

Canadian soldiers' letters

THIS exhibit/exposition is part of a series dealing with postal history of Canada and provinces. My original motivation was to scan and record well over 2000 BNA stampless and early stamped covers that I have accumulated over the past fifty years of collecting postal history. It soon became apparent that these should be organized into relatively small chunks.

Earlier ones in this series (all of which are freely downloadable from Richard Frajola's website):

- *Postal history of Nova Scotia & New Brunswick* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH/dhNSNB.pdf> and <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH/dhNSNBpart2.pdf>
- *Postal history of Prince Edward Island* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DHPEI/DHPEI.htm>
- *Manuscript town postmarks of Canada* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH2022/Canadapostmarks1.pdf>
- *Early Canadian town postmarks* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH2022/Canadapostmarks2.pdf>
- *Canadian postal history (domestic)* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH/DCPH.pdf>
- *Canadian money letters* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DHMay23/Part7.pdf>
- *Canadian registration to 1898* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DHMay23/Part3.pdf>
- *Postal history of Newfoundland (to 1875)* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH2023/DHNFph.pdf>
- *Mail between Canada & US (to 1875)* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DHMay23/Part8.pdf>
- *Mail between Canada & UK, 1761–1875* <https://www.rfrajola.com/DH2023/DHCanadaUKexhibit.pdf>

Older ones (which will be updated):

- *Canadian DLO returned letter covering envelopes and wrappers* [rfrajola.com/mercury/DH9.pdf](https://www.rfrajola.com/mercury/DH9.pdf)
- *Mail to and from Canada prior to joining the UPU* [rfrajola.com/DH/DHCanadaExternalMails.pdf](https://www.rfrajola.com/DH/DHCanadaExternalMails.pdf)

Planned

- *British Columbia postal history, to 1875*

Comments, suggestions, queries, offers of material (to trade) etc, are solicited.

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Canadian soldier's letters



SOLDIERS and sailors serving in the British Army or Navy were entitled to a special concessionary rate on mail received or sent out. This exhibit/exposition discusses examples to or from Canada, in the period 1802–56. It is an update of <https://www.rfrajola.com/mercury/DH4.pdf>.

There are several aspects to this study. One is the postal history. Another is the history. Many of the folded letter sheets discuss the local situation, such as disease, famine, riots, Sometimes they discuss the treatment the soldiers received at the hands of their officers. Most items are significant with respect to one or the other criterion, sometimes both.

First we deal with the postal history preliminaries (rates, routes, rules, . . .). The first section treats a number of soldiers' letters (including an officer' letter), including an 1856 pensioner's letter from Canada. The second section consists of a correspondence between a soldier, Mark Josephs, and his in-laws in Montreal, over the period 1827–1841. There are eleven soldiers' letters here, mailed from Ireland, British Guiana, and Bermuda (even within these places, Josephs moved around, so they are rarely from the same town), and we follow his rise through the ranks and the multiple tragedy near the end. (There is a soap-opera quality to them.) From the postal history point of view, some of the items are rare, for example, the very clear Missent to Liverpool England handstamp (second reported) and two examples with black Bermuda Paid datestamp (fourth and fifth examples reported [in black]).

A typical definition of postal history involves the study of rates, routes, and markings. Unfortunately, the rates for soldiers' letters are monotonous in this period. Very often, the letters were carried by war ship, and the routes are not usually very exciting. Normally, the markings are *Pa 1* (indicating prepayment of the

concessionary rate, one penny), the military endorsements, plus the usual town marks of origin and destination as on any other cover in this period. However, the contents are sometimes of much greater interest than the postal history. The Josephs correspondence documents the rise and fall of a soldier in the British Army, including discussions of local conditions and politics.

Postal history preliminaries

From [R] (the authoritative book on British and some Empire rates before 1840), concessionary rates for the military were introduced in 1795, and modified occasionally thereafter. Tabeart [TT] covers soldiers' letters in more detail, into the 1890s. The only personnel eligible for these cheap rates were sergeants and below (although sergeants-major were sometimes excluded) and their equivalent ranks (seaman, soldier, etc). Excluded were commissioned officers, warrant officers, midshipmen, and various odds and ends, such as civilian employees, although some of these were eventually granted the concessionary rate.

At the time, the ordinary postal rates from points abroad, and even in the same country, were excessive, and quite beyond the means of the vast majority of the population. Active military personnel (excluding officers, who were normally well-off) were offered what was in this period extremely cheap postage.

The 1795 act gave the rates as 1 d if prepaid from the soldier (seaman, etc), and 1d collect if addressed to the soldier; this applied only to single weight letters, but was good from/to anywhere in the British Empire. If the letter from the soldier were sent collect, it would be charged the usual rate, which could be quite substantial; if it were prepaid to the soldier, it would also be charged the full rate. In 1806, the rules were modified so that the concessionary postage had to be prepaid in either direction, otherwise the full rate would be charged.

In 1823, special concessionary rates were applied to the East Indies (the Indian subcontinent); from there, mail had to be sent collect, and was charged 3 d, made up of 1 d concessionary rate and 2d gratuity (to the captain of the private ship carrying the mail). This was increased to 4d in 1840.

Soldier's letters (as they are traditionally called, even if sent by seamen) are usually easy to identify. The lower left corner will typically have a signature of the commanding officer of the sender, frequently written at a 45° angle from upper left to lower right, together with his rank and unit.

Outline

The Quebec 1802 cover (the first one illustrated) shows an example mailed from Quebec to Montreal. The signature at the lower left reads *WF Macbean/Lt Col Com of 6th Regt*. In this case, it was conveniently marked *a soldier's letter*, but not many are so indicated. This is very early for a Canadian soldier's letter, but not the earliest (two earlier ones appeared in Cavendish's Dorothy Sanderson sale).

As observed previously, commissioned officers were not eligible for the concessionary rates. The Antwerp 1814 example, mailed by a British officer Belgium to America, meaning British America, illustrates this.

Next, Halifax 1818, is a seaman's letter from on board his ship, to his wife in England, complaining that he has just been drafted for another five years service. The following cover, Halifax 1821, is far more interesting. It concerns eligibility for prize money from the Castine Fund, including a certificate of eligibility, which was subsequently processed by the Fund administrators. We identify the seizure which led to the prize, and explain the significance of the Castine Fund (which was largely used to help build Dalhousie University), and other connections.

The India 1834 cover is likely the only known one to BNA with an India soldier's letter handstamp. It is in very rough shape. On the same page is an 1851 soldier's letter, addressed to the same small town, Clyde River (which did not even have a post office until much later), the postage paid with a penny red.

Next is Woolwich 1841, a soldier's letter to Toronto, followed by Laprairie 1841 expressing relief at being out of British Guiana. This is followed by a Montreal inquiry about a soldier in the East India Company; it is endorsed like a soldier's letter, but travelled free. Finally, in this section is an 1856 pensioner's letter from Canada to UK, in the first year (military) pensioners were eligible for the concessionary rate.

Section two is composed of the Josephs-Borrowdale correspondence, between Mark Josephs, a soldier in the 76th Regiment of Foot, and his in-laws in Montreal, over the period 1827–41. We see the ups and downs

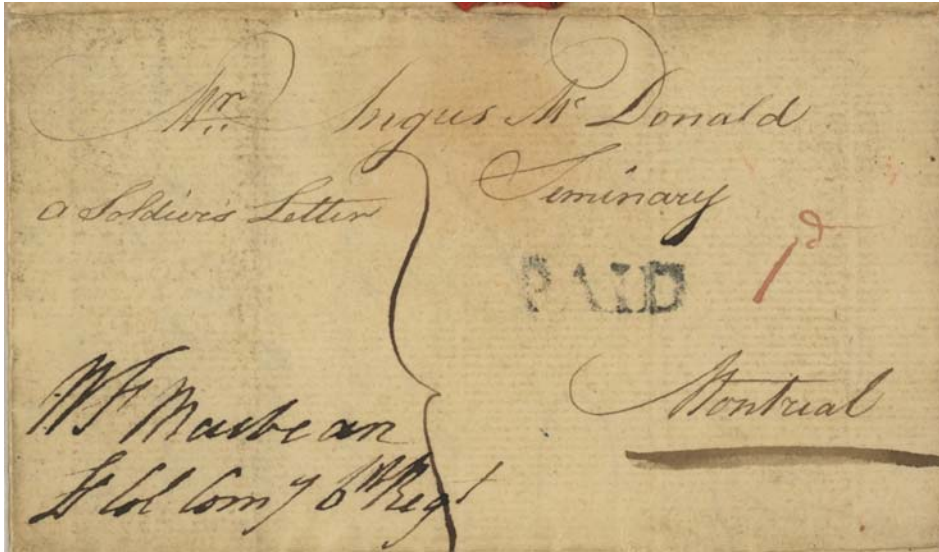
(latterly, mostly downs) in the career of a British soldier, as well as (mis)treatment by the Army, exposure to cholera, yellow fever, etc.

References

- [B] www.bermuda-online.org/britarmy.htm
- [C] Frank Campbell, *Canada post offices 1755–1895*, mimeographed by the author (1958), in various versions (reprinted later) and with supplements and corrections.
- [F] <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~crossroads/regiments/regiments-infantry-2.html>
- [I] <http://www.imaginemaine.com/mainestories/HyderAlly.html>
- [R] David Robinson, *for the Port & Carriage of letters*, published by the author, Scotland (1990). Reprinted by the R P S L (2023).
- [T] Colin Tabcart, *Robertson revisited*, James Bendon, Limassol, Cyprus (1997).
- [TT] Colin Tabcart, *United Kingdom letter rates, 1657–1900*, published by the author (1989).

Quebec 1802

Soldiers and seaman (sergeants or lower rank) in the British armed forces were entitled to concessionary postal rates; from 1795, this was 1d stg prepaid. The sender was to write his name, rank. and unit across the top, and his commanding officer to endorse it at the lower left.



Quebec–Montreal, 1802. Rated **PAID** ^{1^d} cy, soldier's rate. Instead of the name and rank of the sender, we have simply a *Soldier's Letter*; this was fairly early in the use of soldier's letters. Endorsed by the commanding officer, Lt-Col WF Macbean (Company 7, 6th Regiment).

Straightline Q U E B E C , with several dating variations, known 1802–1828.

Mr Angus McDonald

Quebec 29 April 1802

Sir

I received your favor of the 26th ultimo and have to inform you that your mother and brother went from [place] yesterday in a vessel for Montreal & that your brother was apparently in better health than on his arrival, which we hope God may continue. The doctor says that expects his cure will have the desired effect.

If the wind is not very favourable, you mother will be at Montreal by the time this reaches you; if not, soon after you will please give our compliments to her and Donald and your brother. I shall likewise count it a great favor if you inquire for a letter I send wi th this for my father-in-law Jno (?) McDonald, River au Raisin, and give it to your mother to carry up with her. I have directed it to your care and any future commands will be punctually obeyed by sir . . .

PS You will be so good as to give my wife's compliments with mine to Mr Desoulmier, the parish priest, and tell him from that I haven't been at my duty since with himself, that indeed I deserve a great scolding. I went once to Mr Plicy (?), now Bishop, and when I told him it was two years since I received sacraments, he refused hearing my confession, though I expostulated and told him I wasn't my own master, and could not go when I wished.

Antwerp 1814

Officers were not entitled to concessionary rates, and had to pay full postage. From A Maclaine in Antwerp just before the Battle of Waterloo to his brother, Major Maclaine of the 57th regiment, in Upper Canada.



Antwerp Sept. 13. 1814



Antwerp to Lord Hill's army (near Waterloo), re-addressed to BNA, 1814.

Letter arrived in Colchester (UK), postmarked 19 & 20 November; arrived in Halifax (four blobs later) 13 April 1815, then transit Montreal (straightline at upper right) straightline 20 April.

The rating is complicated, and partially conjectural. This is due mostly to Kevin Preece. There are faint rate marks *Pd* 2/3, 1/8 (possibly in red, more likely in black), and 3/3 (red or black). The 2/3 is prepaid and made up of packet (Falmouth to Halifax) 1/3 and inland Colchester to Falmouth (360 miles) 1/1 less one penny for transatlantic service.

The 1/8 likely refers to the newly-changed rate Antwerp–UK. On arrival at Halifax, it was charged an additional 3/3 cy, equivalent to 2/10 stg, which means 1400–1500 miles, the largest distance rate (within BNA) that I've ever seen, putting it far to the west of York (Toronto). The 57th had been shipped to Canada in May 1814 to participate in the War of 1812, which was almost over. Most of it had returned to UK by August 1815.

Antwerp, September 13, 1814

My dear Hector

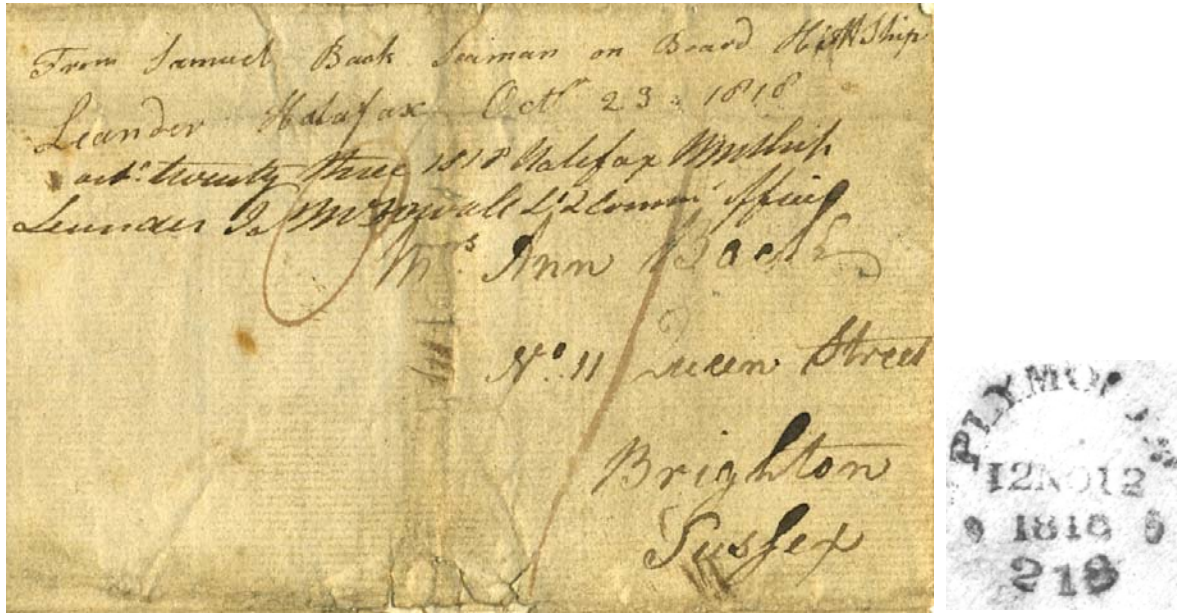
I have this moment received a letter from Collector (?) Ross, who gives me the melancholy news of Commissioner Clepham's death. In him, he seems to have lost a good friend and which I am truly sorry for.

I am in great hopes to hear of A Mc's (?) arrival in London. How soon that happens, I shall be off from [this place] on leave to see him and all my friends.

Juliana and her [xxx] has had a very narrow escape from being drowned in the gulf. Margaret has gone with Ross to Ayr, where she will get married. Do not forget to write often to your friends.

Your affectionate brother, A Maclaine

Halifax 1818



On board the *Leander*, Halifax, to Brighton (Sussex), 1818. Rated large red *Pd 1d* stg, concessionary rate.

Properly endorsed by sender at top, *From Samuel Beck, Seaman, on board HM Ship Leander, Halifax Octr 23 1818*, but nonstandardly, Lt Commander M'Dowell has endorsed it just below. In the letter, Beck complains to his wife that he has just been forced to serve another five years. Likely carried to UK on the *Dee*.

Plymouth dater with mileage (218, to Brighton).

From *Wikipedia*, the *Leander* was a fourth rate frigate of 60 tons, launched 1813. It took part in the battle of Fort Henry during the War of 1812. At Algiers in 1816, took part in Second Barbary War, 125 crew lost or wounded in heavy fire from shore batteries (*Wikipedia*). It then set sail for Nova Scotia, and left for the East Indies in 1819.

This letter was likely carried aboard the *Dee*.

His majesty's ship *Leander*, Halifax Nova Scotia

October 22 1818

My dear wife

It is with sorrow I inform you that I was drafted again yesterday on board this sh ip, when I expected to be at home with you by the *Dee*. It is said here we are to remain here five years. I would thank you to go and enquire of the gentlemen at Brighton what foundation there is for this story and don't fail to send out to me the result of you inquiries.

I should my dear wife have written to you before only expecting to be at home as soon as this scroll by the *Dee*. I hope, my dear, you will feel no uneasiness at this disappointment as I shall by and by be at home, to pass, I hope the remainder of our lives with more satisfaction.

You will not fail to inform me in your [xxx] how my daughter does remember with sincere affection to my father, mother brothers, and sisters. Direct as formerly to Samuel Beck, Seaman, His majesty's ship *Leander*, Bermuda, or elsewhere, and believe me dear wife, I remain your affectionate husband,

Samuel Beck.

Halifax 1821

From a sergeant-major in Halifax to Ireland, concerning the addressee's eligibility for the Castine Fund.



Halifax–Ballycastle (Ireland), concerning eligibility for Castine Fund, 1821. Rated large red *1d* stg (barely visible).

From a sergeant-major, on official business. Letter confirms eligibility of recipient for prize money from the Castine fund, for having taken part (as a member of the 62nd Regiment of Foot) in the reseizure of a British ship from the American navy near the Penobscot River. It was used as a form processed by the Castine Fund officials, including date of receipt and other details.

Faint black Halifax N S Paid dater (almost always in red), & red double framed Dublin lozenge.

James Currey

Agreeable to the request contained in your letter of 27th February last addressed to Lt & Adjutant Parker, I send you herewith a certificate which I make no doubts will enable to receive your proportion of the Castine Prize Money from the agents, on referring to the Castine Prize List retained at the Regiment.

Your name appears as being duly entitled to it. Therefore, I am surprised how the agent or the Deputy Treasurer of the hospital could inform you that your name did not appear in Prize List sent from the regiment. The regiment is in good health and there is no expectation of our leaving Halifax. Paymaster Darby died in August 1819 and Lt Col Goodridge in August 1820. Sergeants Massey and Lambeth join me in our best respects to you.

John Rowe, Sgt Major 62nd Regiment

NB In order to avoid the expense of postage if you have any further occasion to write to the Regiment, address your letter to me.

On another page is a certificate, which was apparently processed on the September date noted.

[Handstamped in orange] **BOARD 12 SEPT**

We hereby certify that James Currey, whose description is annexed was entitled to Prize Money for the capture on the Penobscot in North America in September 1814, having served as private in Brevet Major Riddall's Company, the 62nd regiment, on that occasion.

[Now a description in the form of a table.]

Name James Currey; age at enlistment 19; 5 feet 8½ inches; complexion swarthy; hair brown; eyes grey; trade labourer; born in the parish of Drammore, town of Ballycastle, county Antrim; date of enlistment 20 November 1797. Signed by George Gauntlett, Lt Colonel, commanding officer; Edward Parker Lt, adjutant; and Richard Jellicoe (?) paymaster.

No 13
BOARD 12 SEPT. 1821 *Halifax 7th May 1821*

We hereby Certify, That James Currey whose description is annexed was entitled to Prize Money for the Captures on the Penobscot in North America in September 1814. Having served as a Private in Brown Major Biddalls Company 62nd Regiment on that Occasion.

Description

| Name | Age at Enlistment | | | Complexion | Hair | Eyes | Trade or Occupation | Where Born | | | Date of Enlistment |
|--------------|-------------------|--------|------|------------|-------|------|---------------------|------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|
| | Years | Months | Days | | | | | Parish | Town | County | |
| James Currey | 19 | 5 | 28 | Swarthy | Brown | Grey | Soldier | Newcastle | Newcastle | Ontario | 20 Nov ^r 1797 |

Joseph Holt, Lieut. Colonel } *Commanding Officer*

Edw. Parker, Lieut. Col. } *Adjutant*

Richard Lellie } *Paymaster*

Form used by Castine Fund officials. Originally dated 7 May 1821, processed on 12 September 1821. The whole letter was obviously submitted to the Castine Fund after it had been received by Curry; the orange **BOARD** handstamp was applied in September 1821, well after he had received the letter.

(From Wikipedia) In September 1814, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke led British forces into eastern Maine and captured Castine, Hamden, Bangor, and Machais. The Americans were given the option of swearing allegiance to the King or quitting the country. The vast majority swore allegiance.

This is the only large tract of territory held by either side at the conclusion of the war and was given back to the United States by the Treaty of Ghent. The British left Maine in April 1815, at which time they took large sums of money retained from duties in occupied Maine, back to Nova Scotia. This money, called the Castine Fund, was used in the establishment of Dalhousie University in Halifax.

The Castine Fund also included funds from war prizes, the most famous being the U S S *Chesapeake* (there is a monument to its capture—including the anchor—in Halifax, and the plaque specifically mentions that part of the prize money went to the Castine Fund).

Why is the *Chesapeake* so famous? Because its captain, James Lawrence, uttered the fatuous but famous *Don't give up the ship*. No one has heard of the ship that captured it—H M S *Shannon*, under Captain Phillip Broke—in 1813. He issued a challenge to the *Chesapeake* to come out of its harbour and fight. Despite his ship being undermanned and outgunned, Lawrence decided to do just that. Broke won a lopsided victory—the *Chesapeake* was captured in under an hour. Lawrence made his statement as he lay dying.

The action for which Currey was to receive prize money involved the recapture of a British ship. He was part of the 62nd (Wiltshire) Regiment of Foot Soldiers. It was at Castine 1814–1815; it returned to Europe too late to help Blücher win the battle of Waterloo. It was stationed in Halifax 1818–23.

The U S privateer [a pirate ship authorized by a national government] *Hyder Ally* had seized a British East Indiaman in 1814. It was sent as a prize back to the U S, under Lieutenant Oxnard. He took it to Portland (Maine), and was rather surprised to find that the British were occupying most of the Maine coast. After a long chase, the ship was recaptured by the British near the Penobscot River (hence the reference to the Penobscot in the certificate). Despite this bad luck, Oxnard became a successful captain and a wealthy man after the War of 1812.

Soldier's letters to Nova Scotia

Addressed to the small town, Clyde River.

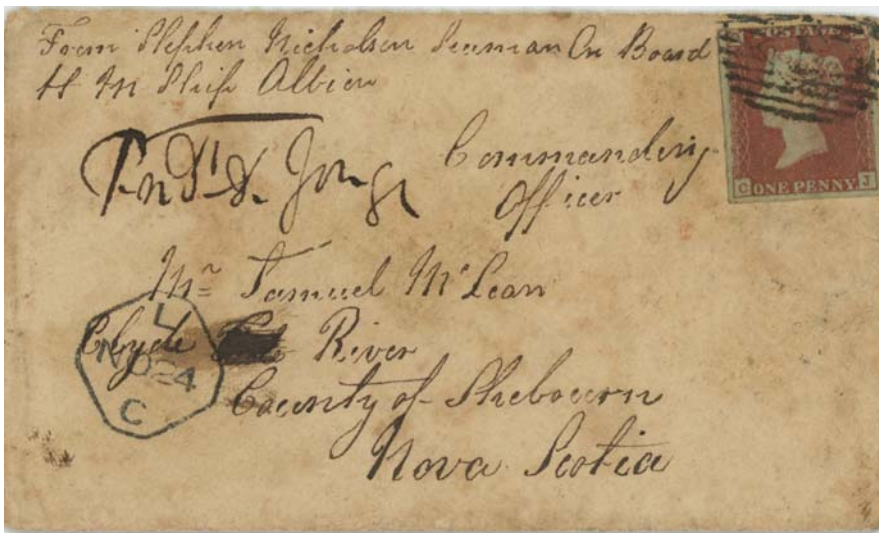


India soldier's letter to Clyde River (Shelburne, NS), 1834. Possibly unique example of an INDIA SOLDIER & rate stamp (in this case, Robertson/Tabart Insol-5, 1823-1848) on a cover to BNA. Clyde River did not have a post office until 1850 [C].

Charged 1 d stg concessionary rate and 2 d stg captain's gratuity; translated to 4^d cy due. Carried on the *Lady Pelham* from Falmouth to Halifax (this accounts for the *Packet* endorsement). Faint Halifax circle date stamp.

The commanding officer's endorsement appears above the address, reading *JL Fletcher Sr Lt HMS Cura-coa/Madras Africa*. At first, I thought this was a misspelling of Curaçao, but it appears so often in references to other ships that it perhaps is the correct spelling of the ship's name. He located Madras in Africa. Nonstandard endorsement.

And again to Clyde River



London—Clyde River, soldier's letter, 1851. From Stephen Nicholson Seaman, on board H M Ship *Albion*. Commanding officer's signature is unreadable. Soldier's letter fee paid by penny red. Backstamped at Shelburne and Halifax.

Woolwich 1839



Woolwich (UK)–Toronto, soldier's letter, 1839. Rated paid 1 d, soldier's concessionary rate. From Alex Mitchell, gunner & soldier, 9 Battalion, Royal Artillery. Endorsed by the commanding officer, Lt Col William D Jarvis.

T.P Woolwich (two-penny post).

Laprairie 1841



Soldier's letter, Laprairie (LC)—Chertsey (UK), 1841. Paid 1d soldier's concessionary rate. From a sergeant of the 70th regiment.

1829-type **LAPRAIRIE**, 1829–41.

From La Prairie (LC) 1841 to his father, Henry Cook, plumber & glazier, Guildford Street, Chertsey, Surrey, England. Expresses great relief at being out of British Guiana, otherwise boring. For more on disease-ridden British Guiana, see the last few letters in the Josephs-Borrowdale correspondence.

Endorsements William Cook, Sergeant, 70th regiment; commanding officer's endorsement appears to be [xxx] White, Major for Cdr.

*Laprairie Province Lower Canada
18th June 1841*

Dear Father

I take the pleasure of writing to you in hope of finding you in good health as it leaves me at present. I thank god for it & I am very happy to acknowledge the receipt of your kind & welcome letter which I received when on board her Majesty's ship *Sapphire* in Carlisle Bay (Barbados) on the 29th April & were very happy to hear you were all in good health.

We left Demerara on the 24th April, arrived at Barbados on the 27th, sailed for Quebec on the 1st May & arrived at Quebec after a beautiful passage on the 29th May. [We] sailed again on the steamer *Queen* for Montreal on the 31st May but did not stay there, but were trans-shipped to the steamer *Royal Victoria* for Laprairie—which is our station at present—at which we landed on the evening of the first June, a most glorious day after leaving a place like the West Indies, a most unhealthy spot as [for] three years there is almost certain death to any British subject.

But we are now in a christian country once again and the place is now in a very quiet state, which was more than we expected to find it, as we had our vessel well equipped for war in case of an attack being made on us; but a person would scarce credit what many of our men suffered from the cold in our passage, although in the month of May & they were well provided for it too, as they had flannel shirts & drawers issued to them in addition to cloth trousers which is never worn in the Indies, for we get a blue serge instead.

I heard from Caroline a short time before I left the West Indies but did not answer her letter as I was expecting to leave every day for Canada, so if you should meet with an opportunity of letting her know that I am safely arrived in Canada & in a perfect state of health, I shall be ever thankful to you. I would have wrote to her this packet, but I am busy at present [and] I can scarce find time, but will write to her in the course of a week or two for whenever we change our station, it gives me a little to do, but thank god, everything goes well with me at present & I am getting so stout you would scarce know me.

I am very happy that the Wrecclesham lads are plucking up their spirits a little as they are taking a notion of the red cloth which they will wish they done [sic] long ago if they take care of themselves [[*This refers to a superstitious belief that wearing red will ward off disease.*]]. We are getting 120 from Ireland this year but they are not arrived at present so I cannot say whether any of the Wrecclesham lads will join us or not but we have as fine a regiment at present as there is in Canada out of 21. Dear father, I would be obliged to you if you could let Caroline know the time

Dear father, I would be obliged to you if you could let Caroline know the time I have been from home as she is very anxious to know. It is eight years next November that I enlisted at Guildford on the 22nd of that month, but please god the next three years will soon wear off & then we return home again. But the two years and two months in the West Indies was worse than all the rest. I will write again in a short time, as I can offer no remarks whatever on the state or appearance of the country at present being a total stranger in it so no more at present.

From your ever affectionate son, Sergt W Cook, 70th regiment

Please direct [to] Laprairie near Montreal Lower Canada.

East India Company 1851



Montreal–London, 1851. While it looks like a soldier's letter, it is actually an *Enquiry After a Soldier*. *East India Company's Service*. Rated free, as indicated by the London crown circle on reverse (at top).

Niagara 1856

Pensioners, that is, retired military, were eligible for the concessionary rates. The earliest reference I could find for this is from the May 1856 postal guide, as quoted in [TT] (my emphasis):

Note S . . . NCOs, private soldiers, or seamen, whether serving on board H M Ship or transports, on sea or on land (in foreign parts), as also *enrolled pensioners* in Canada, can send or receive letters by direct packet, vessel of war, or transport, for a postage of 1 d.

It only seemed to apply to pensioners in Canada.



Niagara (U C)—Manchester, soldier's letter from pensioner, 1856. Rated paid **PAID 1 d**, concessionary rate. From Robert Smith, Local Pensioner. Endorsed by John Weir, Sgt-Major, in charge of detachment of permanent pensioners.

BY-CANADIAN PACKET applied at Liverpool [Robertson M 10, known 1854–9] and red Liverpool tombstone [Robertson P 10, 1852–8]

Josephs–Borrowdale correspondence

THIS section consists of twelve letters (Josephs0–Josephs11), eleven of which were sent at the concessionary rate. Those were endorsed (but not all written) by Mark Josephs, a soldier in the 76th Regiment of Foot from 1821 to at least 1841. The first letter (Josephs0) was hand-delivered, from the military chaplain at Montreal in 1827 and this sets the stage for the correspondence. It is addressed to the future father-in-law, Borrowdale, and expresses concerns about his daughter marrying a common soldier (Josephs). The remainder of the correspondence is addressed to the Borrowdale family in Odletown (various spellings), near Montreal.

All the letters have been transcribed. Josephs rises through the ranks (as we see from his endorsements), and writes from various places in Ireland, then from British Guiana, and finally from Bermuda. He describes local conditions in considerable detail. Particularly interesting is his description of the effects of yellow fever on the military in British Guiana, and the subsequent tragic effects on his family, his career, and his future with the Borrowdales. At the same time, some of the covers are significant postal history items, particularly the last two.

I could find nothing about Josephs or his family on the internet, and very little about the Borrowdales. So I do not know whether Josephs eventually settled in Montreal (as he had suggested at at least one point).

Timeline

- 27 February 1821

Mark Joseph enlists in the British Army (Josephs10)

- 7 May 1827

Josephs0. Letter from Chaplin to Borrowdale, warning of Elizabeth's desire to marry Mark Josephs.

- 28 May 1827

Elizabeth Borrowdale and Mark Josephs married at the Protestant church in Quebec (Josephs11)

- 21 September 1827

Josephs1. Waterford (Ireland) to the Borrowdales.

- 20 May 1828

Josephs2. Tipperary (Ireland) to the Borrowdales. Josephs has been promoted to corporal. Josephs suffered from a severe fever for six weeks, before recovering.

- 31 December 1828

Josephs3. Cashell (Ireland) to the Borrowdales. They have a child, Anne. Reports on disturbances in Ireland.

- 13 March 1830

Josephs4. Cashell (Ireland) to the Borrowdales. Josephs is promoted to sergeant. More on disturbances.

- 3 September 1832

Josephs5. Athlone (Ireland) to the Borrowdales. Second daughter born about eighteen months earlier. Cholera epidemic (worldwide, from 1832) in full force.

- 4 February 1833

Josephs6. From Josephs' uncle to the Borrowdales; mailed under Josephs' franking concession 9 March 1833.

- 9 March 1833

Josephs7. Athlone (Ireland) to the Borrowdales.

- 19 June 1839

Josephs8. Capooey (Essequibo, British Guiana) to the Borrowdales. Josephs has been promoted to colour sergeant. Two of their children die in yellow fever epidemic (1837–41); massive deaths in regiment. Demerara backstamp.

- 22 September 1839

Josephs⁹. Demerara (British Guiana) to the Borrowdales. Wife dies in yellow fever epidemic. Discusses plans to live with Borrowdales after retirement in a few years.

- 4 June 1841

Josephs¹⁰. Hamilton (Bermuda) to the Borrowdales. Josephs demoted to private. Bermuda paid backstamp.

- 26 September 1841

Josephs¹¹. Hamilton (Bermuda) to the Borrowdales. Explains reasons for demotion. Rebuts father-in-law's accusations. Bermuda paid backstamp. Second reported example of Missent to Liverpool England handstamp.



From military chaplain in Montreal to Mr Borrowdale, in Odletown (on the island of Montreal), 1826 or 1827. Hand delivered.

This sets the stage for the correspondence.

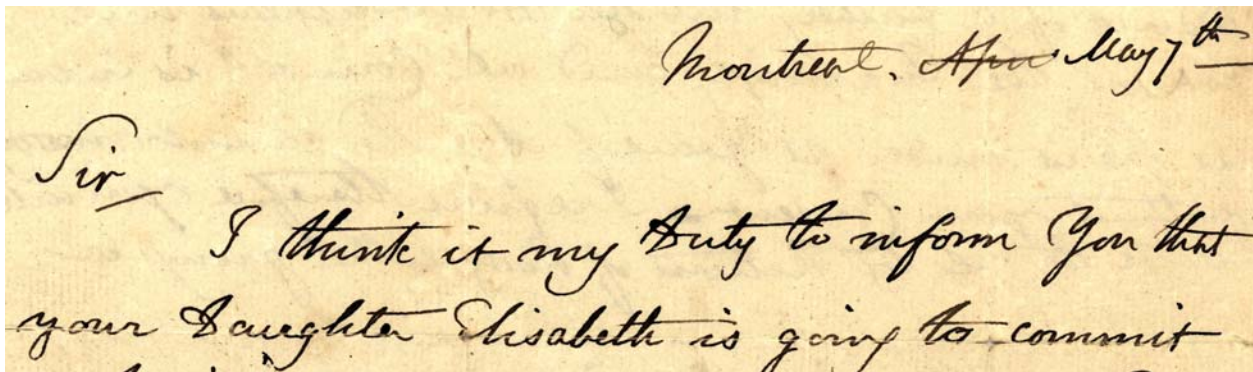
Montreal, May 7th

I think it my duty to inform you that your daughter Elisabeth is going to commit a foolish act which may occasion her sorrow as long as she lives. She is about to unite herself to a common soldier of the 76th regiment. I have nothing particular against the character of the young man. But I know what are the miseries and indecencies of a common barrack room, and I regret that so respectable a young woman should throw herself into such a situation. Indeed both your daughters are in every point of view so respectable that any father might be proud of them and I have always treated them as daughters rather than as servants.

On the present occasion, I have given to Elisabeth the advice of a father, but her heart appears to be set on the marriage and all counsel is in vain. As she is under 21 years of age, she cannot marry without your consent. I request therefore you will write to me by return of post, either giving or withholding your consent.

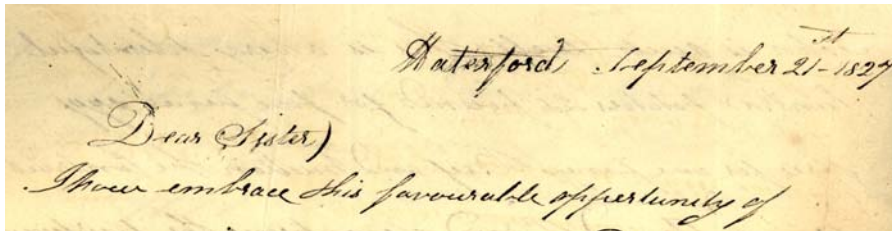
Direct to me

Theodore BB Stevens, Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces, Montreal





From Waterford (Ireland), 1827.



Dear Sister

I now embrace this favourable opportunity of wishing to inform you that I received your welcome letter from John at Fermoy. It gave great pleasure to hear that you my dear sister with our dear parents, brothers, sisters, and my grandmothers were in good health as it leaves us at present, thank God. We are arrived in this country the 8th of this month after a pleasant but long passage of five weeks.

My dear Ann, you will be happy to know that I was not sick more than six or seven days during the passage. Dear sister, the reports you heard of my sailing (?) mournfully upon my trunk at one time and half-wasted away at another on board ship before we left Quebec is I am happy to say, quite false, and whoever told you so only intended to make you unhappy.

The 70th regiment arrived in Fermoy about four days after us. John is quite well. This is a very plentiful centre (?); potatoes 28 pounds for five pence, eggs three for one penny, beef and mutton the contract price of d per pound, bread seven pence per four pound loaf, and clothing very cheap but the inhabitants very poor.

My dear sister, you will please to write to our dear parents. Tell them now that I am [ham!] well and happy, tell them that I intend to send them a letter as soon as we have settled. It will perhaps be a fortnight longer, for we are in expectation of going to Dublin for the winter. Remember Josephs and myself to Mr and Mrs Stevens, to [Ontares?] George and Dr [xxx], to Margaret and Rose, and all inquiring friends.

To conclude for the present wishing you all the joy this world can afford and happiness in the next and believe me to remain your ever affectionate sister till death.

Betsey Josephs

Appended is the following brief note by Mark Josephs

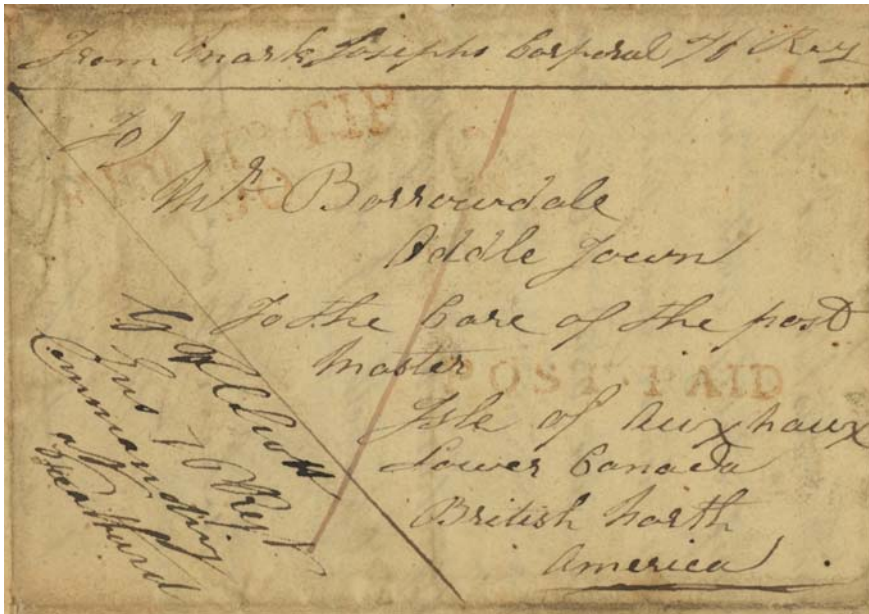
My Dear Sister-in-law

I hope you do not believe every idle tale that is told you concerning Betsey being unhappy, for believe me she is not. My dear Ann, I hope you will not consider me so base a wretch as to make a woman unhappy whom I adore to the very bottom of my heart to the contrary, I shall take delight in doing everything in my power to make her happy and comfortable, so conclude in remaining your every affectionate brother-in-law.

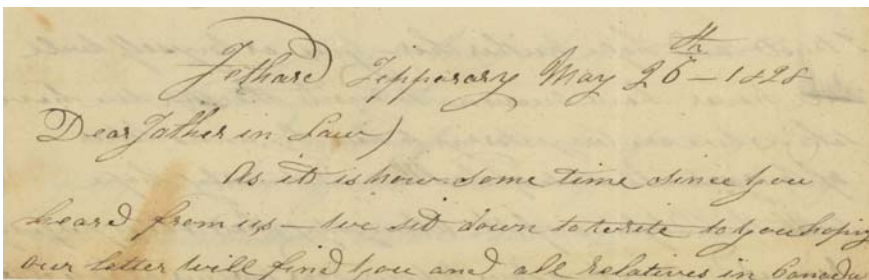
Mark Josephs

PS Answer this by return of post, and direct [to] Mark Josephs, Private, Light Infantry Company 76th Regiment, Waterford Ireland, or elsewhere

Josephs2



From Tipperary (Ireland) to Isle aux Noix, 1828. Faint **POST PAID** and large ms **1d** soldiers' rate. Mileage straightline **X E X X TIP / 90**



Dear Father in Law

Fethard Tipperary, May 20th 1828

As it is now some time since you heard from us, we sat down to write to you hoping our letter will find you and all relations in Canada well and happy. We are ourselves tolerably so thank God at present, with the exception of your amiable daughter, having a slight cold. We have wrote to Ann since our arrival in Ireland as you have no doubt heard. We arrived in this country in September last after a long but pleasant passage of six weeks. Provisions are very cheap here and the country is at present very quiet.

I have been, since our arrival in this country, afflicted with a severe fever that confined me to my bed for six weeks but thank God, am now perfectly recovered. We do not live in barracks as I have permission to live in the town where we have every thing very comfortable.

You may rest assured, my dear sir, that it shall be the study and pride of my life to render your daughter happy now she has become my wife. I trust and hope neither her [xxx] nor myself will never have occasion to regard the step we have taken.

We are very sorry to hear by Ann's letter of Margaret's ill state of health and sincerely hope with the blessing of the Almighty that she is perfectly recovered.

Give my love to your dear partner and to every one of your family. Please to answer this soon, for we shall always be extremely happy to hear from you and our thoughts and conversation are frequently directed to you and our other friends in Canada. Hoping you will write shortly and that it will be to state you are all well and happy. I remain

Your affectionate son in law and sincere well wishes

Mark Josephs, Corporal 76th regiment

PS Direct to Mark Josephs, Corporal

Captain Martin's Company, 76th Regiment, Kilkenny Ireland or elsewhere

There is a further letter from his wife Elizabeth.

Dear Father and Mother

I enclose a few lines to assure you of my continued affection towards you as well my dear Grandmother, brothers, and sisters, and all friends in Canada tho at a great distance from you, my thoughts and wishes are often with you. I live comfortably with my dear husband and only wish we were nearer you. Pray write soon, letting us know how you are and believe me sincerely.

Your affectionate daughter, Elizabeth Josephs

(PS) When you write, please to put a penny into the post with the letter, and it will come free.



Cashell (Ireland)—Île aux Noix (Montreal), 1829. Rated **POST PAID 1** (huge), concessionary rate. Boxed **CASHELL / PAID**; Dublin paid octagon, and Halifax four blobs transit.

Illegible officer's endorsement lower left. Letter discusses disturbances in Ireland (food riots—the potato crop failed regularly from 1825—and sectarian violence) with which he had to deal.

Cashell

31st December 1828

Dear Father and Mother

It is with pleasure I set down to acquaint you with a circumstance which occurred a short time since. Elizabeth was safely delivered of a fine girl who was a few days since christened Ann Holborne Josephs.

Since I last wrote to you, we have thank God enjoyed excellent health and Betsey and our child are both at present remarkably well. Our situation in the army is as pleasant as we can expect in a country like this where the people have been so long dissatisfied with the Government, and therefore of course with the army.

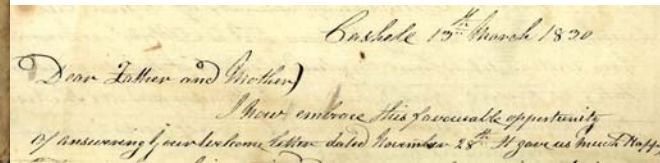
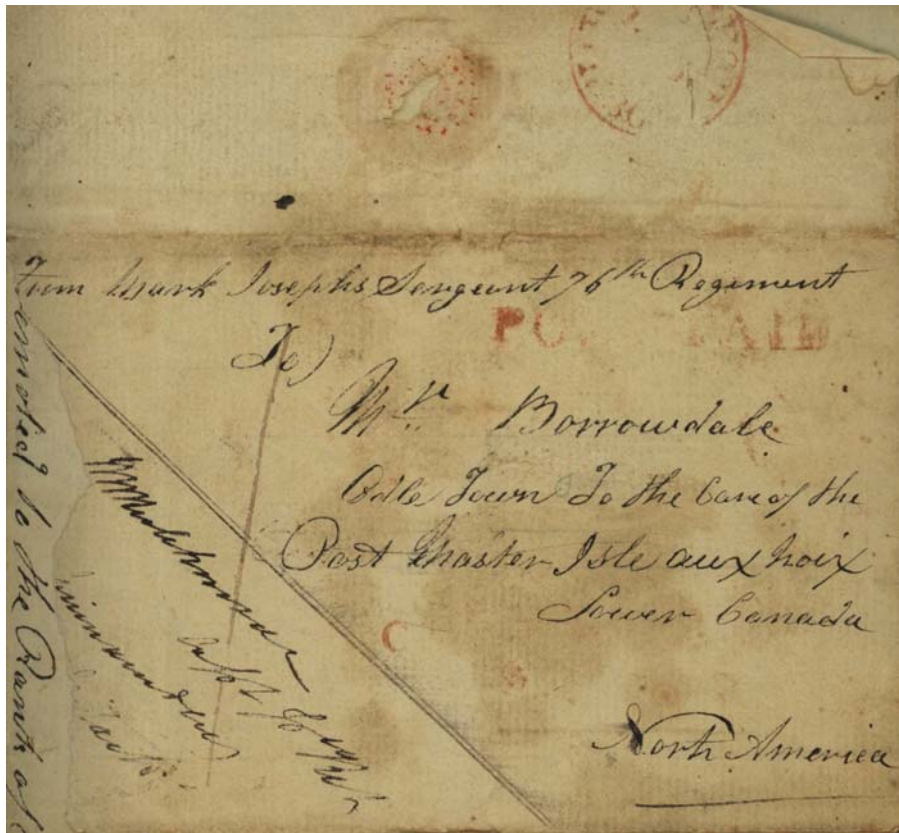
Since we have been at our present station, serious disturbances have occurred, but fortunately they have hitherto in every case, been got over with[out] any serious injury to the service or the country. Our regiment will perhaps remain in Ireland two or three years. I am at present corporal, and expect further promotion.

Give my respects to the whole family and all enquiring (?) friends. I trust you will have the goodness to write to us, as we are anxious to hear from you. With every wish for your welfare and happiness here and hereafter, I remain . . .

PS Direct [to]

Mark Josephs, Corporal

76th Regiment, Cashell Ireland or elsewhere



Cashell (Ireland)—Île aux Noix (Montreal), 1829. Rated **POST PAID 1 d** concessionary rate.

Illegible officer's endorsement lower left. Josephs has been promoted to sergeant. Letter writing paper is watermarked W M D 1821, and laid.

Cashell

13th March 1830

Dear Father and Mother

I now embrace this favourable opportunity of answering your welcome letter dated November 28th. It gave us much happiness to hear of your being all in good health as this leaves. Elizabeth has enjoyed excellent health thank God since we left America. Our little daughter grows a fine child and is very well with the exception of a slight cold. But as for myself, this country does not agree with my health.

You wish to know if Ireland is any quieter than it was, but I am very sorry to say it is anything else but quiet, particularly in this county. You have perhaps seen an account in some of the papers of the Reverend John Gring (?) protestant minister being shot within 200 yards of his home and several other protestant ministers been shot at during the last four or five months, such is the state of party feelings in this country.

Everything is very cheap here: bread 6½ d per four pound loaf, beef 2 d and 3 d per pound, mutton 3½ d per pound, pork 1½ d per pound, butter 6 d per pound, potatoes 3 d per stone, eggs three for a penny, clothing of every sort very cheap. But soldiers are very much [xxx] about in this country, out every week searching for arms and marching provisions. The detachment that I am stationed with has to march every Friday from this place to Clonmell with prisoners. About a month since, we marched forty prisoners mostly heavy (?) crimes such as murder, conspiracy, house-breaking, and robbery.

I have not been to England yet since our arrival in the country. But please God spares us our lives, we intend to go the next winter. I shall make it my business to go through Manchester, as that will be my nearest way to Birmingham, the place that I shall have to go to so that Betsey will have an opportunity of seeing her uncle and aunt during the time that we stay in Manchester I have received letter from England stating it to be in a distressed state at present.

Give our love to Henry and all the rest of the family and receive the same yourself from your ever affectionate son and daughter, Mark and Elizabeth Josephs.

Direct for Mark Josephs

Sergeant, Captain Trench's Company

76th Regiment Cashell County, Tipperary, Ireland or elsewhere

[PS] I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant the day I sent you the last letter.

PS There is 500 prisoners in our gaol [jail] at Clonmell for trial in this country. So much for Ireland.



Athlone (Ireland)–Île aux Noix (Montreal), 1829. Rated **Pd 1** d concessionary rate. Double-framed Dublin paid datestamp, Quebec 1831-type double broken circle.

(Worldwide) cholera epidemic in Ireland.

Dear Sir

Athlone, 3rd September 1832

It is now nearly two years since I wrote to you and have received no answer, which surprises both myself and my wife, as neither of us can in any way account for your sorry silence, a silence that gives my Elizabeth much uneasiness and causes us both to think something must have occurred to have hindered her dear and indulgent parents from writing to her and if so why not her brothers and sisters write as they cannot forget they have a sister Elizabeth still living, and although at a distance could receive no greater happiness than to hear from them and to know they were all well and happy.

Dear Sir, let me impose (?) of you to answer this by return of post as we are in suspense until we hear from you. Our oldest daughter, who is now nearly four years old sends her Grandmother a kiss and says she will come and see you. Our youngest, Sarah, who is a year and a half old has been afflicted with sickness [cholera] for nearly four months, but has recovered and now runs about. . . . This country is in a sad state, what with agitation and the cholera raging in almost every town in Ireland. This place has been visited with it but not so severe as most other places. Our regiment has been confined to barracks since arriving to it. The first time in June, when [xxx] became confined only for a fortnight during which period there were only one person in the whole town died with the disease and it left for a few days. When intercourse was opened with the town, and the inhabitants [xxx] to think the last to have it broke out with redoubled violence taking of every person it attacked which has not been more than forty or forty five persons inhabitants thank the almighty during the period our regiment has been confined (which has been six weeks) to barracks.

We have only lost one man and woman belonging to the regiment.

I see accounts in the newspapers that it has broke out in Montreal and Quebec and that it has committed greater ravages at both places and at St Johns [LC] and several other places.

May it please the almighty dispenser of all events to keep it and every other disease of the like nature from the [xxx] of my Elizabeth's parents and cause health and happiness to reign among you all in the [xxx] prayers of your ever affectionate son and daughter. . . .

Josephs6



I Athlone 9th March 1833
 Dear Father and Mother
 I take this opportunity
 of answering your affectionate letter of your

Athlone (Ireland)–Lacolle, 1833. Rated *Pd 1 d* concessionary rate. Double broken circle Athlone and double-framed Dublin paid datestamp.

Letter written by Josephs' uncle in Birmingham, but mailed at Athlone under Josephs' privilege; Josephs includes his own message. We find out that Josephs' family is from Birmingham.

Dear Brother

Manchester, February 4, 1833

I am very glad of embracing an opportunity of writing to you, as your son-in-law [Josephs] will convey the letter to you from Ireland. My nephew, the soldier, is on a furlough to his Father's in Birmingham, and on his return to our home, I formed ready (?) a few lines for him to take.

Dear John believe me we were very glad to see him, who gives us a long account off family affairs and your prosperity in America; time will not permit to write a long letter at present.

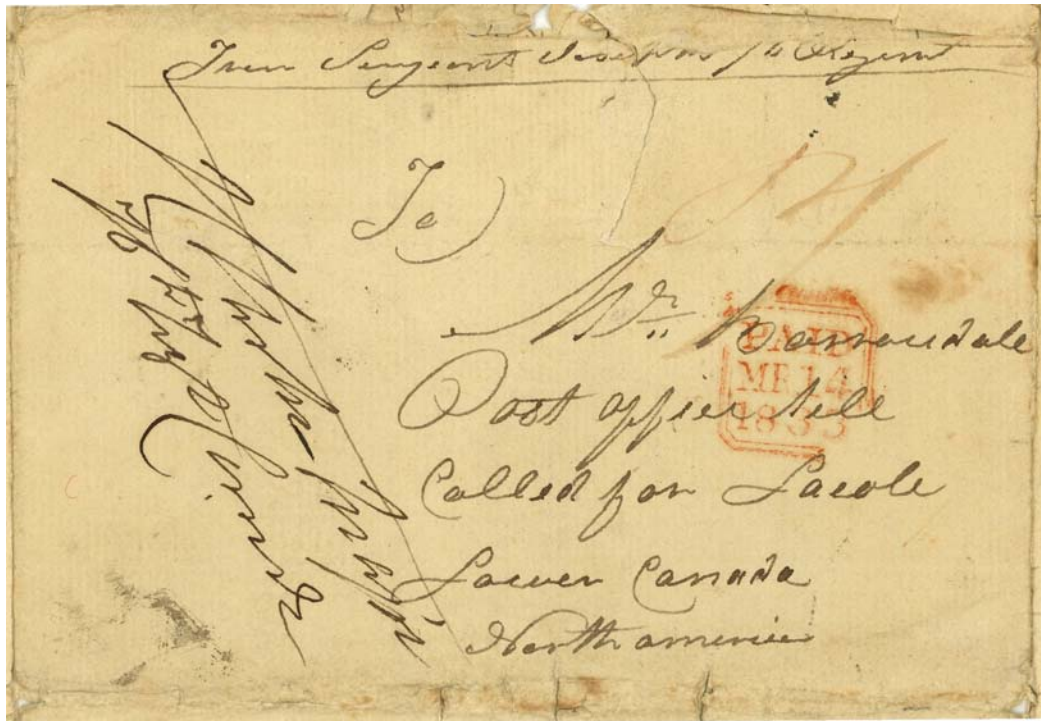
I am exceedingly sorry to say that my dear son Theophilus is very ill, but by the help of God, I hope he will recover again. My dear old mother departed this life about four years ago, aged 84. Also my sister Jane Smith is dead and left to my two sons, £246, further my son Joshua is comfortably married and resides in Liverpool, and doing very well. The trade of Manchester is middling brisk, and eatables are pretty reasonable. Your relatives in this quarter are apparently in good health.

Dear John, I have a desire that you write upon the first convenient opportunity, and direct thus: Joshua Poole, 23 Ryton Street, Manchester, Lancashire. Be pleased to accept of all, our real respects and loving kindness to yourself, and your loving wife, and the rest of your dear family, hoping this scrawl will find you all in perfect health. As for us, we are as well as can be expected during the sickness of our dear son Theophilus so no more at present.

From your affectionate
 brother Joshua Poole

Josephs7

Mailed same day as letter from Joseph's uncle (Poole), although the former was written a month earlier.



Athlone (Ireland)–Lacolle, 1833. Rated **P 1** d concessionary rate. Double broken circle Athlone and double-framed Dublin paid datestamp. The location of the Dublin stamp and the commander's endorsement are almost identical to those of the Poole cover.

Athlone, 9 March 1833

Dear Father and Mother

I take this opportunity of answering your affectionate letter. It gave us great pleasure to hear you [xxx] are all in good health as thank God this leaves (?) all here at present.

I should have answered your letter sooner but [xxx] as I was going to England to see your brother and sister Poole in Manchester whom I found well, except Theophilus who was being ill [xxx], so ill that I think he will scarcely re[cover]. [xxx] and Joshua is married and lives in Liver[pool]; both himself and wife were in Manchester. When I called, she (?) made me quite welcome (?) and wished very much to see my Betsey and our own dear children, but it being winter, the weather was much too severe for them to cross the [xxx]. However, if please God spares us, I intend sending them [xxx] for a fortnight and three weeks [that is, five weeks] when the warm weather comes.

The distance from this place to Dublin is 60 miles, and from Dublin to Liverpool is about 180 miles, and from Liverpool to Manchester is about 36, thereby making the total distance from Athlone in Ireland to Manchester in England 276 miles.

With this letter I have sent one from Manchester [Josephs6] [xxx] has taken the directions off[f] it as it could not be franked without it being directed by me. [S?]he has put about a dozen of seeds in it for you, and in this you will find a few more, if not lost. I hope they are the same sort you want, as I cannot find any other seed called Liburnum. It is a tree covered in summer with long yellow golden flowers in chains. If there is any other sort of seed you want, let me know and I will if possible procure it for you.

[xxx] so [xxx] Sarah according to her wish a lock [xxx] of her little nieces hair, Ann's, who is the [xxx] [xxx] is tied at both ends and Sarah's is tied at one. You will receive a newspaper [xxx xxx] with these letters or in a few days after.

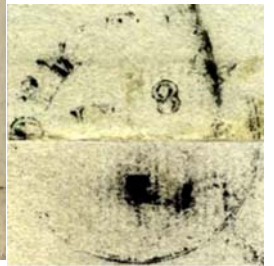
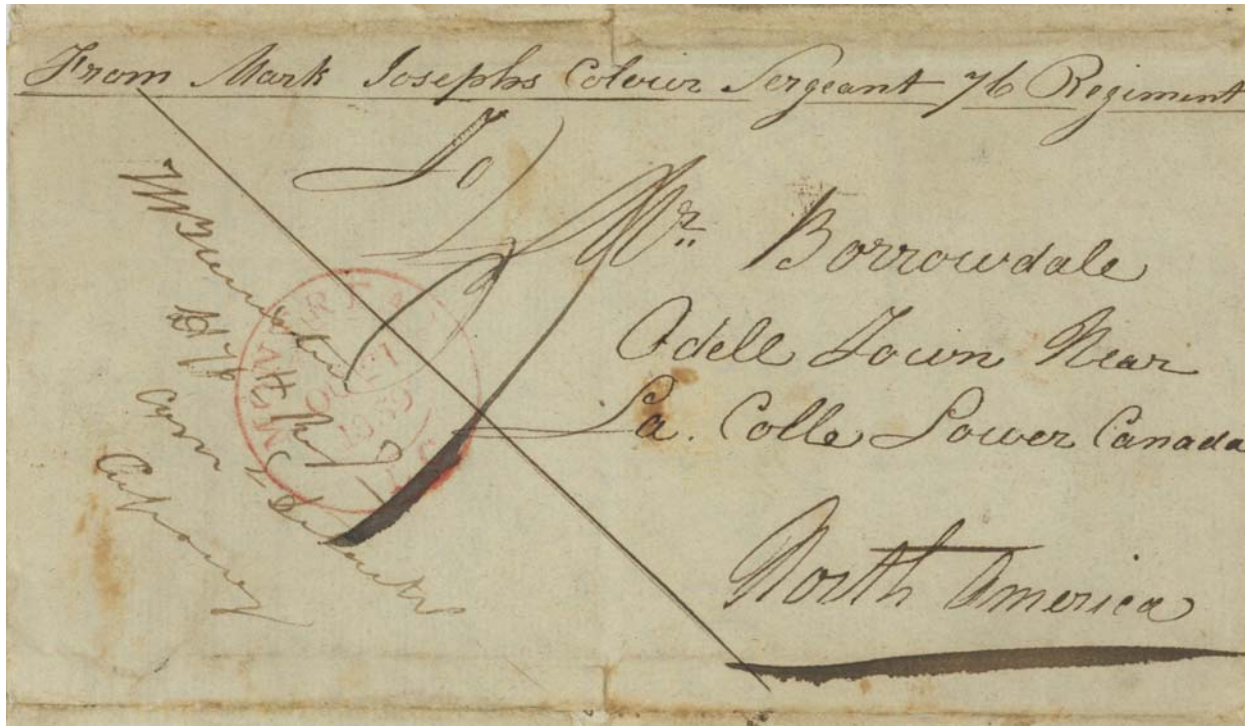
Betsey wishes to know how the orchard you planted thrives, and whether you make your own cider from it. Ireland remains in the same state as usual. No more at present from

your own affectionate son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Elizabeth Joseph.

Josephs8

Two of their children die in yellow fever outbreak.

Capoony Essequibo 19th June 1839



Capoony (Essequibo, British Guiana)—Lacolle, 1839. Capoony was the site of a British prison; it is near the coast and the Essequibo River. Yellow fever broke out in British Guiana in 1837 and continued to 1841. The skirmishes referred to the 1837–8 uprisings in Upper and Lower Canada

Faint Demerara double broken circle and Montreal double circle.

Capoony, Essequibo

19th June 1839

Dear Father and Mother,

With pleasure I now write to inform you that I received your welcome letter dated 16th August [1838] and feel quite happy that you are all well. As this leaves us all at present thanks the Almighty. The West Indies is a very unhealthy climate. We have lost our fine children, a boy and girl, named Thomas and Mary, since our arrival in the West Indies, and the regiment has lost three hundred and twenty besides women and children.

We have still two children, a boy and girl, named Henry and Ann; Henry eighteen months old, and Ann ten years. We are sincerely sorry to hear of the death of Hannah [?] and hope that Henry and Margaret have entirely recovered their health.

I read in the papers of a skirmish having taken place between a party of the rebels and the volunteers of Oddle Town in which the volunteers behaved with greater spirit.

You wish to know how long our regiment is likely to remain in the West Indies. That is quite uncertain as it entirely depends on the state of affairs in Canada. If that country continues in a disturbed state, it will be the means of our removal to America sooner than otherwise, as there is only one regiment before us, namely the 67th and the at-present under orders. However, I have every reason to believe that our stay in the West Indies will not exceed more than one year.

I have little more than two years to complete the period of twenty one years service, when if please God spares me and I hold the same rank as at present, I shall be enabled to get my discharge with a pension of one shilling and eight pence per day. Although I could now get my discharge and about fifty pounds as a compensation for past services, which sum would no more than defray the expenses of passage either to England or Canada, and then what little ready money I am in possession of besides, amounting say to about one hundred and forty or fifty pounds sterling, the savings of our industry, would go but a very little way in setting us for life unless we received some assistance on our commencing, as I may say, the world.

Betsey [Elizabeth] wishes to know your advice on the above. Likewise the age of yourself and her mother as well as which of her sisters and brothers are at home with you, and those that are from home, where they are and have settled. Betsey wishes to know if her cow is still alive and if you have any produce from her and whether you have considered that it would answer us to leave the service and commence with a shop in your neighbourhood upon the above sum. Likewise, whether you have heard what has become of her cousin Samuel Be (?). Please to let us know whether you have cleared your farm and how your new orchard thrives.

No more at present from your every affectionate son and daughter Josephs. Ann [their daughter] desires to be remembered to Grandfather and mother as well as her uncles and aunts and says she would like to come and see you; as for young Harry, he sends you a lock of his hair.

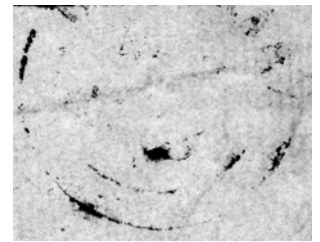
PS Direct your letter as follows

Josephs9

Wife dies from yellow fever. Mourning boundary on first page created in ink.

Dear Father & Mother
Demerara 22nd Sept 1839.

From Mark Josephs Colt & Regent 26th Sept 1839
To
Mr John Bowdler
Lacolle Lower
Canada
South America
1839



Demerara (British Guiana)–Lacolle via London (Xmas day), 1839. Rated **P 1** d concessionary rate. Faint double broken circle Demerara.

Dear Father and Mother

Demerara 22nd September 1839

I have now to address on a subject which I would willingly have left undone could I by that means have kept the melancholy news I have to relate from reaching you by any other channel, as I am aware that it will be received with the deepest regret. But if it is felt so by you what must be my grief to yours, you have certainly lost a beloved daughter but me an affectionate wife and one who in the army had scarce a parallel both as a wife and mother.

She died of the yellow fever after three or four days sickness and what still heightens my misfortunes I was in hospital with the fever at the time she was fallen sick. I had not even the melancholy satisfaction of attending her in her last moments.

Dear Father and Mother, I hope you will not take this too much to heart, as I am now thank God get quite sound, consequently the children are not quite orphans, altho I cannot take care of them as their mother could. The children are both very well and the fever which raged so much in the Colony is now much abated and scarce any case latterly has been fatal.

We lost about 70 men in three months besides six officers and the band [xxx], and about seven women and seven children, which is about one man out of three according to the number of men we had here so after all I have to thank God that he spared me to look after the children when such a number has been taken off with the same complaint that seized me.

The regiment expected to leave here about April or May for Barbados, when we shall either be sent home or go to America, but whether the regiment leaves or not, the Commanding Officer has promised to send me to the Depot as soon as the draught arrives if God spares me so long.

I have sent you a lock of my wife's hair cut off a few days previous to her being sick as I think you will prize it more than anything else I could have sent you.

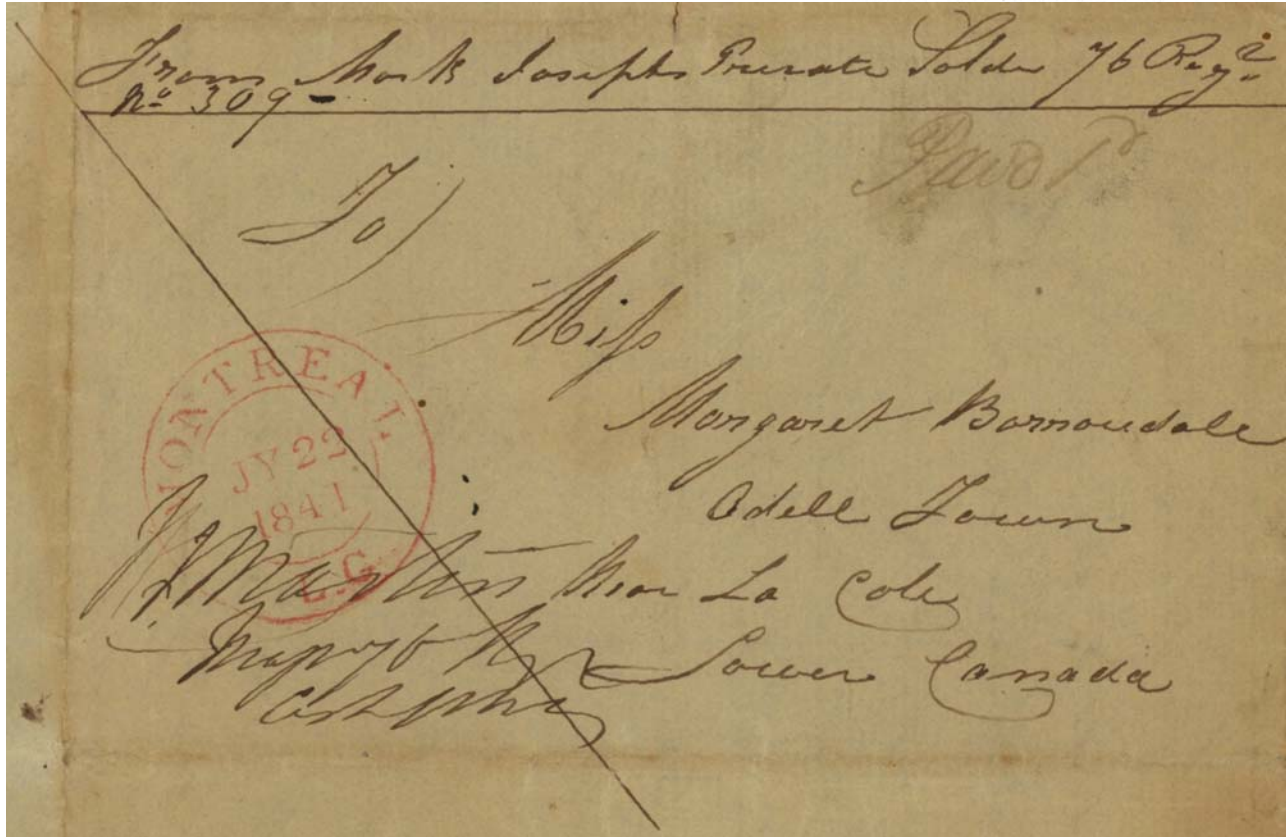
Give my kind love to my brother and sisters and let them know that we had been laying it out a few days before we were seized with the sickness to go and stop with them. But it pleased God to take her before hand. Ann sends her love to all, and should it please God to spare us, I trust we shall all meet again in the course of a few months as it is my intention to settle along with you after I am discharged.

Have the kindness to answer this as quickly as possible, as I shall be uneasy until I hear from you. I remain dear Father and Mother, your affectionate son . . .

PS My poor little boy Henry is growing; he will be two years old on 29 November ensuing. My daughter will be ten years old the next day, 30 November.

Josephs10

Josephs has been drastically demoted (explained in next letter) *Hamilton Bermuda 4th June 1841*



*Hamilton (Bermuda)–Lacolle, 1841. Rated **Paid 1^o** concessionary rate. Faint double broken circle Bermuda Paid (fourth reported example) and double circle Montreal receiver.*

Dear Sister

Hamilton Bermuda 4th June 1841

Your kind and welcome letter came safe to hand on the 17th instant. It gave me infinite pleasure to hear [from] you and all my dear friends were all well in health as thank the almighty. This leaves me and my poor motherless children at present. Ann grows a fine girl; she was 12 years old on the 30th of November last [this does not agree with the previous letter; she should be 11] and takes after her ever to be lamented mother, in goodness and mildness of temper.

And as for my poor little Henry, you would be delighted to see him, he grows a fine manly little fellow. Every person admires him, he was three years of age on the 29th of November last. He speaks very plain, having been obliged to have his tongue cut three times in consequence of his being tongue-tied, he has not the slightest recollections of his mother but calls every woman that takes any notice of him his dear Mama.

I am extremely sorry to have given you all so much uneasiness, but my dear sister, the reason of my long silence has been in consequence of expecting the regiment would have been ordered to proceed from here to the Canadas. However, there is at present but little expectation of an event so much wished for taking place at present.

As I believe five regiments are ordered from the West Indies to Canada, my period of service, that is to say, twenty-one years, expires on the 22nd of February next, at which time, if it pleases the almighty Disposer of all things to spare my life, I intend to make application for my discharge on a modified pension, which although small, being perhaps not more than ten pounds, or one shilling per day, will I conceive be much better than remaining longer in a service that I am anxious to leave for the purpose of benefitting my children, whereas by remaining two or three years longer, I would only gain an addition of one penny or two pence per diem to my pension. Moreover, I have no person either to comfort or console myself or children since the severe loss of a loving wife and tender mother to my children.

Dear sister, in consequence of my having been promised several times to be sent home with my children and these promises not having been fulfilled has bid me to speak the sentiments of my mind rather too freely to my officers, the consequences of which have been to reduce me to the rank of private; however, I have been offered to be promoted again which I have refused as it would tend to keep me some time longer in the service and which I am not the least inclined to.

Bermuda is a very healthy climate, the chief produces [being] arrowroot and onions. I should like to send you a present of arrowroot providing you can get it forwarded, either from New York or Baltimore as there are a great many Bermuda vessels continually trading in these ports, and generally not more than 5 or 6 days passage.

Ann and Henry send their love to their dear Grandfather and Mother, Uncles and Aunts, and little cousins, and say that they should like to see them. Give my kindest respects to all my dear friends and I hope little niece thrives well and may the almighty in his goodness grant her health, wisdom, and understanding is the sincere wish of her loving uncle. . . .

Josephs11

Josephs' father-in-law cites *the want and misery of a common barrack room*, similar to the *miseries and indecencies of a common barrack room* in the 1827 letter from the Chaplain (Josephs0).



Bermuda–Halifax–Liverpool–Halifax–Montreal, missent to Liverpool, . . . , 1841. Rated *Paid 1d*.

Faint Bermuda Paid large circular datestamp (fifth example in black); MISSENT TO LIVERPOOL ENGLAND oval (second reported example; Robertson M4, proofed 3 December 1840, *not seen*). Montreal double circle.

From Hamilton (Bermuda) carried by *Margaret*, arriving at Halifax; mistakenly put aboard the *Acadia*, arriving in Liverpool; missent handstamp applied. Sent back to Halifax on *Caledonia*, thence by land to Montreal.

My dear Father

Hamilton Bermuda 26th September 1841

I yesterday was handed a letter by Captain Cockcroft, the Captain of the Company to which I belong. It both surprised and pained me to find that you formed so unfavourable an opinion of my character as to consider that I have disgraced myself and children, by neglecting and bringing them to want and misery of a common barrack room as you pleased to term it, how you have formed that opinion of me is a mystery unless it is in consequence of my being reduced. If so, believe me it was for no disgrace. If it were, it was in my power to have kept it a secret from you by desiring you to have directed [addressed the letters] as formerly. However, I feel convinced that you are not aware of the rules of the service.

Trifling faults will often reduce a commissioned officer to the ranks, not only that [xxx] it was for any disgraceful act, I should not have been offered promotion again, as I was, by the identical person you wrote to, likewise, by the commanding officer of the regiment.

I do not think any thing of the bad opinion you have formed of me, but I think you should have spared one who is now at rest in her grave, one who was [xxx] dear to me, one who is always in my thoughts. I mean my beloved wife, the fond mother of my children, one who was universally beloved and respected, one that defied any person to say that either herself or husband ever disgraced themselves or children, until her own father says, "My daughter disgraced herself by getting married prematurely, and her husband by neglecting his children."

However allow me to say that she was not married prematurely, but by license in the protestant church of Quebec on the 28th day of May 1827, the marriage certificate I have by me at present. However, I suppose Captain Cockcroft will give you every information you require on the subject.

You wish to know in your letter whether I was of temperate habit. If your meaning is whether I abstain from liquors entirely, I answer you candidly that I do not, but that I take a glass of spirits, wine, beer, or porter whenever I think it necessary. Neither am I an advocate for total abstinence, our regiment is under orders for Halifax and will embark about the 10th or 13th of October. I expect to accompany them to Halifax, and from there proceed to England for the purpose of being discharged and pensioned at about one shilling per day.

I always thought of settling in the Canadas with my children agreeable to their mother's wish, however, your ungracious letter together with my being so poor, not being able to command more than one hundred pounds, puts it entirely out of the question, as I consider it too trivial a sum to do anything with in the Canadas, although in England with perseverance I think it would be nearly sufficient to procure a respectable living. However, whether I remain in England or return to Demerara where my best treasure is now moulding, rest assured, the respectability and welfare of my children shall be my only consideration. Allow me to remind you that your Grandchildren are not in want or misery in a common barrack room, nor have they been since their deplorable loss.

Ann is with a lady learning the use of a needle and Harry is with a married sergeant who keeps the school and library, and as a [xxx] to their [xxx]. Therefore, if you can believe the above, you will find you have done me a great pain of injustice by saying (?) to my charge, the crime that I was not guilty of and by that whatever you say of me that you will speak more kindly of [xxx] whose only fault was marrying the choice of her [xxx] heart and that choice a soldier. [xxx] [xxx] [xxx] with kindness to being one of the family and may the almighty dispenser of all good grant you all the happiness in this world and the next is the sincere wish of yours [xxx]

truly M Josephs

Be pleased (?) to answer this immediately, otherwise I may not get it.

[PS] Direct [to]

Mark Josephs, private, soldier

Captain Cockcroft's Company, 76th Regiment

Halifax or elsewhere.

I could find nothing about the Borrowdale family or Mark Josephs and his children, not even if they were reconciled with the Borrowdales and moved to Montreal. We do find out that they were married in Québec (the city, I think) at the Protestant church, on 28 May 1827.

The 76th Regiment was stationed in B N A 1814–27, when it was recalled to U K. It was stationed at Halifax 1841–2.