be happy if his sister would make certain of her passage by coming up to London & going in the same ship along w^t him, which he informs me he has proposed in his letter which I have forwarded by Mr Sands about eight days ago.

I return you & my cousin thanks for your intended present but am fearfull I shall never arrive to that perfection in musick as to merit a favour of that kind. Tho I am very fond that kind of entertainm^t & amusement yet am afraid I cannot find leisure sufficient to pay that attention which it requires.

I have had the misfortune of an accid^t w^t one of the salts intended for my Uncle James, which you'd favour me very much in another of the same as nearly as you can recollect, the dimentions are, in high inch & 1/8 & 1½ diameter from the outside or flat of the squares.

I have sent inclosed to my mother two return franks (if one is not sufficient) for conveyance of your severall letters for Quebec. There are one or two ships expected to sail before the grand fleet, but how soon I cannot say. No particular news. Lord G.Gordon is honerably acquitted. Pray excuse haste. I conclude w^t my love to you, aunt & cousins & ever I am d^f Uncle

Your affec^t nephew

Crafts Mackay

London the 15th Feb^y 1781