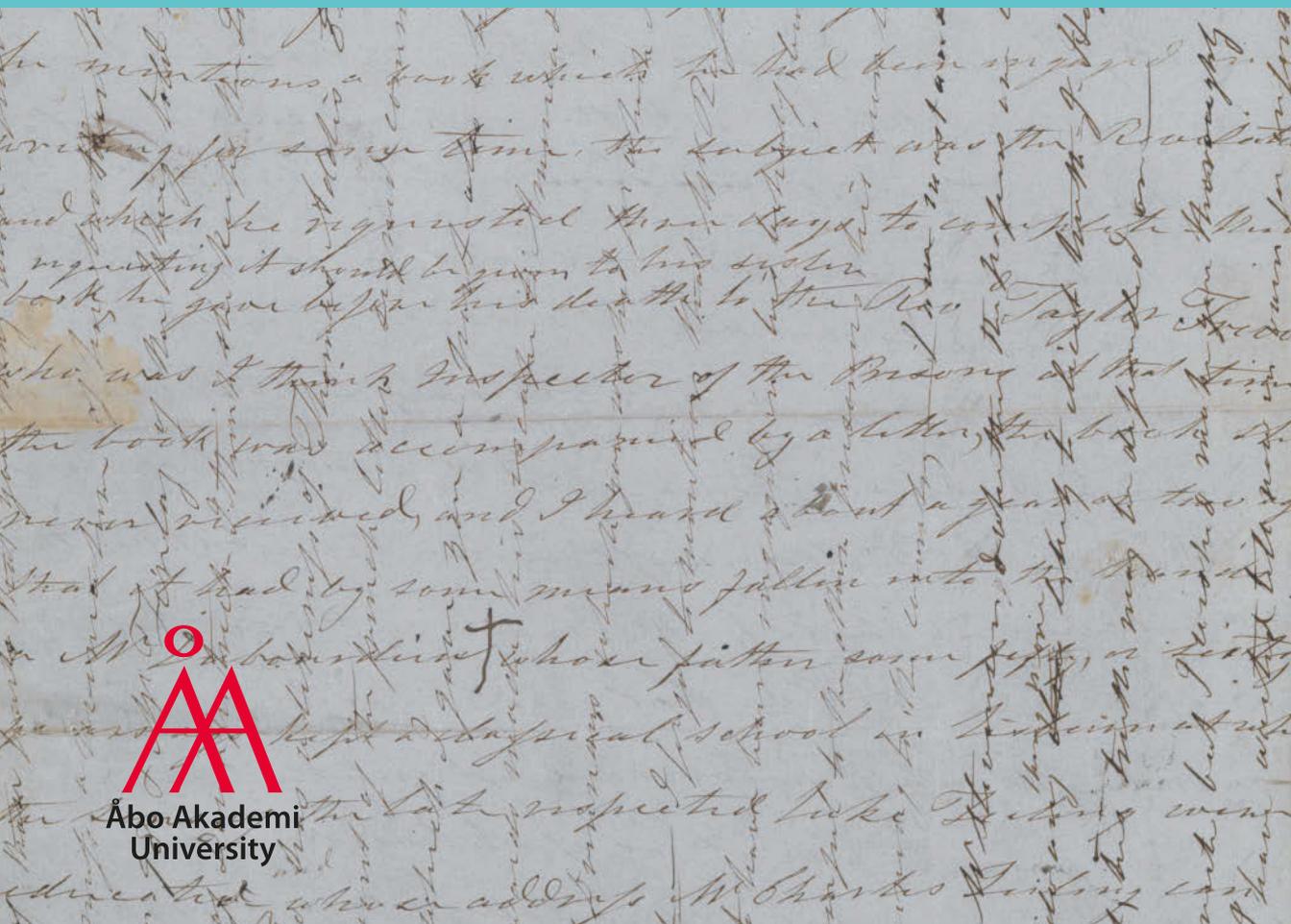


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# The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken (1770–1866)





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(1770-1866)





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## List of Abbreviations

LHL	Linen Hall Library
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NMNI	Nation Museums of Northern Ireland
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
QUBSC	Special Collections, Queen's University Belfast
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
TCD	Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, Trinity College Dublin
UCD	University College Dublin
UVA	Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

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# 1. Introduction

Letters are a form of flight. They do not contain evidence of ‘the real person,’ but are rather traces of this person in a particular representational epistolary guise and as expressed at successive points in time and to a variety of people.

Liz Stanley<sup>1</sup>

It is not from a single sketch that our judgement should be formed; but only, since every letter is a portrait, more hastily or more elaborately designed, from a careful examination and comparison of many.

Robert Aris Willmott<sup>2</sup>

Now she is gone, and severed is the chain  
Which linked our generation to the past;  
The stricken and oppressed no more shall hear  
A voice that soothed so oft the bed of woe;

But though ‘tis hushed, a record still survives,  
Shrined in the annals of a Nation’s wrongs;

Where Erin’s daughters yet unborn, may trace  
A type of all in woman, good and great.

Thomas Charles Stewart Corry<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Liz Stanley, “The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences,” in *Auto/Biography* 12 (2004): 223.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Aris Willmott, *Gems of epistolary correspondence: selected from the best English authors, from the time of Sir Philip Sidney to the present day* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Charles Stewart Corry, “Ode to the Memory of Mary McCracken,” *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems* (Belfast: D. & J. Allen, 1879), 113–14.

## 1.1 Aims and Scope

This thesis is intended to provide the first scholarly edition of the correspondence of Belfast's Mary Ann McCracken (1770–1866), fully annotated, with accompanying essays and commentary. In providing the definitive resource on Mary Ann McCracken based on original source materials, the thesis seeks to obviate the need for second-hand usage of letters (and partial letters) which have been reproduced in earlier biographies (most notably Mary McNeill's 1960 work, from which most modern citations of McCracken's letters are still drawn). In bringing together and sequencing all of her extant letters for the first time, the work seeks to give a greater insight into her later life and views, as well as to shed new light on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish society, and particularly on the rapidly-changing environment of Belfast. By uniting the letters with contextual, biographical and technical commentary, the project also aims to function as a contribution to Irish life writing, women's history, and the expanding field of epistolary studies.

While James Daybell has noted the ways in which letter-writers of the Tudor era “constructed ‘personas’ or adopted masks in public for various social situations,”<sup>4</sup> Rebecca Earle has described both personal and impersonal letters of the eighteenth-century, “when the idea of the sensible self developed most strikingly,” as sites of “epistolary self-creation.”<sup>5</sup> Given the modern letter's potential in this regard, McCracken's correspondence may provide insights into her own self-image and the negotiation of her public and private personae. Moreover, as Carolyn Steedman has noted (reflecting on Vermeer's well-known painting *Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid*), the historical epistolary practices of women in general have been illuminated by — and have come to serve — a wide, perhaps even overwhelming, range of critical projects:

The epistemological status of the woman writing a letter is complex. She and her letter are matters for historical inquiry

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<sup>4</sup> James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 167.

<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Earle, “Introduction: letters, writers and the historian,” in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945*, ed. Rebecca Earle (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 2.

because of the force and pressure of theories, structures of explanation, and mythologies that have emerged across a number of academic fields. As a figure, she has come to offer a new originary narrative: she accounts for the emergence of modern subjects and modern social structures; of gender relations, and perhaps even of the concept of gender itself; of literary, cultural and feminist theory.<sup>6</sup>

While this thesis does not aim to explore these areas as such, it is clear that McCracken's correspondence may be viewed within the context of intense scholarly interest in the epistolary scene, especially in connection with the historical experience of women. This thesis also takes seriously Earle's claim that letters should be read "both as texts, and as concrete historical artefacts strongly rooted in particular contexts."<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, it will attend not only to the contents, but also to the material features of McCracken's letters and to their circulation in space and time.

Another important strand of the thesis involves using these primary materials to enter into a critical dialogue with the many versions of Mary Ann McCracken which have populated folk history, cultural memory and literature.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, since McCracken's status as a cultural icon has made her ripe for appropriation by many (and sometimes competing) movements within Northern Ireland, it is vital to ensure that she may also be heard fully in her own words.

In 1992 the leading scholars of Irish women's history called for innovative analysis of "women's role in more organised political associations." They further stated:

There was a group of women in eighteenth-century Ireland who were aware of the new political debates on equality and democracy. Some like Mary Ann McCracken had read Mary Wollstonecraft. The range of intellectual interests of these women was wide and included scientific as well as arts subjects. Other women became

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<sup>6</sup> Carolyn Steedman, "A woman writing a letter," in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945*, ed. Rebecca Earle (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 119.

<sup>7</sup> Earle, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>8</sup> While the thesis shares some thematic interests with Guy Beiner's important 2018 book *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster*, the bulk of the research (which began in 2013) was completed prior to its publication.

involved in the Gaelic revival. These well-read, articulate women merit attention in their own right.<sup>9</sup>

It is not coincidental that Mary Ann was singled out. A biography of her life had been published in 1960 and was subsequently republished in 1988. Why then, in spite of this work, might her life still be considered to demand analysis? In order to answer this question, we must firstly acknowledge that what Mary McNeill did highlight in her biography is of huge interest. However, it does leave one with a feeling of stones left unturned, particularly in regard to the scope of epistolary sources. Although McNeill quoted from numerous McCracken letters, she did not cite from (or indeed reference) every epistle of which she was aware, nor was it her intention to do so. Rather, McNeill selected quotations which assisted her in assembling her own version of McCracken's life. This is particularly relevant to the "unrequited lover" narrative. For example, having quoted from Letter 70, in which Mary Ann vented her frustrations at being prevented from visiting Thomas Russell at Downpatrick Jail, McNeill commented, "No ending – no signature!"<sup>10</sup> suggesting that it was McCracken's emotional state which resulted in her failing to sign off "this torrent of wrath,"<sup>11</sup> when in actuality, all of the extant letters between McCracken and Templeton are devoid of end salutations.<sup>12</sup>

In another instance, McNeill merged two draft letters (Letter 58 and Letter 59), reproducing a critical transcription found in Richard Robert Madden's *United Irishmen*.<sup>13</sup> As a result, McNeill carried Madden's omissions, edits and paraphrasing into her own work.<sup>14</sup> Similar examples exist of McNeill overriding the original text in favour of Madden's revisions to the physical manuscript (such as deletions and substitutions). McNeill also overlooked aspects which give an insight

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<sup>9</sup> Margaret MacCurtain, Mary O'Dowd and Maria Luddy, "An Agenda for Women's History in Ireland, 1500–1900," *Irish Historical Studies* 28, no. 109 (May 1992): 18.

<sup>10</sup> Mary McNeill, *The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: A Belfast Panorama* (Dublin: Allen Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1960), 220.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Nor did McNeill consider the fact that the letter was likely in draft form.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, Second Series, vol. 2 (London: J. Madden & Co., 1843), 502–04.

<sup>14</sup> See McNeill, *Life*, 202–04.

into McCracken's epistolary practises, such as the letters' material features. This was due, in part, to the fact that she was working from microfilm (which is now housed within the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, McNeill was unaware of some of the extant letters, such as those housed within the Royal Irish Academy's Richard Robert Madden Collection and those found within the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. Nevertheless, McNeill was the first historian to draw significant attention to Mary Ann as a letter writer and to provide such extensive citations. Her comprehensive and inspirational biography has served as the catalyst which launched this current attempt to compile a complete edition of the McCracken correspondence.

The majority of the extant correspondence exists amongst the papers of McCracken's male correspondents; namely, the historian, Richard Robert Madden; her niece's husband, Robert James Tennent; and the Irish-American lawyer Andrew Leitch. The contents of others are salvaged from transcriptions within historical texts or archives. Remarkably, however, the 181 letters within this collection are merely the tip of the iceberg, as is revealed by a series of intertextual references.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, a single sentence within Letter 176 signals at least 136 missing letters.

Not only is Mary Ann's epistolary zeal demonstrated by this vast body of correspondence, it is also alluded to within their content. William McCracken's chastising letter of 1797 suggests that it was highly unusual not to receive a letter from his sister, who was so "fond of writing."<sup>17</sup> This "fondness" prevailed into old age as is evidenced by her step-grandniece, Anna McCleery, who later recalled that "a great part of her evenings or other spare time was occupied in letter-writing."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, when Mary Ann was struck down with illness in 1854, as a result of overexertion, she expressed much indignation at

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<sup>15</sup> See Microfilm of McCracken letters in Madden papers at Trinity College Dublin, Newspaper cutting, notes and correspondence relating to research, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/12.

<sup>16</sup> See section 3.4.

<sup>17</sup> Letter 38 (TCD MS873/138).

<sup>18</sup> Anna McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken, Sister of Henry Joy McCracken," in *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*, ed. Robert Magill Young (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co. Limited, 1896), 197.

being told she must “take perfect rest for some time & even refrain from writing.”<sup>19</sup> Her epistolary practises are also captured through remarks such as, “on looking over my letter book,”<sup>20</sup> “I had a letter (and think it is some place among my papers as I never destroy any)”<sup>21</sup> and “I am apt to write so diffusely & circumstantially that I frequently write my letters over again with the intention of shortening, in which I do not always succeed.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Letter 159 (TCD MS873/75).

<sup>20</sup> Letter 165 (TCD MS873/77). Unfortunately, no such letter-book remains.

<sup>21</sup> Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692).

<sup>22</sup> Letter 173 (TCD MS873/84).

## 1.2 Biographical Overview

Born in Belfast on 8 July 1770 to Captain John McCracken and his second wife Ann (née Joy), Mary Ann McCracken was the fifth of six surviving children. The McCracken brood were raised in connection with Belfast's Third Presbyterian Congregation and were educated at David Manson's co-educational school on Donegall Street, where corporal punishment was unheard of, boys and girls were taught as equals and learning was facilitated through play.<sup>1</sup> This education coupled with the family's status as "part of Belfast's liberal presbyterian middle class"<sup>2</sup> produced children ideally fitted for intellectual openness and political radicalism.

Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution and encouraged by the success of the American War of Independence, a Society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast in 1791 with the goal of uniting "all the people of Ireland" and achieving "a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in Ireland."<sup>3</sup> Henry Joy McCracken was one of those in attendance at the first committee meeting and his elder brothers William and Francis swiftly joined him as sworn members. Indeed, Mary Ann's eagerness that her female friends join the society suggests that by 1797 she herself had already joined its ranks.<sup>4</sup> The society became more radical as it was forced underground and a government crackdown resulted in many arrests. Both Henry and William were imprisoned in Dublin's Kilmainham Gaol, during which time Mary Ann regularly wrote to them about the developing situation in Belfast and on at least one occasion argued for equality of the sexes.<sup>5</sup> Following their release, Henry became heavily involved in the planning of a rebellion and went on to command the rebels at the Battle of Antrim in June 1798. Despite escaping into the Belfast hills,

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<sup>1</sup> See "Life of David Mason," *Belfast Monthly Magazine* 6, no. 31 (February 1811): 126–132.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Agnew, "McCracken, Mary Ann," in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, ed. James McGuire and James Quinn, vol. 5 (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 879.

<sup>3</sup> "The United Irishmen (1791)," in *Selected Documents in Irish History*, ed. Josef L. Altholz (New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 70.

<sup>4</sup> See Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151) and section 2.3.2.2.

<sup>5</sup> See Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

he was later captured and hanged outside the town's market house at the age of thirty-one. Mary Ann's own involvement in these events are vividly captured within both her correspondence and a transcribed interview.<sup>6</sup> Although traditionally understood in light of her ill-fated brother, Mary Ann outlived her most cherished sibling by almost seventy years. In a bid to keep the memory of her brother and the cause alive, she assisted with and contributed to Dr Madden's multi-volume corpus *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* and other related works.

Over the course of her ninety-six years (spanning sixty-seven years of the Georgian era and twenty-nine years of the Victorian era) McCracken dedicated herself to what she described as her "various avocations."<sup>7</sup> In her early twenties, she began a muslin business with her sister Margaret, where the rights of workers were given upmost priority.<sup>8</sup> She was a keen promoter of the cultural revival of Ireland's ancient poetry, language and music, most notably assisting her close friend Edward Bunting (who had joined the McCracken household in 1784 at the age of twelve and remained until 1819) with the gathering and processing of materials for his collection of Irish airs.

From childhood she visited and assisted at the Poor House (later known as the Belfast Charitable Society) which was "the first public charitable institution in Belfast."<sup>9</sup> Her uncles Robert and Henry Joy took an active part in its establishment and McCracken would eventually serve as Secretary of its Ladies Committee.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, her acquaintance with the institution began, in her own words, "as soon as I could walk" and continued into her ninth decade.<sup>11</sup>

Mary Ann's step-grandniece, Anna McCleery tells us that she "taught for many years in a [non-denominational] Sunday School held

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<sup>6</sup> Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99. See section 5.4.3.

<sup>7</sup> Letter 172 (PRONI D1748/G/387/8).

<sup>8</sup> See McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 193, wherein an undated bill, detailing the grievances of the weavers, praises the McCracken sisters for going against the grain and continuing to employ their staff.

<sup>9</sup> Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81).

<sup>10</sup> See Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81) wherein MAM wrote of her uncles' involvement with the Poor House.

<sup>11</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 193. See section 5.5.1.3.

in Frederick Street Schoolhouse,"<sup>12</sup> however, it is also possible that she had already been teaching at the school in its former premises on Waring Street, where it had been established in January 1802.<sup>13</sup> The school's move to Frederick Street occurred at the same time as its adoption of the Lancasterian model in 1812.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in 1838 McCracken wrote, "I have been visiting the Lancasterian School for the last twenty-five years, generally once a week and I find the children taught there for the last two or three years much better acquainted with the Scriptures than the scholars of any former period."<sup>15</sup>

Within the *Post Office Belfast Annual Directory for 1843–44* Mary Ann McCracken is listed as a committee "manager" for the Belfast Ladies' Clothing Society which provided garments and blankets for the poor.<sup>16</sup> Following her death, the society recognised her as "a most energetic collector of its funds."<sup>17</sup> However, it is unclear how far back her links with this society go, leaving the possibility open that she had some hand in its inception in 1812 as the Female Society for clothing the Poor.<sup>18</sup> McCracken also collected for the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick (which was formed by the same ladies of the Clothing Society committee). On the subject of this society, McCleery

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<sup>12</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 196.

<sup>13</sup> This is not to be confused with the Sunday school established by her brother, of which she wrote, "My brother Harry was joined with a few of the industrious class in Belfast in a Sunday-school in the old Market-House, in which writing as well as reading was taught. In two years a young woman had learned both to read and write. They did not presume to impart religious knowledge, but they taught their scholars how to obtain it for themselves, by which every sect might equally profit." This school came to an abrupt end when the Town Sovereign, the Anglican Rev. William Bristow "came to the place of meeting with a number of ladies, with rods in their hands as badges of authority, which put to flight the humble pioneers." Section 5.5.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'Natural Leaders' and Their World* (Liverpool: LUP, 2012), 227.

<sup>15</sup> Letter 120.

<sup>16</sup> See *Post Office Belfast Annual Directory for 1843–44* (Belfast: Wilson, 1843), Appendix, 16.

<sup>17</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 195. See section 5.6.4. The society is also referred to as the Belfast Ladies' Society for Clothing the Poor.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Bradshaw, *Belfast General & Commercial Directory for 1819* (Belfast: Francis D. Finlay, 1819), xxviii.

recalled how her grand-aunt “used to say the ladies would not let her visit, for she would give too much, and would tell of cases in which she had been imposed upon. It was a hard trial for her to refuse any who seemed in distress.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, peppered throughout her correspondence are examples of Mary Ann McCracken collecting for unfortunate individuals (such as Thomas Russell’s sister, Margaret) and appealing for assistance on their behalf.

McCleery’s assertion that Mary Ann “was one of an association to prevent the employment of climbing-boys in chimney-sweeping,”<sup>20</sup> has been further investigated by historian John Gray, who pinpoints the establishment of a Belfast Committee for Superseding the Use of Climbing Boys in the Cleaning of Chimneys at “a well attended public meeting in May 1834.”<sup>21</sup> The same meeting saw the passing of a resolution calling for an associated ladies committee to be set up (upon which, Gray presumes, McCracken went on to sit).

The Belfast Ladies’ Association for the Relief of Irish Destitution first met on 1 January 1847 with the intention of alleviating distress in the Irish countryside. However, it quickly expanded its scope as it became “evident that the impact of the Famine was also being felt elsewhere, even in industrial towns such as Belfast.”<sup>22</sup> During her time in Belfast, the American abolitionist and humanitarian Asenath Nicholson visited this multi-denominational association, writing of its members thus:

One would tell me enthusiastically, that she did not know how the association could manage without Maria Webb; her judgment was always the turning point in all difficulties. Maria Webb would expatiate on the efficiency of Mary Ireland, as a visitor and manager; a third would regret that the indefatigable Miss

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<sup>19</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 195.

<sup>20</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 195.

<sup>21</sup> John Gray, *Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: Feminist, Revolutionary and Reformer* (forthcoming pamphlet) (Belfast: Reclaim the Enlightenment, 2020), 28. Gray cites his sources as *Northern Whig*, 1 May 1834, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Christine Kinealy, “‘The Widow’s Mite’: private relief during the Great Famine,” *History Ireland* 16, issue 2, March/ April 2008, <https://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/the-widows-mite-private-relief-during-the-great-famine/>.

M'Cracken, she feared, would soon leave us, as her age had passed the line of three-score years and ten.<sup>23</sup>

On 23 March 1847 the same association formed The Belfast Ladies' Industrial National School for Girls (being the first ragged school established in Ireland), which was conducted in the Lancasterian school house on Frederick Street. McNeill states that "every annual report of the School from the year of its foundation till that of her [Mary Ann McCracken's] death includes her name as a member of committee."<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the reports for the years 1860–1866 record Miss McCracken as holding the position of President. Following her death, the 1866 report contained a short obituary describing her as "a beloved friend" of the school, who never missed a weekly meeting as long as she was able to attend and paid tribute to her "ardent charity, her large and tender sympathy, her sweet humility and self-forgetfulness."<sup>25</sup> Her niece, Maria McCleery was also listed as a committee member over the years and was last cited as such in the Twenty-Third Report for the year ending 17 March 1870.

Finally, yet no less significantly, Mary Ann McCracken sat on the committee for the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association, of which she was later President.<sup>26</sup> In 1857, a fellow member described her as "as ardent now in the cause of American Antislavery as she was formerly in that of the West Indian slave."<sup>27</sup> However, by 1859 with membership in decline, she regretfully informed fellow abolitionist Dr Madden, "there are but 16 or 17 female anti-slavery advocates for the good cause [...] in Belfast, & none to distribute papers to American

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<sup>23</sup> Asenath Nicholson, *Annals of the Famine in Ireland in 1847, 1848 and 1849* (New York: E. French, 1851), 76–7.

<sup>24</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 292.

<sup>25</sup> *Twentieth Report of the Committee for 1866–67 of the Belfast Ladies' Industrial National School for Girls conducted in the Lancasterian School-House, Frederick-Street, Being the First Ragged School established in Ireland* (Belfast: Alexander Mayne, 1867), 4. See section 5.6.3.

<sup>26</sup> See section 2.3.1.3.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Ireland to the Committee of Boston bazaar, 13 November 1857, in Ellen M. Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," *The Boston Public Library Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (October 1958): 185.

Emigrants but an old woman within 17 days of 89.”<sup>28</sup> The “old woman” referred, of course, to herself.

Despite speculation about her relationship with United Irishman Thomas Russell, who was hung in 1803 for his part in Emmet’s failed rebellion, Mary Ann never married. She did, however, raise a child. In the aftermath of Henry Joy McCracken’s execution, Mary Ann was summoned to Rev. Steele Dickson’s jail cell where he informed her that Henry had an illegitimate daughter named Maria. It has been speculated that her mother was Mary Bodell, a daughter of labourer David Bodell, whose cottage on Cave Hill provided shelter to fugitives (including Henry). It is thought that the Bodell family fled to America following the rebellion. Indeed, in her interview with Madden more than forty years later, Mary Ann commented, “I had afterwards an opportunity of materially serving that family.”<sup>29</sup> This may suggest that she financed their departure. Mary Ann further remarked that the child was “left to our care” and became “a treasure” who was “as an only and affectionate daughter.”<sup>30</sup> Aunt and niece were not to be parted until the former’s death in 1866.

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<sup>28</sup> Letter 172 (TCD MS873/78).

<sup>29</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 483. See section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 497.

## 1.3 Outline of Chapters

Mary Ann McCracken's life, personality and historical significance have made her a ubiquitous presence in Belfast. Chapter 2 of this thesis explores the ways in which McCracken has been cast in cultural memory and folk history, revealing the relationship between her legacy and various kinds of image-making and appropriation. Within the sub-chapter "Images" (section 2.1), the material and visual traces of her life will be surveyed with the aim of exposing the hidden layers of history (and historical interpretation) that lie beneath them. This will include consideration of such phenomena as her grave's epitaph, several verifiable portraits and purported images and a bust commissioned by Belfast City Council in 2004. As a significant figure in Irish history, Mary Ann McCracken has also been subject to many kinds of appropriation, the most significant of which will form the basis for discussion in section 2.2. These range from selected murals (based upon the aforementioned images) deploying her likeness in support of political and social projects to commercial appropriations. Section 2.3 assesses the extent to which Mary Ann embodied the various iconic personae with which she is associated, paying particular attention to their origins, limitations and authenticity. Having explored such labels as abolitionist, proto-feminist and "unrequited lover," Section 2.3.4 shifts towards a less acknowledged role, that of historian. By considering McCracken in relation to the production of historiographical discourse, the scope and multi-faceted nature of her involvement emerges.

McCracken appears as a character within an array of literary genres, framed, for the most part, in relation to her brother Henry Joy and the 1798 rebellion. Section 2.4 compares and contrasts these fictional portrayals with information derived from original source materials, namely, Mary Ann's letters and her interview with Madden.<sup>1</sup> Where possible (given that not all of the manuscripts were available) the author's intent is considered, in addition to generic and archetypal restrictions.

Chapter 3 paves the way for an informed reading of the transcribed letters by way of a series of detailed analyses of composition and form. Often overlooked material features are brought to the fore, shedding light on McCracken's letter writing practices and on the

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5.4.3.

Irish postal system more broadly. Methods of letter conveyance and their inherent risks are evaluated in section 3.3. Taking Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen's study of "intertextual networks"<sup>2</sup> within a correspondence as a model, section 3.4. explores the relationship between letters and in doing so reveals a variety of references to other letters both within and outside of the chain, as well as intratextual or reflexive references which create internal connections within individual letters. Drawing upon these intertextual references, a chronology of missing letters is established in section 3.5. This is followed by the more definitive "Letter Chronology" (section 3.6) which lists all of the epistles included within the collection (Chapter 4), detailing the extant manuscript location (or in the case of missing manuscripts, the source of a previous transcription), date, author and recipient.

The dispersal of McCracken's once extensive letter collection is traced in section 3.7, while those extant letters which remained in the possession of her correspondents are located within their specific archival collections. The editorial process of gathering, selecting and arranging the letters is documented and explained in section 3.8. An "Introduction to the Letters and their Themes" (section 3.9) groups the letters into loosely chronological categories which give the reader a general impression of their content. For instance, section 3.9.11 describes a set of letters I have labelled "The Madden Correspondence (1842–1861)" with a view to clarifying McCracken's role in assisting Madden's historical enquiries and publications, in addition to highlighting their personal relationship. Finally, section 3.10 details the editorial principles, apparatus and transcription policies employed throughout the collection, serving as a guide to the ensuing chapter and a framework for exploring the letters.

Chapter 4 contains 181 transcribed and annotated letters arranged in chronological order, each preceded by relevant metadata describing the item's most significant particulars. In the case of undated or partially dated letters, several methods of deduction have been employed. Date information remains elusive in one instance, therefore it is placed after the final extant letter. The collection contains letters

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<sup>2</sup> Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, "Intertextual networks in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston," in Terttu Nevalainen and Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen ed., *Letter-Writing* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company: 2007), 73.

written both by and to Mary Ann and several relevant epistles between third parties which were entrusted to her care.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 5 is comprised of thirteen appendices, many of which have a close relationship to parts of the main body and are referenced throughout the thesis. Appendix A contains relevant letters which did not fit within the body of the collection. For example, section 5.1.1 is a draft of Letter 48, allowing the reader to compare the preliminary and final versions. Attached documents or enclosures such newspaper articles are detailed in Appendix B. Three biographical accounts written by Mary Ann and pertaining to three different rebels are reproduced in Appendix C. Two of Madden's lines of inquiry are set out in Appendix D. Firstly, a questionnaire complete with McCracken's answers (although written in Madden's hand) and secondly, a transcript of an interview with her, relating her brother's final days and which was published in *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* of 1843.<sup>4</sup> The latter has been revised (by way of footnotes) to include McCracken's corrections to this text which she made in 1859. Appendix E explores Mary Ann's non-epistolary writing, derived for the most part from McCleery's "Life of Mary Ann McCracken." Also considered are her entries within the Belfast Charitable Society's Ladies Committee minute books, among several other textual instances. Four obituaries marking Mary Ann McCracken's death and reflecting on her "precious legacy" are reproduced in Appendix F. This is followed by "The Last Will and Testament of Mary Ann McCracken" which sheds light on her final residence and finances. It also reveals that although William McCleery was the executor of her will, his two daughters were the beneficiaries.<sup>5</sup>

Appendix H takes a closer look at the McCracken family miniatures (mentioned in section 2.1.2) and attempts to track their journey to Bloemfontein, South Africa. As the portraits can no longer be traced, an analysis had been made of their photographic reproductions. The various versions of Crowley's artwork *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* are discussed in Appendix I, highlighting the reach of McCracken's purported likeness. Two pencil sketches which won Elizabeth O'Kane the commission to sculpt a bronze bust of Mary

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<sup>3</sup> All but one of these letters were received within the family circle and were subsequently endorsed in her hand.

<sup>4</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99.

<sup>5</sup> Overlooking William McCleery's two sons.

Ann appear in Appendix J, while the bust's clay prototype is discussed in Appendix K. Further light is shone on the McCleery family in Appendix L, wherein William McCleery's will is reproduced. Finally, three nineteenth century poems, referenced in section 2.4.3, are included in Appendix M.

## 1.4 Chronology

- 1770** 8 July: Mary Ann McCracken born to Captain John McCracken and Ann McCracken née Joy at 37 High Street, Belfast
- 1774** Belfast Poor House opens
- 1776** The Assembly Rooms added to Belfast's Exchange building
- 1778** 17 March: Belfast First Volunteer Company formed  
Papist Act passed (first Catholic Relief Bill)
- 1780** Test Act repealed
- 1784** Aged twelve, Edward Bunting is welcomed into the McCracken household
- 1786** Waddell Cunningham proposes a Belfast Slave-Ship Company
- 1788** Henry Joy McCracken establishes Belfast's first Sunday School, teaching reading and writing to poor children of all denominations. The Sunday School was closed by Rev. William Bristow, the Anglican Vicar of Belfast  
Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge established
- 1789** 14 July: French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille in Paris  
Henry Joy McCracken returns from Scotland to work at the cotton printing mill owned by Joy, Holmes and McCracken at the Falls
- 1790** Northern Whig Club formed by Lord Charlemont in Belfast  
Thomas Russell arrives in Belfast on military duty  
Mary Ann and her sister Margaret start their muslin business
- 1791** 14 October: The first Society of United Irishmen is established in Belfast  
October: Theobald Wolfe Tone's first visit to Belfast  
Belfast First Volunteer Company passes its own resolution in favour of Catholic Emancipation  
Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* published

- 1792** 2 March: Pioneering school teacher David Manson dies  
 24 March: Henry Joy McCracken takes the United Irishman's test and is admitted to the Belfast Society of United Irishmen  
 14 June: Belfast celebrates the anniversary of Bastille Day  
 10–14 July: The Belfast Harp Festival is held at the Assembly Rooms
- 1793** March: A riot breaks out in Belfast started by a detachment of dragoons  
 April: A second riot occurs in which Henry Joy McCracken is involved  
 Catholic Relief Act passed
- 1794** Henry Joy McCracken relocates to Holywood to recover from an illness  
 Henry Joy McCracken's daughter Maria is born  
 Thomas Russell becomes librarian to the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge  
 Part One of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* is published
- 1795** 28 March: Viceroy Fitzwilliam is recalled  
 March: Henry Joy McCracken is sworn in as a member of the Tenth Society of United Irishmen  
 15 May: Henry Joy Junior sells the *Belfast News-Letter*  
 May: Theobald Wolfe Tone arrived in Belfast en route to America  
 May: Samuel Neilson, Henry Joy McCracken, Tone, Russell and the Simms brothers take a solemn oath at MacArt's Fort while their families assemble in the Deer Park below for a picnic  
 13 June: Tone and his family leave Belfast for America  
 Part Two of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* published
- 1796** September: Russell publishes *A Letter to the People of Ireland on the Present Situation of the Country*  
 16 September: A government clampdown against resurgent United Irishmen results in ten arrests, including Henry Haslett, Charles Hamilton Teeling, Neilson and Russell

Early October: Henry Joy McCracken is arrested and taken to Dublin where he is initially imprisoned at Newgate before being transferred to Kilmainham Gaol a few weeks later

October: Tone arrives in France to urge an invasion of Ireland

October: Irish Yeomanry formed

November: Mary Ann, along with Margaret, her younger brother John and Bunting visit Henry Joy McCracken in Kilmainham Gaol. This marks Mary Ann's first visit to Dublin

Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music* published

**1797** 18 April 1797: William McCracken arrested and imprisoned at Kilmainham Gaol

April: 19 Northern prisoners arrive at Kilmainham Gaol

May 1797: *Northern Star* premises raided by the military, destroying all valuable machinery and type

August: Bunting goes to London

October: Mary Ann, Margaret and Rose Ann McCracken (William's wife) visit Kilmainham Gaol

Early November: Mary Ann and Margaret return to Belfast, leaving behind their sister-in-law

Belfast Fever Hospital opens on Berry Street

**1798** February: Neilson released from jail

12 March: Oliver Bond's house on Dublin's Bridge Street is raided

30 March: Ireland declared to be in a state of "actual rebellion"

18 May: Lord Edward Fitzgerald captured

23 May: Planned date of rising

28 May: Northern Mail Coach stopped and burned along with its letters

May: Leinster rises

3 June: Antrim's United Irishmen meet to decide a response, voting narrowly to wait for French aid

5 June: Rev. Steele Dickson arrested

5 June: Meeting of United Irishmen delegates at Templepatrick at which Henry Joy McCracken is elected as general for Antrim

6 June: Henry Joy McCracken issues a proclamation to march on Antrim the following day

7– 8 June: Battle of Antrim

12 June: Battle of Ballynahinch

Mid-June: Mary Ann and Rose Ann search the Belfast hills for Henry Joy McCracken with eventual success

22 June: Mary Ann dines with Henry Joy McCracken at David Boall's cottage

7 July: Henry Joy McCracken arrested and taken to Carrickfergus Gaol

8 July: News of Henry's arrest reaches the McCracken household. Mary Ann and her father set off immediately to see him

9 July, morning: Mary Ann and her father attempt to see Henry again but can only talk to him through a window

16 July: Henry Joy McCracken transferred to Ann Street Artillery Barracks. Mary Ann and Margaret granted permission by Col. Barber to see and talk to him

17 July, 6am: Mary Ann takes a carriage to Lisburn to fetch Miss Mary Tomb (their cousin) to give evidence at her brother's trial

17 July, noon: Trial of Henry Joy McCracken at Belfast's Exchange

17 July, 5pm: Henry Joy McCracken is executed on gallows in front of the Market House

17 July, night: Henry is interred within the McCracken family plot at the Corporation Church's burial ground on High Street

22 August: Francis McCracken sets sail from Cobh for Jamaica

22 August: Richard Robert Madden is born in Dublin during a raid on his parent's house by Major Sirr

- 23 August: French troops land at Killala led by General Humbert
- 27 August: Battle of Castlebar
- 8 September: Battle of Ballinamuck
- 6 October: In Irish Parliament, Lord Castlereagh declares that the rebellion has been suppressed
- 10 November: First day of Tone's trial
- 19 November: Tone dies at Provost's Prison, Dublin
- 9 December: Meeting of the Irish Bar at which a resolution is passed denouncing the Union
- 1799** 22 January: Irish Parliament meets for its last session
- 25 March: 20 rebel prisoners are moved to the fortress of Fort George in Inverness, including Russell
- October: Lord Lieutenant (Lord Cornwallis) pays a short visit to Belfast to promote the Union
- 9 November: French Revolution ends
- 1800** 1 August: The Burial Ground on High Street is closed by an act of Parliament
- Belfast Poorhouse is released by the military
- 1801** 1 January: Act of Union
- A series of McCracken miniatures are painted, including one of Mary Ann and her niece Maria
- 1802** 13 January: William Tennent, Robert Simms and Rev. Steele Dickson are released from Fort George and return to Belfast
- June: Russell, Neilson and Thomas Emmet are released from Fort George and banished
- August: Russell meets Robert Emmet in Paris
- Belfast Sunday School started by voluntary subscriptions (later developed into the Lancasterian School which Mary Ann visited weekly)
- Patrick Lynch is employed and financed by the McCrackens to assist Bunting in the collection of native Irish airs
- 1803** Early 1803: Robert Emmet leaves Paris for Dublin, leaving Russell to direct a group of United Irishmen

- March: Russell returns to Ireland to organise the North alongside James Hope
- July 1803: Mary Ann forwards 25 guineas, gathered by subscription, to Margaret Russell in Dublin, causing Mr. Skeffington to accuse her of raising money for arms
- 23 July: Emmet's rebellion begins ahead of schedule in Dublin
- 24 July: Russell's proclamation issued to "The Men of Ireland"
- 29 August: Samuel Neilson dies in exile near New York
- 9 September: Russell is arrested by Major Sirr in Dublin and lodged in Kilmainham Gaol
- 12 October: Russell transferred to Downpatrick Gaol
- 20 October: Russell's trial before Baron George begins in the morning and lasts until 8pm
- 21 October: Execution of Russell
- 20 December: Captain John McCracken dies
- 1806** 7 September: Belfast Second Presbyterian Church's organ is opened by Edward Bunting
- 1807** Third Part of Thomas Paines's *Age of Reason* is published
- 1808** 17 March (St Patrick's Day): Belfast Harp Society inaugurated
- 1809** 14 September 1809: Mary Ann accompanies naturalist, John Templeton on an expedition to the shore at Bangor
- Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* published
- 1812** Female Society for clothing the Poor commenced in Belfast
- Francis McCracken's sailcloth factory and rope walk declared bankrupt
- Belfast's Market House is demolished
- 1813** 23 April: Rev. Edward May places an advertisement in the *Belfast News-Letter*, announcing an auction of a portion of High Street's Old Burying Ground
- 7 May: Auction held at the Old Burying Ground
- Summer: Mary Ann goes to the Spa at Ballynahinch to recover from a serious illness

- 19–22 October: Bunting’s Belfast Musical Festival  
 Belfast Harp Society dissolves due to lack of funds
- 1814** March: A small Ladies’ Committee, upon which Mary Ann and Margaret sit, is inaugurated at the Belfast Charitable Society for the welfare of the women and children but is dissolved after two years  
 25 May: Ann McCracken dies  
 7 June: William McCracken dies
- 1815** Bunting sets off on a tour of Europe  
 Francis McCracken’s sailcloth factory and rope walk is declared bankrupt for a second time  
 Mary Ann and Margaret retire from their business
- 1816** The Chapel of Ease (now St George’s Church) opens on the site of the former Corporation Church on High Street
- 1821** 4 January: Edward Bunting visited the McCrackens in Belfast  
 Margaret Russell admitted to The Retreat home at Drumcondra
- 1823** 30 August: Belfast gains gaslight
- 1825** 15 December: John Templeton dies
- 1826** Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick formed
- 1827** 12 March: Elizabeth Fry visits the House of Correction in Belfast  
 13 March: At Fry’s behest, 27 ladies, headed by Mary Ann, meet in the Friends’ Meeting House and agree to form a committee devoted to the women and children of the Poor House  
 27 July: First meeting of the Belfast Charitable Society’s Ladies’ Committee with Isabella Tennent as secretary
- 1829** 13 April: Roman Catholic Relief Act  
 11 December: Margaret McCracken dies
- 1830** Nicholas Crowley paints “Cup-tossing,” for which Mary Ann is said to have sat  
 Belfast Anti-Slavery Society established

- 1832 Mary Ann becomes secretary of the Belfast Charitable Society's Ladies' Committee
- 1834 1 April: John McCracken Junior dies at Greenock, Scotland  
September: Margaret Russell dies
- 1835 15 April: Henry Joy Junior dies
- 1836 Francis McCracken Junior takes over the management of his father's cotton mill
- 1838 28 June: Queen Victoria's coronation  
22 July: Mary Ann and Miss Mary Ann Magee visit Eliza Templeton at her Bangor residence
- 1839 24 January: Eliza Templeton died and is later buried at Bangor
- 1840 Penny post introduced  
Bunting's *The Ancient Music of Ireland* published and dedicated to Queen Victoria
- 1842 24 April: Richard Robert Madden interviews Mary Ann at her Belfast residence<sup>1</sup>  
22 December: Francis McCracken dies  
The first two volumes of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* are published  
The Young Ireland Movement is founded
- 1843 21 December: Bunting dies  
Two volumes of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times, Second Series*, are published. The second volume contains the "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken," a chapter of which is based on his interview with Mary Ann of 24 April 1842
- 1845 7 December: Frederick Douglas delivers a lecture on behalf of the Anti-Slavery Society at Belfast Second Presbyterian Church  
Winter: Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association formed with Mary Ann as a committee member

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5.4.3.

- 1846** Three volumes of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, Third Series, are published
- 1847** 10 February: James Hope dies  
 May: Maria McCracken marries William McCleery  
 The Belfast Ladies' Industrial School is established, of which Mary Ann is President  
 Asenath Nicholson comes to Belfast and meets Mary Ann
- 1848** 13 January: Mary Ann and Maria laid up with influenza
- 1849** 11 August: Queen Victoria visits Belfast for four hours
- 1851** 6 March: Robert Magill Young born in Athlone, Ireland  
 October: Mary Ann pens the last minutes of the Belfast Charitable Society's Ladies' Committee
- 1854** In this year, Mary Ann is President of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association
- 1857** The second edition of the first series of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* is published
- 1858** The second edition of the second series of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* is published
- 1860** The second edition of the third and fourth series of Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* are published
- 1861** 12 April: The American Civil War begins
- 1862** 23 July: Christopher Aitchison marries Mary McCracken McCleery  
 Harland and Wolff shipyard opens
- 1863** 1 January: Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation  
 17 July: Francis Joseph Bigger born
- 1865** 9 May: The American Civil War ends  
 Autumn: Mary Ann suffers an attack of bronchitis  
 December: 13th Amendment ratified signalling an end to slavery in the United States
- 1866** 26 July: Mary Ann dies at 62 Donegall Pass, Belfast aged 96

## Note on Sources

The information in this chronology has been drawn from the following sources in addition to the letters and other materials contained within the thesis:

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- Wright, Jonathan Jeffrey. *The 'Natural Leaders' and Their World*. Liverpool: LUP, 2012.

## 1.5 Genealogy

This pedigree draws most extensively upon the “Genealogy of the Joy and McCracken Families” found, in fold-out form, at the back of Mary McNeill’s 1960 biography *Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: A Belfast Panorama*. The thesis’s author contributed an updated and amended version of this family tree to the 2019 republication of McNeill’s work.<sup>1</sup>

Further details are brought to light through a series of letters which were sent to McNeill following the book’s publication. Other significant sources include, Clifton Street Cemetery’s Registry, Rosemary Street Church Records and the Irish Genealogy and Find A Grave websites.

### Maternal Grandparents

**Grandfather:** Francis Joy (3 August 1697–10 June 1790)

**Grandmother:** Margaret Joy nee Martin (1690–1745)

N.B. Following Margaret Joy’s death, Francis Joy remarried Ann Young nee Morrison (see “Maternal Step Grandmother and her Family”)

### Maternal Uncles and their Families

**Uncle:** Henry Joy (c. 1720–20 January 1789)

Spouse: Barbara Dunbar (1722–c. 1777)

Daughter: Elinor “Ellen” Joy (b. 8 November 1749) m. David Tomb (d. 1799)

Granddaughter: Barbara Tomb m. William Hamilton Drummond on 28 February 1801

Granddaughter: Mary Tomb

Grandson: George Tomb (d. 17 March 1812)

Granddaughter: Isabella Tomb

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<sup>1</sup> See Mary McNeill, *The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: A Belfast Panorama* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2019).

Grandson: Henry Joy Tomb (c. 1790–1840) m. Thomasina Gordon  
on 26 April 1822

Grandchild: Unknown

Grandchild: Unknown

Son: Francis Joy (b. 13 September 1751– died in childhood)

Daughter: Mary Joy (b. 22 November 1755) m. Robert Holmes

Grandson: Robert Holmes

Grandson: Henry Joy Holmes (d. 1835)

Grandson: James Holmes (b. 9 February 1777)

Grandchild: Unknown

Daughter: Ann Joy (b. 14 October 1757)

Son: George Joy (23 February 1760–1811) m. Miss Wallace

Granddaughter: Unknown (d. 1797)

Grandchild: Unknown

Grandchild: Unknown

Son: James Joy (12 June 1763–1812)

Son: Henry Joy (7 January 1766–6 June 1838)<sup>2</sup>

Daughter: Harriet Joy (13 July 1768)

Daughter: Grace “Grizel” Joy (12 January 1772–1832)

**Uncle:** Robert Joy (1722–1785)

Spouse: Grace “Grizzel” Rainey<sup>3</sup> (d. December 1762)

Daughter: Mary Joy (died in infancy)

Son: Henry Joy Junior (16 October 1754–15 April 1835) m. Mary  
Isabella Holmes (14 May 1771–7 October 1832)

Grandson: Robert Joy (12 February 1798–February 1814)

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<sup>2</sup> Counsellor, Attorney General, Chief Baron.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Joy’s second cousin.

Grandson: William Bruce Joy (6 September 1800–28 January 1885)<sup>4</sup>  
m. Arminella Vance (c.1814–28 March 1888) on 20 May 1836  
Great-grandson: Albert Bruce Joy (21 August 1842–22 July 1924)<sup>5</sup>  
Great-grandson: George William Joy (7 July 1844–28 October 1925)<sup>6</sup>  
m. Florence Masterman  
Grandson: Henry Holmes Joy Q.C. (1805–1875) m. Catherine Ann  
Ludlow (b. 1805)  
Great-grandson: Robert Joy (12 August 1838–6 February 1905) m.  
unknown<sup>7</sup>  
Great-great-grandson: William Bruce Rainey Joy (1885–6  
September 1946) m. Josephine (1885–1 December 1947)<sup>8</sup>  
Great-great-great-granddaughter: Cecilia Alix Bruce Joy (14  
October 1916–August 1941)<sup>9</sup>  
Great-grandson: John Holmes Joy (b. 1842) (Joy 92)  
Great-granddaughter: Anne Joy m. Rev. Paul Lyster Jameson  
(1833–12 December 1897) in 1869  
Great-great-granddaughter: Lucy Catharine Anita Lyster Jameson  
(b. 12 May 1878)<sup>10</sup>  
Great-great-grandson: Henry William Paul Lyster Jameson (1875–  
26 February 1922)<sup>11</sup>  
Grandson: Frederick Joy (d. 1853)

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<sup>4</sup> William Bruce lived in London and was a medical doctor.

<sup>5</sup> Sculptor.

<sup>6</sup> Artist.

<sup>7</sup> *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books* (Belfast: Glenravel Local History Project, n.d.), 114.

<sup>8</sup> See *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 119

<sup>9</sup> "Births 1916," Civil Records, Irish Genealogy, accessed 19 June 2019, [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth\\_returns/births\\_1916/01330/1549292.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1916/01330/1549292.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> "Births 1878," Civil Records, Irish Genealogy, accessed 19 June 2019, [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth\\_returns/births\\_1878/02969/2087958.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1878/02969/2087958.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See James B. Leslie, *Armagh clergy and parishes : being an account of the clergy of the Church of Ireland in the Diocese of Armagh, from the earliest period, with historical notices of the several parishes, churches, &c.* (Dundalk: W. Tempest, 1911), 49 and Henry Lyttelton Lyster Denny, *Memorials of an ancient house: a history of the family of Lister or Lyster* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., 1913), 107.

Grandson: John Joy  
Granddaughter: Susan Bruce Joy (7 May 1812–6 June 1832)

Son: Robert Joy (1 September 1758–1771)

Daughter: Ann Joy (17 February 1760– died in infancy)

Son: Francis Joy (1 May 1761–1810) m. Unknown  
Grandson: William

Daughter: Margaret Joy (died in infancy)

### **Paternal Grandparents**

**Grandfather:** John Hugh McCracken<sup>12</sup> (1691–22 August 1730)  
**Grandmother:** Ann McCracken neé Campbell (b. 1690)

### **Paternal Uncles and Aunts**

**Uncle:** James McCracken (3 June 1711–1767)

**Uncle:** Thomas McCracken (19 October 1712–1712)

**Uncle:** Hugh McCracken (25 October 1713–1713)

**Aunt:** Jennet McCracken (b. 1714)

**Aunt:** Isabella McCracken (b. 1718)

**Aunt:** Mary McCracken (b. 1719)

**Uncle:** Robert McCracken (b. 1721)

### **Parents**

**Father:** Captain John McCracken (14 February 1720–20 December 1803)

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<sup>12</sup> A merchant in Lisburn.

Spouse 1: Sarah Potter (27 February 1748–c.1755) m. 27 February 1748

Son: John McCracken (28 October 1750– died in infancy)<sup>13</sup>

**Mother:** Ann McCracken neé Joy (1730–25 May 1814) m. c. 1756/7

## Siblings and their Families

**Brother:** Robert McCracken (24 April 1758– died in infancy)<sup>14</sup>

**Sister:** Margaret McCracken (17 July 1760–11 December 1829)

**Brother:** Francis McCracken (4 June 1762–22 December 1842)

**Brother:** William McCracken (9 December 1765–7 June 1814)

Spouse: Rose Ann McGlathery (1770–12 November 1833) m. 1791<sup>15</sup>

Son: Henry McCracken (died in infancy)

Daughter: Henrietta McCracken (1799–1799)

Son: John William McCracken (22 July 1801–28 October 1878) m. Elizabeth Cairncross<sup>16</sup> (b. 1803) on 30 July 1828

Grandson: Henry Joy McCracken (died in infancy)

Granddaughter: Rose Anne McCracken

Grandson: Francis McCracken (b. 6 November 1833) m. Alice Maud Mc[...]

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<sup>13</sup> See R.M. Cromarty, "McCracken of Ulster Connections," 1975, Correspondence of M.A. McNeill about genealogical enquiries, McNeill Papers, PRONI, D3732/3/11.

<sup>14</sup> Register 'A' Baptisms 1722–1760, Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast Papers, PRONI, T654/1.

<sup>15</sup> Rose Ann McCracken remarried William Cairncross (b. 1785) sometime around 1816. She is buried with her second husband in Clifton Street Cemetery, Platform 16 Grave Number 23. See *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 66.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Cairncross of Dundee was the niece of William Cairncross. Therefore, John married his step-sister. They are buried in plot F 712 at Belfast City Cemetery.

Great-granddaughter: Elizabeth Rose “Bessie” McCracken (d. 8 April 1958) m. David Bleakley<sup>17</sup>

Great-great-grandson: Frank Bleakley m. Angela [...]

Great-great-granddaughter: May Bleakley (died in childhood)

Great-great-granddaughter: Vivienne Bleakley m. Thomas L. Bradley

Great-great-great-grandson: Stephen Bradley

Great-great-great-granddaughter: Louise Elizabeth Bradley

Great-grandson: Henry Joy McCracken (1886–8 March 1950) m. Amy Janette Flack (b. 1891)<sup>18</sup>

Great-great-grandson: Henry “Hal” Joy McCracken (22 November 1921–17 November 2001) m. Dorothy Staples<sup>19</sup>

Great-great-great-granddaughter: Deborah Joy McCracken (b. 21 July 1952) m. Andrew Stevens

Great-great-great-granddaughter: Catherine Ann McCracken (b. 24 June 1961) m. Dan Brown

Great-great-granddaughter: Catherine Joy McCracken m. Roy William Bodell

Great-great-granddaughter: Moira McCracken m. Thomas Morquay

Great-great-great granddaughter (adopted): Sheila McCracken (b. 25 June 1957)

Great-great-great grandson: David McCracken (31 August 1961)

Grandson: John McCracken (1835–1 July 1908)

Granddaughter: Catherine (died in infancy)

Granddaughter: Maria Henrietta McCracken (d. 26 February 1899)<sup>20</sup>

Granddaughter: Elizabeth McCracken (1841–1852)

Granddaughter: Georgina McCracken

Granddaughter: Catherine Kidd McCracken

**Brother:** Henry Joy McCracken (31 August 1767–17 July 1798)

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<sup>17</sup> They lived at 111 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast and are buried at Belfast City Cemetery.

<sup>18</sup> The couple and their young family emigrated to Canada on 15 August 1924.

<sup>19</sup> Second marriage with Blanche Heyes. Henry was aged three at the time the family emigrated to Canada.

<sup>20</sup> Maria Henrietta McCracken died at the Belfast Charitable Institution.

Partner (presumed): Mary Bodell (b. 29 March 1774)<sup>21</sup>

Daughter: Maria McCracken (1794–5 August 1878) m. William McCleery (1804–1 September 1874) in 1847

*Mary Ann McCracken* (8 July 1770–26 July 1866)

**Brother:** John McCracken Junior (26 October 1772–1 April 1834)

Spouse: Elizabeth J. McReynolds (1778–3 July 1825) m. 27 July 1795

Daughter: Ann McCracken (1796–20 June 1833) m. Ninian Hill in 1830

Grandson: Ninian Hill (b. c.1830/1)

Son: John McCracken (d. 12 December 1831)<sup>22</sup>

Son: Henry Joy McCracken (1801–April 1828)<sup>23</sup> m. Eliza Duffin (c. 1801–1827) on 22 August 1826

Granddaughter: Mary Brown McCracken (16 August 1827–9 July 1885) m. Rev. Charles Reichel (20 October 1816–29 March 1894) on 17 September 1851

Great-grandson: Sir Henry Rudolph Reichel (11 October 1856–22 June 1931)

Daughter: Eliza McCracken (14 May 1804–20 May 1850) m. Robert James Tennent (30 April 1803–25 May 1880)<sup>24</sup> on 22 June 1830<sup>25</sup>

Grandchild: Unknown (d. 18 July 1831)<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Alexander Gordon, *Historical Memorials of the First Presbyterian Church of Belfast, Ireland: Prepared in connection with the centennial of its present meeting-house* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co., 1887), 61.

<sup>22</sup> John McCracken died of tuberculosis in Ohio, USA.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Joy died in Dublin.

<sup>24</sup> See “Calendar of Wills and Administrations 1880,” Will Calendars, NAI, accessed 13 October 2016, [http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014895/005014895\\_00372.pdf](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014895/005014895_00372.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> The couple are buried within plots 17 and 18 (grave numbers 51–53) at Clifton Street Cemetery.

<sup>26</sup> “Tennent New Born, Child of Robert J. Tennent,” *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 4.

Grandson: William "Willie" Tennent (d. 8 September 1833–March 1834)<sup>27</sup>

Grandchild: Unknown (d. 29 November 1843)<sup>28</sup>

Grandson: Robert "Bobby" Tennent (24 June 1835–29 January 1917)<sup>29</sup>

Grandson: Unknown (b. 1847)<sup>30</sup>

Granddaughter: Evelyn-Margaret Tennent (1841–1916)<sup>31</sup> m. James Owen of Holestone (3 August 1836–1900) in 1861<sup>32</sup>

Granddaughter: Maria Josephine Tennent<sup>33</sup>

Granddaughter: Anne "Annie" Tennent m. Nicholas de la Cherois of Ballywilliam in 1864

Granddaughter: Elizabeth "Bessy" Tennent (d. 1918)<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "William Tennent, Aged 6 months, Son of Robert James Tennent," *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 8. PRONI also houses "documents about the burial of Tennent's eldest son, Willie, born and died in 1833, with a lock of his hair, ivory teething ring, black sealing wax, etc.; a needlecase made by Bessy Tennent, 1847, and lock of R. J. Tennent's own hair." Correspondence and papers of James Tennent, Tennent Papers, PRONI, D1748/G/809.

<sup>28</sup> "Child of Robert James Tennent," *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> See John and J.A. Venn, ed., *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900. Volume 2: From 1752 to 1900. Part 6: Square-Zupitza* (Cambridge: CUP, 1922), 141 and "Calendar of Wills and Administrations 1917," Will Calendars, NAI, accessed 13 October 2016, [http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014920/005014920\\_00395.pdf](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014920/005014920_00395.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> In 1847, Eliza Tennent's cousin wrote to congratulate her husband on the birth of their second son, as "the Young Ladies were getting into such a Majority." Francis McClean to Robert James Tennent, Correspondence and papers of James Tennent, Tennent Papers, PRONI, D1748/G/366.

<sup>31</sup> Evelyn Margaret Owen died in Naples, Italy.

<sup>32</sup> The couple are buried at Rashee Old Graveyard, County Antrim.

<sup>33</sup> Maria Josephine Tennent was the executor and primary beneficiary of her brother's (Robert Tennent's) will, therefore she was still alive in 1917. See "Calendar of Wills and Administrations 1917," [http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014920/005014920\\_00395.pdf](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014920/005014920_00395.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> See Other Tennent mortgages, Emerson Tennent papers, Papers of L'Estrange & Brett, Belfast Solicitors, PRONI, D971/12/F.

Granddaughter: Letitia Tennent (1840–10 October 1930)<sup>35</sup> m. Henry Harrison (d. 2 December 1873) in 1860, m. Henry Hartley Withers in 1896

Great-granddaughter: Sarah Cecilia Harrison (21 June 1863–23 July 1941)<sup>36</sup>

Great-grandson: Henry Harrison (17 December 1867–20 February 1954)

Son: Francis McCracken (c. 1802–23 August 1863)<sup>37</sup> m. Mary Ann Taggart (c.1803–1867)

Granddaughter: Mary Ann McCracken (b. c.1828)

Granddaughter: Jane “Jennie” McCracken (c.1830–1880)

Grandson: Ninian Hill McCracken (b. c.1832)

Grandson: John Alex McCracken (c.1835–1863)

Granddaughter: Clara Ann Dyce McCracken (1837–1888)<sup>38</sup> m.1

Maxwell Lepper (1826–1869) m.2 Adolphus Kyngdon (1834–1912)<sup>39</sup>

Great-grandson: Charles Maxwell Lepper m. Catherine Armstrong

Great-grandson: Harper Brison Lepper m. Evelyn Cliffe

Great-granddaughter: Ellen Millar Lepper m. Jack Warnock

Great-grandson: George A.F. Kyngdon (died in infancy)

Great-granddaughter: Alice Mary Kyngdon m. Augustus E. Watkins

Grandson: Thomas McCracken (1838–8 January 1914)<sup>40</sup>

Granddaughter: Blanche McCracken (b. 1844)

Grandson: Robert James Tennent McCracken (b. 1846)

Daughter: Margaret McCracken (b. 1808)

Daughter: Jane McCracken (b. c.1810)

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<sup>35</sup> Letitia was baptised on 7 November 1840. See Journals of Eliza Tennent, June 1840–December 1840, Letters to Eliza Tennent, Tennent Papers, PRONI, D1748/H/59.

<sup>36</sup> Artist and first woman to sit on the Dublin City Council.

<sup>37</sup> Francis McCracken Junior’s obituary appeared in *The Northern Whig* of 25 August 1863.

<sup>38</sup> Buried in Auckland, New Zealand.

<sup>39</sup> Cromarty, “McCracken of Ulster Connections,” McNeill Papers, PRONI, D3732/3/11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Son: William McCracken (October 1797–1840)

Daughter: Mary McCracken m. Mr Hull

## Maternal Step Grandmother and her Family

**Step Grandmother:** Ann Morrison

Spouse 1: Mr Young (unknown issue)

Spouse 2: Francis Joy m. 1745

Daughter: Frances Joy (d.1839) m. William Jackson

Granddaughter: Rose Ann Victoria Jackson m. Mr Douglas

Great-Granddaughter: Francis Mary Isabella Douglas (d. 24 March 1844) m. William McCleery (1804 –1 September 1874)<sup>41</sup>

Great-Great-Grandson: James McCleery (b. c.1833)<sup>42</sup>

Great-Great-Granddaughter: Anna McCleery<sup>43</sup> (d. 11 October 1888)

Great-Great-Granddaughter: Mary McCracken McCleery (1833–1916) m. Christopher Aitchison (August 1830–9 July 1902) on 23 July 1862<sup>44</sup>

Great-great-great-grandson: Francis Umpherston Aitchison (25 April 1864–31 March 1881)

Great-great-great-granddaughter: Mary Aitchison (November 1865–4 May 1866)

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<sup>41</sup> William McCleery appears twice. His first wife Francis Mary Isabella Douglas (with whom he is buried in Belfast's Clifton Street Cemetery) died on 24 March 1844 leaving him a widower with four young children. He remarried HJM's daughter, Maria McCracken sometime around May 1847. See Letter 145 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22). His wives were related (half third cousins) as a result of Maria's great grandfather's (Francis McCracken) second marriage.

<sup>42</sup> See Letter 145 (24 O 10/ 22).

<sup>43</sup> "Anna his eldest daughter." Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83).

<sup>44</sup> The ceremony was announced in the *Belfast Newsletter* as follows, "Aitchison and McCleery – July 23, at Rosemary Street Church, by the Rev. John Orr, of Portaferry, uncle of the bride, Christopher Aitchison, to Mary, daughter of William McCleery, of Bankmore House, Belfast. No cards sent." "Marriages," *Belfast Newsletter*, 24 July, 1862, 3. Rev. John Orr was Mary McCracken McCleery's half uncle, owing to the fact that he married her father's half sister. Mary McCracken Aitchison is buried at Old Pentland Cemetery, Loanhead, Scotland, alongside her husband and other family members.

Great-great-great-granddaughter: Elizabeth Douglas Aitchison (3 December 1867–7 November 1897)  
Great-great-great-grandson: William Charles Aitchison (27 March 1869–12 August 1904)  
Great-great-great-granddaughter: Helen Anna Aitchison (1871–19 November 1941) m. Alfred Penry Francis (1860–8 October 1916)  
Great-great-great-granddaughter: Mary Beatrice Aitchison (July 1873–18 August 1873)  
Great-great-great-grandson: Henry Christopher Aitchison (4 December 1875–April 1892)  
Great-great-great-grandson: Hugh James Aitchison (d. 22 November 1944)<sup>45</sup> m. Unknown  
Great-great-great-great-grandson: Hugh Christopher Aitchison  
Great-great-great-great-grandson: Charles Henry Aitchison  
Great-great-great-great-grandson: George Kemp Aitchison m. Audrey Helen Dutton (b. 29 July 1912)  
Great-great-grandson: William (b. August 1843)<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Emigrated to Likatlong, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

<sup>46</sup> See Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

## 1.6 Residences

### 37 High Street (1770–1796)

Between 1758 and 1772, seven children were born to Captain John and Ann McCracken at 37 High Street. Their penultimate child, Mary Ann McCracken, being born on 8 July 1770. They lived at this house with their paternal grandmother, while just next door resided their Uncle Henry Joy, Aunt Barbara Joy and nine cousins. At that time, the River Farset ran open through the centre of High Street, leading out into the docks where Captain McCracken berthed his ship. Mary Ann recalled how, as a young girl, she managed “the feat of hopping three times across High Street without stopping.”<sup>1</sup>

The house was demolished some time during the latter half of the nineteenth century, as Fred Heatley explains:

It stood two doors from McKittrick’s Entry, or Court, now Joy’s Entry, and Dr. Madden[,] in his article on McCracken[,] states that Ogdson’s confectioners at 39 High Street was the original house. Ogdson vacated the premises during the early 1860’s and the Belfast Screw Steamer Coal Co. took possession. The last two decades of the century saw the removal of these old buildings but with the information we have, it is most likely that the site now occupied by St. George’s Hall is where the old McCracken house once stood.<sup>2</sup>

Built in 1881, St George’s Hall housed a cinema between 1908 and 1916 and was, for some years, home to the Ulster Sports Club. It is currently taken up with office and retail spaces. On 27 January 1999, a blue plaque was erected by the Ulster History Circle above Joy’s Entry stating, “Henry Joy McCracken 1767–1798, United Irishman, Born in a house near this site.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, it fails to mention his arguable equally well-know sister, who was also born at this location.

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<sup>1</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 177.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken* (Belfast: Belfast Wolfe Tone Society, 1967), 12–13.

<sup>3</sup> “Henry Joy McCracken,” Ulster History Circle, accessed 4 May 2014, <http://ulsterhistorycircle.org.uk/henry-joy-mccracken/>.

### 30 Rosemary Lane (c. 1796–c. 1814)

Sometime during the 1790s, the McCracken family relocated to 30 Rosemary Lane, “a narrow passage-way between Hercules Street (now Royal Avenue) and North Street,”<sup>4</sup> which had become Rosemary Street by 1808. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date of their move. McCleery vaguely suggests it occurred “when she [Mary Ann] was past her childhood.”<sup>5</sup> Two relevant documents can be found within PRONI; the first is a lease, “from Thomas Stewart and others to John McCracken for a property in Rosemary Lane, formerly in the possession of Rev. William Carmichael” dated 19 September 1791;<sup>6</sup> the second is a deed of conveyance on the house and its plot, signed by Captain McCracken on 2 October 1795.<sup>7</sup> Historian John J. Marshall states that, “the McCracken family removed from High Street in the summer of 1796 to Rosemary Lane, next to Winecellar Entry.”<sup>8</sup> It is possible that Captain McCracken leased the property for some years before the family moved onto the premises. In any case, Letter 15, dated 29 April 1797, is the first within the collection addressed to “Rosemary Lane,” while Letter 83 is the final, dated 26 January 1804. Both the *1806 Belfast Traders Directory* and the *1807 Belfast Directory* list Margaret McCracken and Co. and Francis McCracken as operating their businesses from 30 Rosemary Lane.<sup>9</sup>

The house was affectionately referred to as “Noah’s Ark” owing to the “numerous inmates,” animals included.<sup>10</sup> Conveniently, the lane

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<sup>4</sup> Cathal O’Byrne, *As I Roved Out* (Belfast: The Irish News Ltd., 1946), 190.

<sup>5</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 177.

<sup>6</sup> Modern photocopies of original documents, September 1791, Legal Documents, Records of Rosemary Presbyterian Church, Belfast, PRONI CR3/32/B/1/8.

<sup>7</sup> “Modern photocopy of original Deed of Conveyance, October 1795, Legal Documents, Records of Rosemary Presbyterian Church, Belfast, PRONI CR3/32/B/1/9.

<sup>8</sup> John J. Marshall, “Miscellanea: old Belfast signboards (note by Isaac W. Ward),” *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 12 (1906): 189.

<sup>9</sup> “1806 Belfast Traders Directory,” Street Directories, Lennon Wylie, accessed 7 May 2014, <http://www.lennonwylie.co.uk/1806.htm> and “1807 Belfast / Ulster Street Directory,” Street Directories, Lennon Wylie, accessed 7 May 2014, <http://www.lennonwylie.co.uk/1807.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 177.

was also home to the McCracken's church, the Third Presbyterian subscribing congregation. The house and the church were both destroyed during the Belfast Blitz of April 1941. The latter was replaced by a building housing the headquarters of the County Antrim Freemasons which remains there today.

### **Waring Street (1808)**

In the *1808 Belfast Directory* the sisters' business is listed as "McCracken, Margaret, & Co., muslin manufacturers, 39 Waring Street,"<sup>11</sup> which adjoined their brother Francis's mercantile business at number 38. While, *Holden's Directory for 1809, 1810 and 1811* lists their premises as "McCracken Marg. & Co., muslin-manufacturers, 30 Waring-St."<sup>12</sup> It is unclear whether or not the the siblings were living onsite, however, in turning to McCracken's correspondence we find that Letter 95 (composed by Bunting on 8 March 1809) is addressed to, "Miss Mary McCracken/ Waring Street/ Belfast." Furthermore, Mary Ann's music notebook, found within QUBSC's Bunting Collection, is inscribed, "Nov. 15th 1808. Miss Mary McCracken Waring St., her book, Belfast."<sup>13</sup> McNeill refers to the Waring Street premises as the "sisters' undertaking" rather than their place of residence. She further notes that "probably the move to this important commercial area close to the quays took place in the beginning of the century, and it seems likely that at this stage the sisters launched into production on a factory basis, continuing at the same time to employ weavers who worked in their own homes."<sup>14</sup> The extent of Mary Ann's residency at the address remains unclear.

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<sup>11</sup> *Belfast Directory for 1808* (Belfast: Smyth & Lyons, 1808), 30.

<sup>12</sup> *Holden's Triennial Directory, for 1809, 1810, 1811* (London: J. Davenport, 1811).

<sup>13</sup> Miss Mary McCracken, Manuscript Psalms and Old Airs, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/19.

<sup>14</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 244.

## Donegall Street (c. 1814–1843)

It would seem that sometime after the death of both their mother and brother William in 1814, those family members remaining at Rosemary Lane, packed up and moved to Donegall Street. McNeill states that, “Francis with Margaret, Mary Ann and Maria, moved to No. 79 Donegall Street, close to their brother John,”<sup>15</sup> and notes that this residence was kept “from about 1814 till 1843.”<sup>16</sup>

Although numerous Belfast directories confirm Francis McCracken’s residence during this period as Donegall Street, the house number varies over the years and, at times, within indexes. It is important to note that Francis McCracken Junior (John McCracken Junior’s son) took up residence at 91 Donegall Street when he reached adulthood, working as the manager of Belfast’s York Lane cotton mill. Therefore, uncle and nephew must be distinguished between when consulting these directories. The listings for Francis McCracken Senior (and by extension, Mary Ann) are as follows:

*Bradshaw’s Belfast General & Commercial Directory for 1819:*  
McCracken, Francis, rope & sail manufacturer; house, 79 Donegall Street; warehouse, 7 James’s Street<sup>17</sup>

*Belfast Directory for 1831–1832:* McCracken, Francis, rope and sail maker, James Street; house, 70 Donegall Street<sup>18</sup>

*Matier’s Belfast Directory for 1835–6:* McCracken, Francis, senior, merchant and manufacturer, office and stores, 9, James’-street; residence, 68, Donegall-street<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 245. John McCracken Junior lived at 82 Donegall Street.

<sup>16</sup> Notebook 4, 5 volumes of notes for Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/3.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Bradshaw, *Belfast General & Commercial Directory for 1819* (Belfast: Francis D. Finlay, 1819), 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Belfast Directory for 1831–1832* (Belfast: Robert Donaldson, 1832), 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Matier’s Belfast Directory for 1835–6* (Belfast: Matier, 1835), 104.

Martin's *Belfast Directory 1839*: McCracken, Francis, merchant, rope and canvass manufacturer, 9 James's-street, resident, 78 Donegall-street<sup>20</sup>

Martin's *Belfast Directory 1841–42*: 80 Donegall Street, Francis M'Cracken<sup>21</sup>

Martin's *Belfast Directory 1841–42*: McCracken, Francis, & Co. rope and canvass manufacturers, 9 James' street; F. McCracken's residence, 78 Donegall street<sup>22</sup>

Martin's *Belfast Directory 1842–43*: 80 Donegall Street, Francis M'Cracken<sup>23</sup>

Martin's *Belfast Directory 1842–43*: McCracken, Francis, & Co. rope and canvass manufacturers, 9 James' street; F. McCracken's residence, 78 Donegall street<sup>24</sup>

Two of McCracken's remaining epistles were written from this address; Letter 131, dated 6 and 7 January 1843 and Letter 132, dated 1 April 1843. During her time at Donegall Street, Mary Ann lost two of her siblings; Margaret on 11 December 1829, followed by Francis on 22 December 1842. In 1859, Mary Ann reflected that 'at the time of my dear brother Frank's death we were much embarrassed by the house we were living in'.<sup>25</sup> Although keen to move, the "avaricious & ill-tempered"<sup>26</sup> landlord refused to settle Francis' lease (of which eight years remained), for less than £200; the equivalent of £12000 today. Fortunately, friends and businessmen of the town rallied around to raise the required sum, as, in Mary Ann's own words, "a testimonial

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<sup>20</sup> *Martin's Belfast Directory for 1839* (Belfast: Martin, 1839), 105.

<sup>21</sup> *Martin's Belfast Directory for 1841–2* (Belfast: Martin, 1841), 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>23</sup> *Martin's Belfast Directory for 1842–3* (Belfast: Martin, 1842), 27.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>25</sup> TCD, Madden MSS 873/82, Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 22 February 1859.

<sup>26</sup> TCD, Madden MSS 873/79, Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 23 June 1859.

to my brother's memory, bestowing it in the most delicate of manner so as not to hurt our feelings."<sup>27</sup> The official surrender of the lease can be found within the Belfast Charitable Society's Mary Ann McCracken Collection.

### **7 Queen Street (1843–1847)**

Once free of the Donegall Street property, Mary Ann was quick to find alternative accommodation for her and Maria. In Letter 132, dated 1 April 1843, she informs Madden, "We are to leave Donegall St & expect to be fixed in our new habitation N<sup>o</sup>7 Queen St, before the end of the present month."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, *Henderson's New Belfast And Northern Repository For 1843–1844*, lists, "M'Cracken, Miss, 7 Queen-street,"<sup>29</sup> where aunt and niece were to live together for the next four years. Six of McCracken's remaining letters were written from this address.

This house was demolished and replaced some time around 1900 with a red brick, three story structure, which is currently in use as a retail unit.

### **Hollywood (c. July 1847 – November 1847)**

Maria married the widower William McCleery in May 1847, instigating another move; albeit a temporary one. In Letter 145, addressed from Hollywood and dated 14 July 1847, McCracken explains to Madden, "we are come to Hollywood for a few months."<sup>30</sup> The newly weds, along with McCleery's four children and Mary Ann resided there until November 1847, as outlined in a letter from the children's half second cousin Jane Ellen Orr of Portaferry, to her brother John Malcolm Orr, in Chicago, "We had Anna and Mary McCleery down with us for three weeks last month, they liked being

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<sup>27</sup> TCD, Madden MSS 873/82, Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 22 February 1859.

<sup>28</sup> See Letter 132 (TCD MS873/666).

<sup>29</sup> *Henderson's New Belfast And Northern Repository For 1843–1844* (Belfast: J. Henderson, 1843), 340.

<sup>30</sup> See Letter 145 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)).

here very much indeed. They are all living in Hollywood at present, and they intend remaining there until November, when they get settled in B'fast again."<sup>31</sup>

## **28 Castle Street (1847–1853)**

Letter 146, dated 27 September 1849, places the family at 28 Castle Street, which had presumably been their place of residence since November 1847. Further evidence of the family's occupancy at this time can be found in Henderson's *Belfast Directory And Northern Repository 1850*, which lists, "28 Castle Street: William M'Cleery."<sup>32</sup>

A total of ten letters are addressed from this house, the final being Letter 155, dated 26 November 1851. However, the listing "McCleery, Wm., rent agent and accountant, 28 Castle Street and 2 Queen st." appears in both the *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1852*<sup>33</sup> and *1854–55*;<sup>34</sup> the latter overlapping with the earliest letter written in the family's next residence.<sup>35</sup>

## **Bankmore (1853–1862)**

McCracken's remaining letters, dating between 27 February 1853 and 23 February 1861, are all addressed from "Bankmore." Accordingly, the reports of the Committee for the Belfast Ladies' Industrial

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<sup>31</sup> Jane Ellen Orr [Portaferry] to John Malcolm Orr [Chicago], 30 August 1847, Private Collection of John Orr McCleery. Also at "J. E. Orr & M. Orr, Portaferry, Co. Down to John M. Orr, USA," Irish Emigration Database, Documenting Ireland: Parliament, People and Migration, accessed 4 October 2013, <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/ied/records/26184>.

<sup>32</sup> *Henderson's Belfast Directory And Northern Repository* (Belfast: J. Henderson, 1850), 81.

<sup>33</sup> *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1852* (Belfast: James Alexander Henderson, 1852), 314.

<sup>34</sup> *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1854–55* (Belfast: James Alexander Henderson, 1855), 314.

<sup>35</sup> It is possible that William McCleery continued to work out of 28 Castle Street after the family had removed to Bankmore.

National School for Girls for 1855–1862 consistently list Bankmore as her place of residence.

Historian Jonathan Bardon notes that “Bankmore House, now the site of Bankmore Street, was in the country, outside the borough boundary.”<sup>36</sup> However, McNeill states that by the 1850s “the McCleery’s house with its garden and orchard was almost submerged by the tall warehouses spreading out behind the White Linenhall.”<sup>37</sup> The following letter from Charles H. Brett to fellow historian George Benn, sheds some light on the connection between the McCleery family and the house:

7th October 1874

Mr John Ward to whom I mentioned that I was about to write to you, asks me to say that the name of Bankmore by which their manufactory is known was he believed derived in the following way: The builder of the house was a Mr McCleery who came from the neighbourhood of Portaferry to work as an engineer and surveyor for the Lagan Navigation Company and Belfast Water Commissioners, or probably the Charitable Society. His grand-daughter is living in the town, and she believes that the name, Bankmore, was taken from the name of his native place at or near Portaferry.<sup>38</sup>

The “engineer and surveyor for the Lagan Navigation Company and Belfast Water Commissioners” was undoubtedly William McCleery’s father, James McCleery, whose role on the Water Pipe Committee is outlined throughout Strain’s *Belfast and its Charitable Society*. He is buried, alongside his son, within Lot 59 at Clifton Street Cemetery, the registry for which records the following details, “James McCleery – aged 77, civil engineer, Lockview, Stranmillis, of Portaferry, born c.

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<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Bardon, *Belfast: An Illustrated History* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press Ltd., 1982), 76.

<sup>37</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 307.

<sup>38</sup> “Charles H. Brett [Belfast] to George Benn [Glenravel, Ballymena], 7th October 1874,” Correspondence relating to various subjects including history and hospitals, Benn Papers, PRONI D3113/7/8.

1775, died 17th Jan 1852.”<sup>39</sup> Portaferry was inhabited by many McCleerys during the nineteenth century and James presumably named the house after Bankmore Hill, Tullyboard, Portaferry in the parish of Ballyphilip.<sup>40</sup> In his own will, William McCleery states that, “under the will of my late father, my brother James McCleery – now or lately residing at Louisville Kentucky in the united states of America became entitled to one half of the landed property known as the said Bankmore property and it was recommended by my legal adviser that the fee of said property should be taken out in my individual name.”<sup>41</sup> This would suggest that shortly after James McCleery senior’s death, William McCleery moved his family into the property. The granddaughter to whom Brett was indebted, was presumably Anna McCleery as her sister, Mary McCracken Aitchison née McCleery, had married and moved to Edinburgh by 1874 and the letter states that the informant was living in Belfast at the time.<sup>42</sup>

Belfast Directories for 1863, 1865 and 1870, list Bankmore House as “Bankmore Penitentiary,” founded “for the reception of fallen and penitent females. This establishment is under the care of the Sisters of Mercy, and is supported by charitable contributions and the work of the penitents, who are engaged at sewing, washing, &c.”<sup>43</sup> In its capacity as a penitentiary, Bankmore House was attacked on 12 August 1864 by “an Orange mob.”<sup>44</sup>

By 1874, the publishing firm, Marcus Ward & Co., had taken over Bankmore House, as can be discerned from Brett’s previously cited letter. Indeed, *The Belfast And Province Of Ulster Directory 1877*, lists

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<sup>39</sup> *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 61.

<sup>40</sup> Ian Maxwell, *Researching Down Ancestors: A Practical Guide for the Family and Local Historian* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2000), 292.

<sup>41</sup> See section 5.12.

<sup>42</sup> Further evidence of James McCleery’s position within the family can be found on the reverse of his miniature where an attached piece of paper states, “James McCleery/ 1776–1852/ Grandfather to M.McC.Cl. [Mary McCracken McCleery].” See Fig. 5.7.

<sup>43</sup> *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory 1863–64* (Belfast: James Alexander Henderson, 1863), 535 and *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1865–66* (Belfast: News-Letter, 1865), 577.

<sup>44</sup> Jack Magee, *Barney: Bernard Hughes of Belfast, 1808–1878: Master Baker, Liberal and Reformer* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2001), 118.

“Ward, Marcus & Co., Royal Ulster Works, Bankmore, Dublin road.”<sup>45</sup> The company’s Royal Ulster Works building was established in 1870 and from a postcard depiction of the building, it would appear that it was attached to Bankmore House.<sup>46</sup> The Sisters of Mercy must have sold the house to Marcus Ward & Co., sometime between 1873 and 1874. Bankmore is listed in the directories alongside the Royal Ulster Works until 1887. However, by 1890, Bankmore had dropped off the listing, possibly signalling that the house had been demolished.

## **80 Pakenham Place (1862–1865)**

*The Sixteenth Report of the Committee for 1862–63 of the Belfast Ladies’ Industrial National School for Girls* records “Miss M’Cracken, Pakenham Place,” as “President” and “Miss M’Cleery, Pakenham Place,” as one of its “secretaries,”<sup>47</sup> while the seventeenth and eighteenth reports echo this information.

## **62 Donegall Pass, Apsley Place (c. late 1865–8 July 1866)**

However, *The Sixteenth Report of the Committee for 1865–66*, sees a change in their circumstances. Whereas Miss McCracken is listed as “President,” residing at “Pakenham Place,” Maria’s place of residence is given as “Donegal Pass.”<sup>48</sup> Subsequently, the contributions section of the report states, “Donegal Pass (Apsley Place): Miss M’Cracken.”<sup>49</sup> This would suggest that at some point between 1865 and 1866 Mary Ann and the McCleery family moved to Donegall Pass of Apsley Place. In consulting *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1865*

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<sup>45</sup> *The Belfast And Province Of Ulster Directory 1877* (Belfast: News-Letter, 1877), 514.

<sup>46</sup> See “Marcus Ward & Co,” *The Scrap Album*, accessed 8 May 2014, <http://www.scrapalbum.com/xmasp6.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> *The Sixteenth Report of the Committee for 1862–63 of the Belfast Ladies’ Industrial National School for Girls* (Belfast: Mayne, 1863), 2.

<sup>48</sup> *The Nineteenth Report of the Committee for 1865–66 of the Belfast Ladies’ Industrial National School for Girls* (Belfast: Mayne, 1866), 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. MAM’s contribution being 2s 6d.

we see that “Mrs Ellen Malcolmson” then resided at “Apsley Place, Donegall Pass 62.”<sup>50</sup> Yet, the directory for 1868 lists “McCleary [sic], William”<sup>51</sup> as inhabitant, confirming that the move took place in either late 1865 or early 1866. This would suggest that McCracken had resided at 62 Donegall Pass for less than a year when she died on 8 July 1866. Her last will and testament situates her as, “late of Donegall Pass, Belfast, IRL, the County of Antrim,”<sup>52</sup> where the McCleary family remained for at least a further two years.<sup>53</sup>

The house at 62 Donegall Pass still stands and on 27 January 1999, the Ulster History Circle unveiled a blue plaque at this location, reading, “Mary Ann McCracken, 1770–1866, Social Reformer, Lived here.” As outlined above however, she did so for less than a year.<sup>54</sup>

Evidently, Mary Ann wielded little control over these various house moves owing to her spinster status. Up until 1843, relocation appears to have been decided upon by the head of the household, or occurred as a result of their death. McCracken did spend four years presiding over the property at 7 Queen Street, however, Maria’s marriage to William McCleary in 1847 quickly relieved her of this position. Maria’s decision “to take such a step” so “late in life” appears to have been a strategic one which Mary Ann deemed “judicious” as “she had no near female relative but myself, & the law did not acknowledge her as having any, which she felt bitterly.”<sup>55</sup> The ensuing five moves were therefore instigated by William McCleary. It is unclear, however, why the family left the comfort of Bankmore

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<sup>50</sup> *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1865–66*, 49.

<sup>51</sup> “The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1868” Street Directories, Lennon Wylie, accessed 7 May 2014, <https://www.lennonwylie.co.uk/alphaname1868mc.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> See section 5.7.

<sup>53</sup> By 1870 the McCleary family had moved from this address to 70 Donegall Pass. See *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1870* (Belfast: News-Letter, 1868), 261. At the time of his death on 1 of September 1874, William McCleary’s will states that he was living at 55 University Street.

<sup>54</sup> Guy Beiner raises the point that the plaque fails to mention her connection to the United Irishmen. However, there are also countless other epithets which could have competed for inclusion. It is possible that the plaque’s placement on a late residence may have influenced the description. See Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 580.

<sup>55</sup> Letter 145.

House after nine years. A possible clue can be found in Mary Ann's remarks on McCleery's physical and mental health, the state of which appears to have hampered his ability to work and support the family.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Letters 166 and 176.

## 2. “What you see is none of mine”: Mary Ann McCracken in Memory

### 2.1 Images

#### 2.1.1 “Wept by her brother’s scaffold”

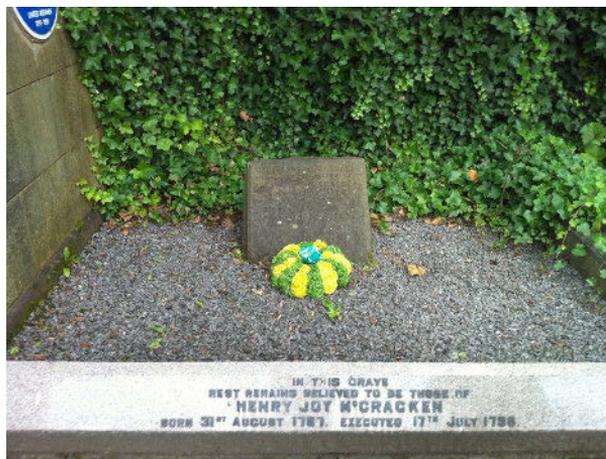


Fig. 2.1. Grave Number 35

At first glance, the grave recorded in the Clifton Street Cemetery’s Registry of Interments as “Wall, Old Part, Grave Number 35”<sup>1</sup> seems to contain but one body - that of Henry. The black capitalised letters against the grave’s pale marble surround declare: “In this grave rest remains believed to be those of HENRY JOY McCRACKEN. Born 31st August 1767. Executed 17th July 1798.”<sup>2</sup> Yet upon closer inspection of the small Mountcharles headstone we find that Mary Ann is also buried in this grave.

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<sup>1</sup> *Clifton Street Cemetery: The Registry Books*, 90.

<sup>2</sup> This enclosure was erected on 15 July 1963 and was paid for by the ‘98 Commemoration Association and by the committee of the Belfast Charitable Society. See Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*, 47.



**Fig. 2.2. Grave Number 35 (detail)**

Her headstone reads, “Mary Ann McCracken. The beloved sister of Henry Joy McCracken. Born 8 July 1770. Wept by her brother’s scaffold 17 July 1798. Died 26 July 1866.” What is striking about this inscription is the lack of information about Mary Ann herself, and the abundance of information about her brother. She is described as his “beloved sister,” and as having “wept by her brother’s scaffold.” Furthermore, three dates are inscribed on her headstone; her birth and death (which are to be expected) and the date of Henry’s death. On her very own headstone then, Mary Ann McCracken’s memory appears to be overshadowed by that of her brother’s, whose remains are “believed” to rest within this grave, despite the fact that she outlived him by almost seventy years.

Henry Joy McCracken was originally laid to rest within the McCracken family plot in the Corporation Church’s burial ground on High Street which ran parallel with Castle Lane. However, in an interview with Madden, Mary Ann explained how:

A most daring outrage, several years after my brother's interment, was committed on the feelings of the inhabitants by the Rev. Edward May. This churchyard, where the departed friends of the principal inhabitants of the town were interred, the rev. gentleman took it into his head to convert to other uses. The graves were levelled, the ashes of the dead were scandalously disturbed, and the tombstones torn up. The sacrilege, however, excited such painful and indignant feelings, that the shameful proceedings were stopped, and it was then proposed to plant the levelled yard with trees, and this in some measure tranquillized the public feeling for a time. Mr. May, however, contrived to get a bill hurried through

Parliament, which gave a power to certain parties to dispose of part of the ground. This was done, and large yards were thus given to several of the houses in Church-lane; and the burying-ground of my family, where my poor brother's remains now lie, thus disposed of, is now built over.<sup>3</sup>

The burial ground had been closed by an Act of Parliament on 1 August 1800.<sup>4</sup> When approval was given to set up a Chapel of Ease in place of the Corporation Church, a committee was appointed to oversee the proceedings. On 22 April 1813, a committee meeting was held, chaired by the Rev. Edward May, where it was agreed, "to arrange to sell as much as they could of the ground of the old churchyard, including the graves, for building purposes, reserving only a space sufficient to hold the church."<sup>5</sup> Strips of the ground were sold to the tenement holders of Church Lane and Forest Lane to "extend their back premises."<sup>6</sup> What was paid for the land and what became of the money paid for it, was not documented by the committee.

In 1902 work was being carried out on some of the premises on Church Lane when several coffins and bones were unearthed. Antiquarian and local historian, Francis Joseph Bigger recorded that, "during building operations, the grave believed to be that of Henry Joy MacCracken was exposed."<sup>7</sup> It may have been Madden's interview with Mary Ann, recorded within *United Irishmen*, that provided Bigger with the specifics of the grave's location, as it states, "he [Henry Joy McCracken] was buried in the old churchyard where

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, Second Series, vol. 2 (London: J. Madden & Co., 1843), 495–6. Also see section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>4</sup> "An Act for Paving, cleansing, and lighting, and improving the several streets, Squares, Lanes, and Passages within the Town of Belfast &c. 1800," in *Statutes Passed in the Parliaments Held in Ireland*. Vol. 12 (Dublin: George Grierson, 1801), 63–101.

<sup>5</sup> William Cassidy and H. C. Lawlor, "The Chapel of the Ford, Belfast," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 8 (1945): 58.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Joseph Bigger, "Memorials of the Patriot Dead," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 15 (Belfast: Davidson & McCormack, North Gate Works, 1909), 94.

St. George's church now stands, and close to the corner of the school-house, where the door is."<sup>8</sup>

Robert May, "a wood-carver by trade and an antiquary by choice,"<sup>9</sup> recovered the bones and brought them to Bigger's home, Ard Righ, on the Antrim Road, before reinterring them in Grave Number 35. In 1909, further remains were:

placed in a suitable strong oak coffer, and buried beside the monument. A hermetically sealed phial was placed in the coffer, with the following inscription written on the parchment:- 'These bones were dug up in the old graveyard in High Street in 1902, and from several circumstances are believed to be those of Henry Joy McCracken. They were reverently treated and placed here by Robert May, of Belfast, 12 May, 1909, when the monument was placed to the memory of his beloved sister.'<sup>10</sup>

This explains the excessive information on the headstone relating to Henry, as it was erected and inscribed by Bigger and May at the time of the reinterment.

Whether these bones were in fact Henry Joy McCracken's remains unknown. Indeed, as early as 1906, doubts were raised in *The Belfast Evening Telegraph*. BELFASTIENSIS (the pen name of Issac W. Ward, a prominent Belfast astronomer), responding to an article by The Chiel, wrote, "we fear the identity of the coffin would be very difficult to establish."<sup>11</sup> The following month The Chiel concurred, "although he may have been some relation of the hero of '98, I am assured the person buried there cannot possibly be the great man of that name."<sup>12</sup> An unmarked coffin (if indeed the bones were recovered from a coffin), and the fact that Henry was buried in the McCracken family

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<sup>8</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 495. The school-house was a Latin school founded by the Earl of Donegall in 1666 and as such, was Belfast's earliest recorded school. The school-house building appears on Thomas Phillips' Map of 1685 (British Library, Maps K. TOP. 51. 37), as being located on the corner of Ann Street and School House Lane (later known as Church Lane).

<sup>9</sup> Edna Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1936), 156.

<sup>10</sup> Bigger, "Memorials of the Patriot Dead," 94.

<sup>11</sup> BELFASTIENSIS, "The Silent Land," *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 12 October 1906.

<sup>12</sup> The Chiel, "The Silent Land IV: Clifton Street Burying Ground," *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 6 November 1906.

plot, raise the possibility that the remains may have been those of another family member or of another person entirely. Yet the use of the word 'believed' on the grave's surround implies a more positive (perhaps hopeful) affirmation, in spite of the uncertainty.

From examining the Clifton Street Cemetery Register, I have discovered that several other bodies are interred in this grave. The first recorded burial at lot 35 was in 1842, four decades after Henry Joy McCracken's death and two decades before Mary Ann McCracken's. It was that of their elder brother Francis, who was much respected in the town. The next was eleven year old Elizabeth McCracken in 1852, a daughter of Mary Ann's nephew John McCracken (her brother William's son).<sup>13</sup> The grave was last opened in 1914 for the interment of Thomas McCracken, the son of Francis McCracken Junior.<sup>14</sup>

However, an entry in the Poor House Burial Ground Register reveals that John McCracken bought lot 35 for nine pounds and two shillings on 19 November 1801.<sup>15</sup> Despite having been open since 1797, Clifton Street Cemetery only began recording the burials from January 1831 onwards. Those McCrackens who died between 19 November 1801 and January 1831 and whose final resting places I have been unable to locate, presumably lie here. These include, Captain John McCracken who died on 20 December 1803, Ann McCracken who died on 25 May 1814, William McCracken who died on 7 June 1814 and Margaret McCracken who died on 11 December 1829. Two of William's children who died in infancy, Henry and Henrietta may also be buried here. So not only is Mary Ann's memory overshadowed by her brother Henry's, so too are the memories of these other McCracken family members.

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth McCracken (c. 1841–26 May 1852).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas McCracken (1838–8 January 1914). See Cromarty, "McCracken of Ulster Connections," McNeill Papers, PRONI, D3732/3/11.

<sup>15</sup> Poor House Burial Ground Register, Clifton House Archives, MS6/2016/001/0002.



**Fig. 2.3. The siblings' embrace sketch**

The above sketch, by an unknown artist, depicts the siblings' final moments together before Henry Joy McCracken ascends the scaffold's ladder which looms ominously behind them.<sup>16</sup> Mary Ann is seen to be in great distress; she clings to her brother, her head pressed against his shoulder and she appears to be leaning against him. By contrast, Henry stands tall and upright, supporting his sister's weight and comforting her. Mary Ann's bonnet lies discarded at her feet, indicated her heightened emotion, whereas Henry exudes respectability, clad in his iconic green coat and neatly fastened neck tie.<sup>17</sup> Henry Joy McCracken may be the one about to climb the gallows steps, but he remains strong and gallant to the end.

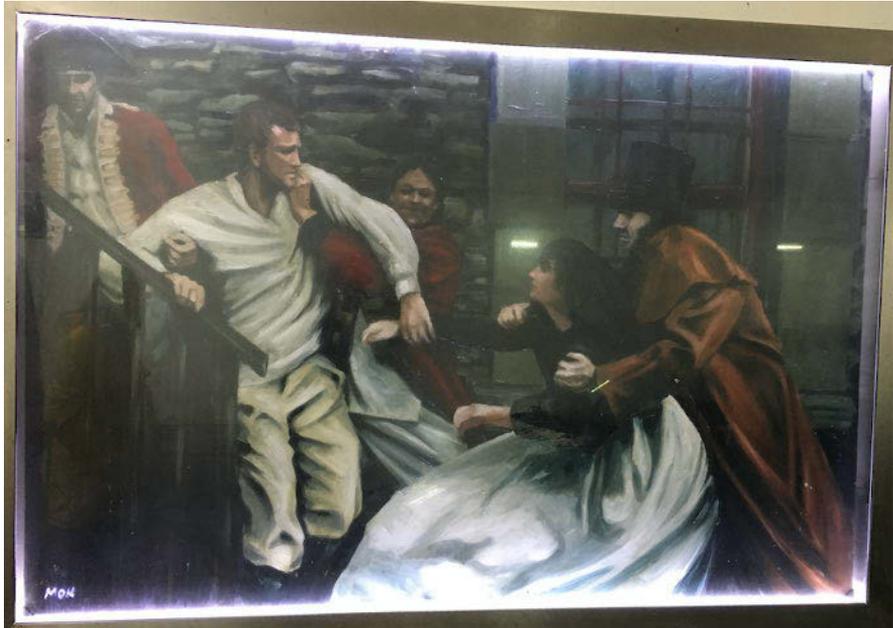
This sketch reiterates the headstone inscription "Wept by her brother's scaffold." Indeed, Mary Ann does confess to crying at the

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<sup>16</sup> Joe Graham, "Out and About," accessed 29 November 2013, <http://outandabout.rushlightmagazine.com/Mallusk.html>. The thesis's author has been unable to find an original source for this image, nor was Joe Graham able to provide a source following a private email correspondence.

<sup>17</sup> See W.A. Maguire, ed., *Up in arms: the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland : a bicentenary exhibition: record of an exhibition at the Ulster Museum, Belfast 3 April–31 August 1998* (Belfast: Ulster Museum, 1998), 241.

scene during her interview with Madden, “I took his arm and we walked together to the place of execution, where I was told it was the General’s orders that I should leave him, which I peremptorily refused. Harry begged I would go. Clasp[ing] my hands around him, (I did not weep till then) I said I could bear anything but to leave him. Three times he kissed me and entreated I would go.”<sup>18</sup> However, what is striking in this narrative is Mary Ann’s strength. She takes her brother’s arm, they walk “together” as equals and she strongly refuses to obey the General’s order to leave her brother.



**Fig. 2.4. “Henry Joy McCracken leaves his sister Mary Ann on the way to the gallows” by Michael O’Neill**

The above artwork, entitled “Henry Joy McCracken leaves his sister Mary Ann on the way to the gallows,” forms part of a series of paintings on permanent display in Belfast’s Warehouse Lane. Created by artist Michael O’Neill, these “Belfast Scenes” were unveiled by the Social Development Minister, Margaret Ritchie in 2008 as part of the regeneration of the Cathedral Quarter. Here both siblings appear in great distress, while it is Henry who clings to his sister’s wrist as they are physically separated from one another. The gentleman gripping

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<sup>18</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 493–94.

Mary Ann McCracken's arms can be identified as "Mr Boyd" by resuming her interview account, "and, looking round to recognise some friend to put me in charge of, he [Henry Joy McCracken] beckoned to a Mr. Boyd, and said, 'He will take charge of you' and fearing any further refusal would disturb the last moments of my dear brother, I suffered myself to be led away."<sup>19</sup> The interview during which this information was gathered occurred in 1842, however, in a letter from Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Russell, written the day after Henry Joy McCracken's execution, a more chaotic scene unfolds. Mary Ann relates that, "I was forcibly torn from him as they said by the Gen<sup>l</sup>'s orders & should have made more vigorous resistance, but Harry requested me to go & I feared disturbing his mind in his last moments by such an unequal contest."<sup>20</sup> In a draft of this letter she further regrets that, "I should not have been so easily hauled from him."<sup>21</sup> The physical violence conveyed in her words, "forcibly torn" and "hauled," are replaced in the interview account with the guiding hands of her brother's acquaintance, Mr Boyd.

The letter seems to suggest that it was the Crown forces who tore her from her brother, as she comments, "they said by the Gen<sup>l</sup>'s orders," with the emphasis on "they." Initially then, Mary Ann McCracken seems to have put up a fight and obviously would have continued to do so but for fear of upsetting her brother. Doubtless, this letter was composed in a grief stricken state of shock and anger, while the interview account was given in hindsight after many years of reflection. Nevertheless, both accounts attest to Mary Ann's strength through her resistance, which is only overcome by brute force and a reluctant compliance with her brother's final wishes.

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<sup>19</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 494.

<sup>20</sup> Letter 48 (NRA 620/16/3/8).

<sup>21</sup> See section 5.1.1.

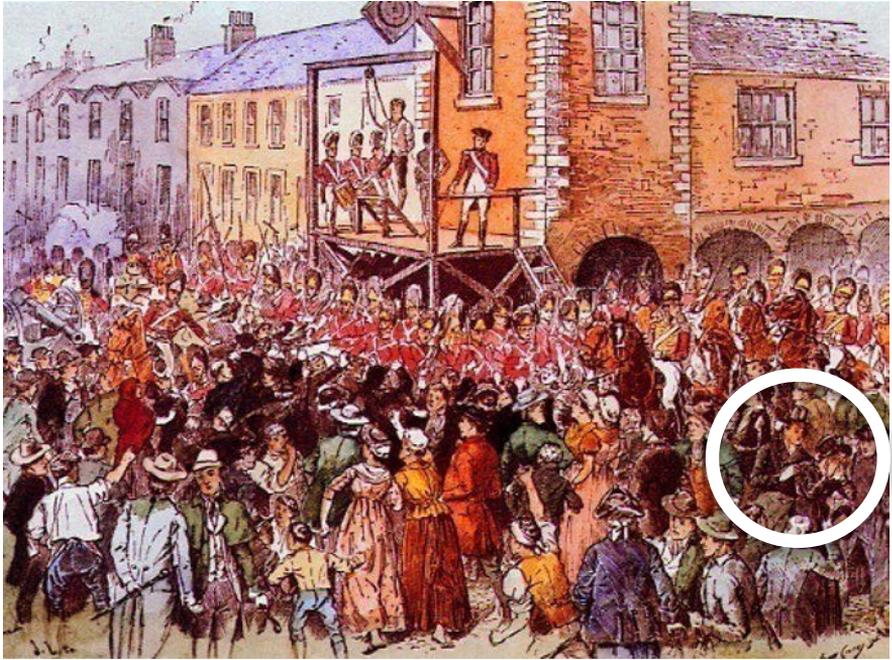


Fig. 2.5. "The Hanging of Henry Joy McCracken," by John Carey

The above illustration is a plate from Young's *Historical Notes of Old Belfast and its Vicinity*, entitled "The Hanging of Henry Joy McCracken," by John Carey.<sup>22</sup> Displayed as Item 248 during the Ulster Museum's 1798 bi-centenary exhibition, *Up in Arms*, it was described thus in the accompanying catalogue:

Carey's imagined scene of the execution of McCracken on the gallows erected outside the old Market House in Belfast, though clearly inaccurate so far as the costume of some of the spectators is concerned, gives some idea of how the place might have looked. The heads of some of the rebels executed earlier were displayed above the market House, as the Rev. James Porter's young son vividly remembered.<sup>23</sup>

Between October 2009 and late 2014, an enlarged copy of this image covered an entire wall panel within the Ulster Museum's 'Plantation

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<sup>22</sup> John Carey, "The Hanging of Henry Joy McCracken," in *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*, ed. Robert Magill Young (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co., Limited, 1896), 185.

<sup>23</sup> W.A. Maguire, ed., *Up in arms*, 250.

to Power-Sharing' gallery.<sup>24</sup> This image depicts the moment following on from the scaffold-side scene and draws upon Mary Ann McCracken's interview comment, "I suffered myself to be led away." It acts as something of a dark 'Where's Wally?' in the viewer's search for the ill-fated man's sister amongst the crowd. What distinguishes Mary Ann McCracken and therefore helps the viewer to locate her (in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture), is that she appears to be the only person visibly upset by the scene. Her hands cover her face and she is stooped over as if sobbing or overcome with emotion. She also appears to be walking away, whereas the other bystanders are turned towards the scaffold or are engaged in conversation with one another. Mr Boyd follows behind, resting his hands on her shoulders. This gesture could be read as an attempt to comfort her, yet his stance also suggests that he is keeping her steady whilst shepherding her away through the crowd.<sup>25</sup>

In each of these artworks, Mary Ann McCracken is seen to be comforted or assisted by a male figure. Viewers are unaware of her defiance of the General's orders or her willingness to bear witness to her brother's execution. These images act as "freeze-frames" (in Bruno Latour's terminology) of Mary Ann and Henry Joy McCracken, and of the Belfast of 1798 more generally. Latour cautions that if "you isolate one inscription, if you extract one image, if you freeze-frame the continuous path of transformations, then the quality of the reference immediately deteriorates."<sup>26</sup> The freeze-framed nature of these images creates the same false closure as the 1909 headstone inscription; Henry Joy McCracken is hung while his sister leaves resigned and heartbroken to spend the rest of her days in mourning for her beloved brother. By contrast, Mary Ann McCracken's recollections (as reported by Madden) situate the moment within a larger flow involving both hope and despair:

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<sup>24</sup> This was replaced by the 'Modern History' gallery in December 2014.

<sup>25</sup> In his Preface, Young states that, "all the full-page and other illustrations were drawn from suggestions and information supplied by the Editor," i.e. Young himself. Young, *Old Belfast*, viii. This would suggest that Young strongly influenced the content of Carey's drawing and that it represents his own understanding of the event.

<sup>26</sup> Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 114.

From the moment I parted with Harry, the idea which had occurred to me in the morning that it might be possible to restore animation, took full possession of my mind, and that hope buoyed up my strength, and supported me at the moment of parting with him. Every effort that art could devise was made, and at one time hopes of success were entertained, but the favourable symptoms disappeared, and the attempt was at length given up. I was present when the medical men entered the room where the body was laid, and then retired and joined the rest of the family, awaiting the result with indescribable anxiety. My heart sank within me when we were told all hope was over, and that a message had been brought from the General that the funeral must take place immediately, or that the body would be taken from us.<sup>27</sup>

Visual and textual versions of the “scaffold scene” act to preserve Mary Ann at the age of twenty-eight and to confine her to a passive, familial role. Any consideration of her life as a whole must recognise and contend with the power of this trope, offering a corrective where necessary.

### 2.1.2 The Faces of Mary Ann McCracken



**Fig. 2.6. Mary Ann McCracken and Maria miniature**

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<sup>27</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 494–5.

Three verifiable nineteenth-century portraits of Mary Ann McCracken remain. The above image is a digitised negative of a miniature painted by an unknown artist.<sup>28</sup> This is the earliest extant portrait of Mary Ann McCracken and the only known image of her niece Maria. It features within McNeill’s 1960 biography, alongside the following description, “Mary Ann McCracken and her niece Maria (probably about 1801) Miniature in the possession of Mr. H.C. Aitchison.”<sup>29</sup> If the dating of the miniature is accurate, Mary Ann would have been in her thirtieth or thirty-first year when she sat for this portrait and her niece Maria would have been approximately seven years old. The image is surprisingly casual - Maria stands close to her aunt with an arm placed affectionately around her shoulder, while her other arm reaches down towards a dog in the bottom left-hand corner. Both wear square necked dresses and Mary Ann wears her hair in Regency curls around her forehead (a style she would evidently maintain throughout her life).



**Fig. 2.7. Oil Painting of Mary Ann McCracken by W. Thompson**

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<sup>28</sup> “Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18144>.

<sup>29</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 112. The image also features upon the covers of the 1988 and 1997 editions, published by The Black Staff Press. For further details on this miniature and those other McCracken miniatures within Hugh Christopher Aitchison’s possession see section 5.8.1.

A second image of Mary Ann McCracken (above) is reproduced within the pages of Young's *Old Belfast*, the accompanying text of which reads, "Portrait of Mary Ann McCracken. (From an Oil Painting by W. Thompson, in possession of C. Aitchison, J.P.)."<sup>30</sup> The artist may have been the Belfast naturalist, William Thompson (1805–1852), as he was known to be "very interested in art. In 1843 he was President of the Belfast Society for the Promotion of Fine arts, a body that organized some quite ambitious exhibitions."<sup>31</sup> Although there is no evidence of him having been a portrait painter, he did contribute drawings of birds to naturalist journals.

On 27 January 1851, a notice entitled "Belfast Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture" appeared in the *Belfast News Letter*. This follow-up to a previous article (which highlighted the more significant works for sale within the exhibition) announced that owing to the high number of sales, those pieces which "had been placed nearly out of view or in insufficient light," had been brought to "a level with the spectator's eye."<sup>32</sup> Among these was "Item number 95: Portrait of Miss M'Cracken," by John Thomson, presumably the engraver whose illustrations featured in both Benn's *The History of the Town of Belfast* (1823) and Young's *The Town Book of the Corporation of Belfast*.<sup>33</sup> The portrait is described as, "an admirable likeness. Age, honourable and venerable, from the benevolence which beams from it, could not be more happily represented, even in idea."<sup>34</sup> This raises the question – could this be the same picture as the one featured in Young's *Old Belfast*? In the absence of other evidence, it is conceivable that Young was erroneous in giving the artist's name as "W. Thompson" instead of "J. Thomson." In this case, a member of the McCleery family or Mary Ann herself would have had to buy the painting from the

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<sup>30</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 174. Christopher Aitchison, the owner of the portrait in 1896 (the book's year of publication), was the husband of Mary McCracken McCleery, MAM's step-grandniece. He acted as executor of MAM's will and he and his wife inherited many documents and items previously belonging to MAM. See section 3.7.

<sup>31</sup> John Wilson Foster and Helena C.G. Chesney, eds., *Nature in Ireland: A Scientific and Cultural History*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 509.

<sup>32</sup> "Belfast Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," *Belfast News Letter*, 27 January 1851, 2.

<sup>33</sup> John Thomson (d. 1847). See Robert Magill Young, ed., *The Town Book of the Corporation of Belfast: 1613–1816* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co.: 1892), 339–41.

<sup>34</sup> "Belfast Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," 2.

exhibition or been given it, in order for it to end up in Christopher Aitchison's hands.<sup>35</sup>



**Fig. 2.8. Photograph of Mary Ann McCracken held by NMNI**

The most widely recognised image is a photograph presented in an oval vignette, in the carte-de-visite format, captured some time between 1857 and 1866 by the photographer John Gibson of 20 Castle Lane.<sup>36</sup> Two copies mounted on John Gibson stationary, are known to exist in Belfast.<sup>37</sup> The first (above) is held within the Ulster Museum's History Collection and was donated by Miss Gibson in 1932.<sup>38</sup> It was

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<sup>35</sup> Aitchison did not marry MAM's step-grandniece until 1862 and the couple inherited the portrait upon MAM's death.

<sup>36</sup> Traditionally, it has been purported that this photograph was taken in the basement of the Poor House where MAM taught the children knitting and spinning skills for their future employment. However, it was more likely taken in the photographer's studio.

<sup>37</sup> John Gibson's crest is stamped on the reverse.

<sup>38</sup> "Mary Anne McCracken," History Collection, National Museums NI, BELUM.P475.1932. Presumably, Miss Gibson was either a daughter or a close relative of John Gibson.

enlarged and displayed as part of the museum's 'Plantation to Power-Sharing' gallery between October 2009 and late 2014. The second resides within the McNeill Collection at PRONI and was given to the historian by Mr A. Thompson in 1960, as revealed by McNeill's penciled note on the reverse.<sup>39</sup> McNeill had a copy made for the Belfast Charitable Society Board which still hangs in a black frame on the Boardroom wall of Clifton House.



**Fig. 2.9. Photograph of Mary Ann McCracken held by Belfast Central Library**

A lesser-known and somewhat more complete version of this photograph (above) exists within Belfast Central Library's Bigger Collection.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, it has not been edited into the oval vignette format, thus granting a fuller view of the scene. The full length of Mary Ann McCracken's dress is revealed and her feet appear to rest on a circular block. However, some areas in the lower half of the

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<sup>39</sup> See Envelope of illustrative material, McNeill Papers, PRONI, D3732/2/1.

<sup>40</sup> "Mary McCracken," Francis Joseph Bigger Collection, Belfast Central Library, Libraries NI.

photograph have been augmented in pencil, perhaps due to overexposure or fading.

The photograph captures Mary Ann McCracken in advanced old age; her reading glasses poised on the bridge of her nose, her long-sleeved dress, shawl and bright white bonnet giving her a dignified, matronly air. The open book clasped between her hands reminds the viewer of her devotion to the education of Belfast's poor children. Mary Ann McCracken's biographer speculates that "all her old interests in mechanism must surely have been rekindled as she sat before that curious thing, a camera, for one of the earliest professional photographs."<sup>41</sup> By placing herself in her subject's shoes, McNeill evokes Mary Ann McCracken's curiosity in the "useful science,"<sup>42</sup> of mechanics and her sense of wonder at the "the discoveries in nature, the inventions in art & all the extraordinary changes in the mind of man."<sup>43</sup> McNeill depicts Mary Ann McCracken as a dynamic woman, still willing to learn and embrace the new. The image also drew the attention of historian A.T.Q. Stewart who remarked, "there is a splendidly clear photograph of her in old age, from which she looks out at us with shrewd Ulster eyes, and an expression that mingles endurance and willpower."<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, Stewart does not perceive the fluid, receptive individual but sees instead a stoic and somewhat static elderly figure.

The photographs are the only known remaining and verifiable images of Mary Ann McCracken. Evidently, the oil painting was in Christopher Aitchison's possession in 1896 (the date of Young's publication), however, there is no record of its existence after this date. Nor can the miniature, once in the possession of Hugh Christopher Aitchison of Bloemfontein, South Africa, be traced beyond December 1956.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 307.

<sup>42</sup> See Letter 35 (TCD MS873/135).

<sup>43</sup> See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>44</sup> A.T.Q. Stewart, *Summer Soldiers: The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1996), 260.

<sup>45</sup> See section 5.8.1.1.

### 2.1.3 Unconfirmed images of Mary Ann McCracken



**Fig. 2.10. *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* by Nicholas Joseph Crowley**

Yet several other images have survived which may feature Mary Ann McCracken, such as Nicholas Joseph Crowley's oil painting, *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* (above).<sup>46</sup> The artwork was completed in 1842 and was later engraved by Charles William Sharpe.<sup>47</sup> The latter is reproduced within Helena Concannon's 1919 work, *Women of 'ninety-eight*, alongside the following description, "Mary McCracken as the old Gipsy, and one of the Teeling girls are said to have sat for this picture by Crowley."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Mary Ann McCracken's great grandniece, the artist Sara Cecilia Harrison, appears to have concurred on this point, as is evidenced in her obituary in the *Irish Press*:

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<sup>46</sup> *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* (1842) by Nicholas Joseph Crowley. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's Picture Library.

<sup>47</sup> Charles William Sharpe (1818–1899), of Birmingham, engraver.

<sup>48</sup> Helena Walsh Concannon, *Women of 'ninety-eight* (Dublin: Herder, 1919), 224–25.

Her [Sara Cecilia Harrison's] family links with '98; she was the great grand-niece of Henry Joy McCracken and was proud of her rebel ancestry. Mary McCracken is preserved in the well-known picture, *Cup Tossers*, where she and the young niece of Teeling are re-presented - Mary, the fortune-teller, cup in hand, reading the tea-leaves for her eager young friend. Miss Harrison often referred with pride to her great grand-aunt's picture.<sup>49</sup>

McNeill appeared to be in no doubt as to the authenticity of this claim, (although she mistakenly dates the painting to around 1830). Indeed, she found the idea of Mary Ann McCracken modelling for the part of the gipsy greatly comforting: "As a portrait of Mary Ann in middle age it is welcome, and as an indication that something of the fun and gaiety of family life in Rosemary Lane still continued, it is most re-assuring. In spite of all her serious undertakings, Mary McCracken never lost sympathy with the lighter side of life."<sup>50</sup>

The oil painting went to auction as part of Sotheby's Irish Sale on 21 May 1998 (the year of the 1798 bicentenary), selling for twelve thousand pounds sterling. Twenty years later, on 11 September 2018, it returned to the Irish Art auction at Sotheby's, where it fetched twenty two thousand, five hundred pounds sterling.<sup>51</sup>

It is feasible that Mary Ann came into contact with the artist through her nephew, Francis McCracken Junior, who was a Pre-Raphaelite art collector. Martyn Anglesea explains that, "Francis McCracken appears in the local press as 'a friend of paintings and painters', and it seems that he was an early patron of the young Dublin prodigy Nicholas Joseph Crowley, who was elected a full R.H.A. at the age of eighteen."<sup>52</sup> The setting of the painting further supports the claim that Mary Ann McCracken sat for the part of the gipsy. To the right of the fortune teller, an open window reveals Belfast's Cave Hill in the distance, with the town lying in the valley

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<sup>49</sup> Margaret Ward, ed., *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Suffragette and Sinn Feiner: Her Memoirs and Political Writings* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2017), 379.

<sup>50</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 256.

<sup>51</sup> See "Nicholas Joseph Crowley, R.H.A. Fortune Telling By Cup Tossing," Sotheby's Irish Art Auction, 11 September 2018, accessed 15 September 2018, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2018/irish-art-118134/lot.23.html#>. For further details on this painting see section 5.9.

<sup>52</sup> Martyn Anglesea, "A Pre-Raphaelite Enigma in Belfast," *Irish Arts Review* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 44-45.

below. Whether or not Crowley painted the scene in a house overlooking Belfast, or added the view in later, the presence of Cave Hill would suggest that there is some link between the painting and the town.



**Fig. 2.11.** *The Caution* by Nicholas Joseph Crowley

Based on this link between Crowley and Mary Ann McCracken and on the details of the aforementioned painting, it may be argued that Mary Ann McCracken also sat for his later oil painting, *The Caution* (above).<sup>53</sup> Indeed, when the painting was exhibited at Dublin’s Gorry Gallery in March 2008 as part of “An Exhibition of 18th–20th Century Irish Paintings,” the accompanying catalogue concurred that, “his famous painting *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* was engraved by the Royal Irish Art Union and features the same sitters as in ‘*The Caution*’

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<sup>53</sup> *The Caution* (1847) by Nicholas Joseph Crowley. Photograph courtesy of Bonhams. This painting sold at Bonhams of London on 22 April 2010 and was described as being signed, “N.J. Crowley 1847” on the lower left-hand side.

in this exhibition.”<sup>54</sup> It is almost without question that the young woman is the same model suspected of being Miss Teeling. Her dark features, pale complexion and hair style are identical, as is her attire; an off-the-shoulders red dress and gold earrings, suggesting that she sat for both paintings on the same day or over the same period of time. Although *The Caution* was completed five years after *Fortune Telling*, in 1847, it is possible that Crowley made preliminary sketches for the painting at the same time.

The old lady also bears a strong physical resemblance to her counterpart in *Fortune Telling*, with her long straight nose, wrinkled forehead and light grey hair. She wears the same ring on her right hand but on a different finger; her shoulders are draped in the same patterned shawl and she is wearing what appears to be the same long sleeved dress (although its colour has been changed from blue to maroon).



**Fig. 2.12. Cave Hill in  
*Fortune Telling by Cup  
Tossing***

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<sup>54</sup> Gorry Gallery, *An Exhibition of 18th–20th Century Irish Paintings 14* (Dublin: Brunswick Press Ltd., 2008), 43.



**Fig. 2.13. Cave Hill and Belfast town in *The Caution***

The parallels do not end with the sitters. An outdoor setting allows for a more expansive view of the surroundings. The ladies sit next to the door of a walled garden in front of which stands a house with a smoking chimney stack. A young man peers over a steep hill at the scene, as a rocky cliff rises up behind him. Beyond this, in a valley below, sits the town of Belfast, overlooked by Cave Hill.<sup>55</sup> The angle at which we view Cave Hill is identical to its position through the window in *Fortune Telling*. This would suggest that the paintings were set in the same location (in and around this house), owing to its elevated western perspective of Cave Hill.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>The two spires belong to the Poor House and St Mary's Church.

<sup>56</sup> It is possible that this house was Cabin Hill, built by Samuel McTier sometime between 1786 and 1787. By 1842 Cabin Hill was owned by a Mr Tomb who was likely to have been one of Henry Joy's descendants and therefore a distant cousin to MAM.



**Fig. 2.14. Watercolour miniature**

A watercolour miniature (above) claiming to portray “Mary Ann McCracken, sister of Henry Joy McCracken,”<sup>57</sup> sold at auction through Whytes of Dublin in late 2010. It is described as being “in a locket with locks of hair on reverse.”<sup>58</sup> The elderly lady’s attire in this portrait does seem to correspond with previous images of Mary Ann McCracken - she wears a bonnet with a bow under her chin, a shawl wrapped around her shoulders and appears to be wearing a black dress.

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<sup>57</sup> Whyte and Son Auctioneers Ltd., *History, Literature & Collectibles. Saturday 13th November 2010* (Dublin: Brunswick Press, 2010), 10. The miniature is from a private collection, having been inherited by the previous owner.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*



**Fig. 2.15. Pastel painting**

Finally, a pastel painting said to be of Mary Ann McCracken, is known to have been held within the private collection of John Kane Archer of County Dublin in 2004 (above).<sup>59</sup> It depicts an older woman dressed in a white bonnet and red shawl with a book clasped in her right hand. A question mark hangs over the authenticity of this image as the medium was not in fashion between 1820 and the late 1860s, although amateurs were known to paint in pastels. There is a possibility that this is “Item number 95: Portrait of Miss M’Cracken,” by John Thomson, exhibited as part of the 1851 “Belfast Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture.” However, the artist remains unknown and so this is a mere speculation.

### **2.1.4 Belfast City Hall Bust**

After winning a commission from the Belfast City Council’s Good Relations Unit in 2004, sculptor Elizabeth O’Kane took just three months to complete a forty inch bronze bust of Mary Ann McCracken

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<sup>59</sup> Sculptor, Elizabeth O’Kane provided the thesis’s author with the photograph and details of this painting. John Kane Archer was the owner of the artwork at the time of the sculpture’s creation.



**Fig. 2.16. Bust of Mary Ann McCracken by Elizabeth O’Kane**

(see above).<sup>60</sup> It was unveiled at a special ceremony on 6 December 2004 and now resides in an alcove of the Belfast City Hall’s rotunda. In making the bust O’Kane drew on several of the aforementioned images of McCracken. These included the miniature and the photograph, both of which were sourced from the 1998 Blackstaff Press edition of McNeill’s *Life*; the W. Thompson oil painting sourced from Young’s *Old Belfast*; Sharpe’s engraving of *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* and the pastel painting from the private collection of John Kane Archer.<sup>61</sup> Notably, in a press interview, O’Kane commented that she “could see the similarities between the images,”<sup>62</sup> adding weight to the theory that Mary Ann McCracken modelled for Crowley’s work and that she was the subject of the pastel painting.

In a personal email correspondence, O’Kane explained her approach, “I worked from a variety of images in making the sculpture, I try and find as many angles and ages as possible of any sitter. As the images were old there was of course some artistic licence

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<sup>60</sup> The photograph is courtesy of Elizabeth O’Kane. Two preliminary pencil sketches which won O’Kane the commission can be found in section 5.10.

<sup>61</sup> This information was provided by the sculptor at her Dublin studio in 2014.

<sup>62</sup> “Mary Ann is Finally Given Recognition,” *North Belfast News*, 15 January 2005, 21.

used. As regards her clothes I researched costumes of the age in the library of the National Portrait Gallery in London, and tried to come up with something that a lady of her age and class would have worn.”<sup>63</sup> The combination of the images, O’Kane’s “artistic licence,” her research and the three dimensional nature of the sculpture, work together to give an impression of what Mary Ann McCracken may have looked like “as a younger lady at the height of her charitable work.”<sup>64</sup>

The bust perfectly met the requirements of the Council which sought a female figure from history to bring balance to a space which “heavily represented men from a unionist tradition.”<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the dimensions of the piece were quite literally made-to-measure against the sculpture of Edward Carson in the adjacent alcove. The juxtaposition of these two figures also brings a political balance: one a staunch Ulster Unionist whose rallying cry “Home Rule is Rome Rule” almost resulted in an Irish civil war just before the outbreak of World War One; the other a representative of a movement of “persons of every religious persuasion, firmly convinced that a general Union of ALL the inhabitants of Ireland is necessary to the freedom and prosperity of this Kingdom [Ireland].”<sup>66</sup> However, this balance remains an unspoken one, and Mary Ann’s association with the United Irishmen is conspicuous by its absence within the bust’s narrative. Indeed, the Council specifically selected Mary Ann McCracken “as a figure who would not be divisive in any way, and believed she should be celebrated for all the great work she did.”<sup>67</sup> This is reflected in the wording of a plaque affixed to the sculpture’s marble base, which reads, “Fervent campaigner for the rights of Belfast’s women, children and poor, for the abolition of slavery and the revival of Irish music, language and poetry.”

Belfast City Hall is an interesting venue for such a sculpture, since it is at once a shared bipartisan space and a British state building. Disagreement over the institutional and political status of the

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<sup>63</sup> Email correspondence with Elizabeth O’Kane, November–December 2013.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Mary Ann is Finally Given Recognition,” *North Belfast News*, 15 January 2005, 21.

<sup>66</sup> Henry Joy, *Historical Collections relating to the Town of Belfast: from the earliest period to the union with Great Britain* (Belfast: G. Berwick 1817), 295.

<sup>67</sup> Email correspondence with Elizabeth O’Kane, November–December 2013.

structure was foregrounded in 2012, following the council's controversial vote to limit the flying of the Union flag to eighteen days per year (in alignment with government buildings in the rest of the UK) after more than a century of continuous display. Loyalist and Unionist protests against the decision resulted in the City Hall being stormed and politicians being attacked. The neutrality of the venue has thus clearly been a matter of heated dispute. Nevertheless, it is evident that the Good Relations committee wished to present someone who could represent all of Belfast, someone who had lived through and moved beyond the troubled past, and someone who had dedicated their life to the people of Belfast. While Mary Ann McCracken's Presbyterianism meant that religious representation in the building remained one-sided, it is also clear that the bust was intended to address the (still overwhelming) gender imbalance of public sculptures in City Hall and the city centre more generally.

## 2.2 Appropriations

### 2.2.1 Murals and Political appropriations



Fig. 2.17. New Lodge mural

A mere half an hour's walk north of the City Hall lies the predominantly working class Catholic area of New Lodge. In 1997 a McCracken mural was painted along the New Lodge Road and a photograph of the wall art has subsequently been catalogued by Claremont Colleges Digital Library under the description, "Republican mural."<sup>1</sup> The McCracken siblings appear at opposite ends of the painting, alongside a quotation from each of their letters. Mary Ann McCracken's portrayal as a young woman has evidently been copied from the miniature depicting her and Maria (as it appeared within McNeill's *Life*), while Henry Joy McCracken's side profile reflects his standard representation.<sup>2</sup> Their words pop out at the viewer in white capital letters against a black background; Henry's proclaiming, "These are the times that try men's souls...the rich always betray the poor,"<sup>3</sup> while Mary Ann McCracken's declare, "What a wonderful clamour is now raised at the name of union, when in reality there has always been such a union between England and

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Crowley, "Mural Painting and Decoration 1997," Claremont Colleges Digital Library, accessed 3 November 2013, <https://ccdlib.claremont.edu/digital/collection/mni/id/24/rec/5>.

<sup>2</sup> The often reproduced image of HJM in side profile, stems from a lithograph attributed to James Henry Lynch, featured within Madden's *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 389. The original miniature was painted by John Comerford however, its whereabouts are now unknown.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 46 (TCD MS873/154).

this country, as there is between husband and wife by which the former has the power to oppress the latter.”<sup>4</sup>

Written just six months after the execution of her brother, this extract (taken from a draft letter) emphasises what John Gray calls, her “entirely unrepentant” attitude towards the rebellion.<sup>5</sup> Her words appear cynical, almost bitter towards the union, while her husband and wife metaphor acts to underline her proto-feminist tendencies.



Fig. 2.18. Mná Na hÉireann/Women Of Ireland mural



Fig. 2.19. Mná Na hÉireann/Women Of Ireland (detail)

In 2014, the mural “Mná Na hÉireann/Women Of Ireland” (see above) was created in Derry by artists Danny Devenny and Marty Lyons. At its centre stands Countess Markievicz “carrying a flag of Cumann na mBan and Ethel Lynch, carrying a flag of the Derry

<sup>4</sup> Letter 59 (TCD MS873/101).

<sup>5</sup> John Gray, “Mary Anne McCracken: Belfast revolutionary and pioneer of feminism,” in *The Women of 1798*, ed. Dáire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 58.



Fig. 2.20. "The Women's Mural"

IRA."<sup>6</sup> Four circular portraits flank the corners of the mural, portraying Máire Drumm, Anne Devlin, Betsy Gray and Mary Ann McCracken.

Building on this, Devenny painted "The Women's Mural" to reflect "the myriad roles republican women have played throughout Irish history: from suffragettes to Cumann na mBan, prisoners, prison visitors, Volunteers, protesters, and homemakers" and which was dedicated to "all women, young and old, activists and supporters, in the past and in the present."<sup>7</sup> The painting was unveiled at the Belfast City Hall in 2016. A copy of the piece also hangs on a gable wall of Rockmount Street, off the Falls Road.<sup>8</sup> In each of these works, the miniature portrait of Mary Ann McCracken has been replicated, thus associating her with her younger, more radical years.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Mná Na hÉireann/Women Of Ireland," *Extramural Activity* (blog), 24 August 2015, <https://extramuralactivity.com/2015/08/24/mna-na-heireannwomen-of-ireland/>.

<sup>7</sup> "'The Women's Mural' - Tribute unveiled in Belfast City Hall," *An Phoblacht*, 5 March 2014, <https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/23821>.

<sup>8</sup> "Mothers, Sisters, Daughters," *Extramural Activity* (blog), 15 June 2016, <https://extramuralactivity.com/2016/06/15/mothers-sisters-daughters/>.

<sup>9</sup> Other murals in which she appears -



**Fig. 2.21. "Heroes on the Wall"**

However, in 2007, it was the photograph of Mary Ann McCracken (having been cropped into a headshot) which was reproduced in a public setting; namely, a march in Derry commemorating the 35th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday.<sup>10</sup> The image, nominated for inclusion by the FEIC (Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign),<sup>11</sup> was part of the "Heroes on the Wall" display which lined the march route. Although primarily composed of photographs of the victims of Bloody Sunday, this display also extended to those of Republican leaders and activists from both Ireland and other countries.<sup>12</sup> Upon closer inspection of the poster, a short biography can be found along one side of her bonnet, which reads, "Mary Ann McCracken. Abolitionist, social reformer, women's rights activist. Sister of '98er Henry Joy."<sup>13</sup> The presence of her image in such a context associates her with highly contentious political issues and the violence of the Troubles.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "35th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday March, Derry," Indymedia Ireland, accessed 3 December 2013, <http://www.indymedia.ie/attachments/jan2007/dscf0292.jpg>.

<sup>11</sup> FEIC consists of a small group of people from the Foyle area devoted to peaceful activism.

<sup>12</sup> These included, Toussaint l'Ouverture, leader of the Haitian Revolution, Mairead Farrell, a member of the Provisional IRA who was killed by the SAS in Gibraltar before she and two fellow IRA members could detonate a bomb in 1988 and Ken Saro Wiwa, Nigerian activist and writer.

<sup>13</sup> "35th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday March, Derry," Indymedia Ireland, accessed 3 December 2013, <http://www.indymedia.ie/attachments/jan2007/dscf0292.jpg>.

<sup>14</sup> Her image also reinforced the all-female platform of speakers at the march.

Commenting on the modern-day Republican claim on Mary Ann McCracken, Nelson McCausland of the Democratic Unionist Party highlighted the issue of those former United Irishmen who went on to become Unionists. Upon reading an article about the 1798 Rebellion in the *Irish News*,<sup>15</sup> McCausland was drawn to the following citation from one of Mary Ann's letters dated 28 October 1835: "in looking forty years back, and thinking of those who were gone, and how delighted they would have been at the political changes that have taken place."<sup>16</sup> McCausland turned to his blog to point out the irony of "dissident republicans, led by the Henry Joy McCracken Flute Band,"<sup>17</sup> convening at Clifton Street Cemetery to commemorate William Drennan alongside Henry Joy McCracken in light of the fact that Drennan subsequently went on to become a Unionist. McCausland claimed that upon his pointing out this fact, the 2012 commemoration "dropped Drennan, who was obviously now an embarrassment [sic], and commemorated McCracken, gathering at the grave of Mary Ann McCracken."<sup>18</sup> He added, "However it is just possible that their claim on the McCrackens may not be such a solid claim as they imagine!"<sup>19</sup>

Evidently, McCausland had not read the letter in its entirety, which described the joyous scenes of the Lord Lieutenant's visit to Belfast in 1835. If he had made the effort to do so, McCausland would have discovered that the extract was part of a longer sentence, reading:

I was too much gratified with the present to feel any annoyance – not merely with the gaiety of the scene, but in looking forty years back, and thinking of those who were gone, and how delighted they would have been at the political changes that have taken place – *which could not possibly, in their day, have been anticipated by peaceable means* – and of the improved prospects of their country, now that

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<sup>15</sup> Letter to the Editor, *Irish News*, 29 October 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Letter 119.

<sup>17</sup> Nelson McCausland, "Mary Ann McCracken and the Union," *Nelson's View* (blog), 21 December 2012, <http://theministerspen.blogspot.fi/2012/12/mary-ann-mccracken-and-union.html>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

the English in general, and particularly the present Ministry, have such just feelings towards Ireland and Irish people.<sup>20</sup>

In this broader context, we find Mary Ann celebrating these “present” changes, whilst simultaneously recognising the very different circumstances faced by the United Irishmen who strove for such improvements. Indeed, in a later letter, she states, “I doubt much if the same progress would have been made were it not for the recollection of former scenes & the apprehension of similar consequences ensuing from a recurrence to the old system of persecutions.”<sup>21</sup> She thus suggests that these changes were at least partly contingent upon the rebellion and its associated upheavals.

Moreover, in focusing on one specific extract, McCausland further overlooked Mary Ann’s later disillusionment. In 1851, she lamented, “I fear the labours of the United Irish is about to be overturned, & the Orange system of religious discord & ill will be re-established – It seems as if the world was going back, in place of advancing in just & liberal sentiments.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, McCausland manipulated one passage from Mary Ann’s vast collection of letters to fit his own Unionist agenda and undermine the Republican claim on the McCrackens. Extending his own logic, it becomes clear that McCausland’s own presumed “solid claim” is at least as naive as that of his opponents. In pursuing a claim on Mary Ann and Henry Joy McCracken, both parties fail to appreciate the latter’s adage, “If the good be done, it is no matter who gets the credit of it.”<sup>23</sup>

Why, then, does she appeal to both sides of the community? In order to answer this question, we must return to her extant nineteenth-century images in the public domain. The photograph of Mary Ann McCracken as an elderly lady projects a non-threatening, passive image which is further reinforced through the Thompson oil painting. The Aitchison miniature of Mary Ann as a young woman depicts her in a maternal role with her niece Maria. What makes Mary Ann McCracken accessible, then, is both an absence and a presence. The absence of any political imagery in these portraits make her

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<sup>20</sup> Letter 119. Emphasis added.

<sup>21</sup> Letter 143 (PRONI D1748/H/29/1).

<sup>22</sup> Letter 155 (TCD MS873/71).

<sup>23</sup> Letter 118.

available for use and re-use by contradictory political agendas. The presence of a kind old lady also plays to the advantage of such purposes. Her gender matched the demands of the City Council, whose first concern when commissioning the bust was that it should represent a female historical figure. It also fit with the programme at the Bloody Sunday march which boasted an all-female platform. Her old age implies strength, endurance and a wholesome determination that demands acknowledgement and respect.

### 2.2.2 Commercial Appropriations

Joy's Entry, one of Belfast's narrow historic alleyways, was named after Mary Ann's grandfather Francis Joy, whose warehouse once stood on the site. On 17 July 1798, his grandson, Henry Joy McCracken, is said to have made his final steps towards the gallows through this entry. Having been a licensed premise since 1892, number 4 Joy's Entry was refurbished in 1999 and named McCracken's Cafe Bar.<sup>24</sup> It would be reasonable to assume that the bar's namesake was Henry, based on its location and the large image of him situated just outside its doors.<sup>25</sup> However, upon entering the premises and opening a menu, a copy of the miniature depicting Mary Ann and her niece could be found, alongside a commentary dedicating the pub to the aunt, whom the bar's website described as "one of Belfast's finest daughters."<sup>26</sup> Ironically, the bar neglected to mention Mary Ann's efforts to combat alcoholism in Belfast.<sup>27</sup> The bar's non-committal motto, "In touch with old values, moving with the times," revealed the extent to which Mary Ann McCracken's image and legacy has proved usefully malleable in contemporary Northern Ireland.

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<sup>24</sup> See "McCracken's Bar," Future Belfast, accessed 17 August 2019, <http://www.futurebelfast.com/property/mccrackens-bar/>.

<sup>25</sup> The image is taken from the engraving of HJM within Madden's *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 389.

<sup>26</sup> "About Us," McCracken's Bar, accessed 7 December 2013, <http://www.mccrackenscafebar.co.uk/tour.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72) and McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 195.

Following a one million pound redevelopment, the bar reopened in June 2018 sporting a new name, “Henry’s,” and an extension into the adjoining premises, branded The Jailhouse (as its website claims it is “long thought” to have been the building in which Henry was held before his execution).<sup>28</sup> Superficially, the change in the pub’s name from “McCracken’s” to “Henry’s” does not mark a significant departure, owing to the ambiguity of the former title. However, if the earlier dedication to Mary Ann is to be taken seriously, the rebranding clearly involved a shift of emphasis from one McCracken sibling to another. That a mainstream (and politically non-aligned) bar in Belfast can now be named unambiguously after Henry suggests that he is no longer considered a contentious figure.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Mary Ann may have seemed a safer association at the time of the bar’s initial opening (immediately following the bicentenary of the 1798 Rebellion), later trends in the development of Belfast’s city centre and Cathedral Quarter, as represented, for example, by the opening of The Muddlers Club restaurant in 2015, have seen the city’s nightlife embracing an “edgier” historical repertoire.

As is illustrated here and throughout this chapter, in contemporary Northern Ireland Mary Ann McCracken’s image has been largely emptied of specific historical content, allowing her to fulfil various and contradictory functions in Belfast and beyond. Republican, Unionist and commercial interests have thus been free to fill the vacuum of her memory and to lay claim to her benevolence. Given her contested place in Irish history and in contemporary Belfast, it is perhaps fitting to recall a declaration she made frequently in her later years, as recorded by her step-grandniece: “I with borrowed lustre shine: What you see is none of mine.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “About,” The Jailhouse, accessed 17 August 2019, <https://www.thejailhousebelfast.com/about/>. MAM referred to the location of HJM’s Belfast imprisonment as “the artillery barracks in Ann-street.” See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 485 and section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>29</sup> On 5 April 2019, a life size bronze statue of HJM, sculpted by Steve Finney, was unveiled outside Henry’s bar. Sinn Féin’s Deirdre Hargey, the then Lord Mayor of Belfast, attended and proceeded to hang her chain of office around the sculpture’s neck.

<sup>30</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 169. This is a quotation from the first two lines of Jonathan Swift’s rhyming riddle, “On the Moon.” However, McCleery substitutes “lustre” for “silver.”

## 2.3 Iconic Personae

### 2.3.1 Mary Ann McCracken: The Abolitionist

#### 2.3.1.1 McNeill's embellishment

Focusing on the image of Mary Ann McCracken as an anti-slavery campaigner, this chapter will examine the ways in which her abolitionist activities and sentiments have passed into cultural memory and how they have been represented and interpreted in modern day Ireland. Drawing upon her letters (and other relevant contemporary sources), a more comprehensive understanding of her contribution to the abolition movement can begin to be established.

In 1859, Mary Ann wrote to fellow abolitionist Dr Madden, "I am sorry to say that Belfast once so celebrated for its love of liberty is now so sunk in the love of filthy lucre, that there are but 16 or 17 female anti-slavery advocates for the good cause, paying 2/6 yearly, not one man, tho' several Quakers in Belfast & none to distribute papers to American Emigrants but an old woman within 17 days of 89."<sup>1</sup> This passage is quoted within McNeill's biography of Mary Ann McCracken, however, the historian added a splash of colour when she imagined, "The little frail, bent, figure – standing by the gangway with her leaflets as the jostling crowds made their way on board: it was the only service she could still render to the cause of liberty, that dominating passion of her life."<sup>2</sup> McNeill's embellishment has given rise to, what Philip Orr describes as, "fascinating anecdotes,"<sup>3</sup> about the elderly Mary Ann often being spotted by the gangways of ships handing out anti-slavery leaflets to emigrants and sailors on their way to the southern ports of America where slavery still existed on the cotton plantations.

It is interesting to note that in her letter, Mary Ann did not specify the location of her pamphleteering - she did not mention gangways, ships or indeed, the dock area. While the harbour setting remains highly plausible, the specific scene imagined by McNeill has become the key reference point and indeed, at times, the only reference point,

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<sup>1</sup> Letter 173 (TCD MS873/84).

<sup>2</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 295.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Orr, "No Blood Stains on the Sugar," *Humani* 104 (May / June 2007): 12.

when talking about McCracken as an anti-slavery campaigner. The image has become fixed in public memory, acting as the definitive freeze-frame of her involvement with and commitment to abolition. It is an image which has been perpetuated through popular “Alternative History” tours of Belfast and in BBC 2’s “Groundbreakers” documentary series of 2016 entitled “Rebel Heart: The Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” in which her words were read over shots of the regenerated harbour area. As a result of the enduring potency of this image, she continues to appear throughout various media as the face of Belfast’s anti-slavery movement.

### 2.3.1.2 Belfast’s Douglass Mural



Fig. 2.22. “Frederick Douglass and Anti-Racism”

On 27 May 2011, a mural entitled “Frederick Douglass and Anti-Racism” was unveiled next to the peace line on Northumberland Street as part of Belfast’s Community Relations Week. The project was funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council), and was created by the Open Hands Community group; a collaboration between young adults on both sides of the divide. The dominating figure at the centre of the mural is the former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who gave five lectures in Belfast between 1845 and 1846. His image is surrounded by other international peace-makers, philanthropists and social reformers, including Daniel O’Connell and Belfast’s very own Mary Ann McCracken. These are placed alongside civil rights activists from the twentieth century, such as Martin Luther King Jr.

Reflecting upon his time in Ireland, Douglass wrote:

I can truly say I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life since landing in this country [...] the spirit of freedom that seems to animate all with whom I come in contact - and the entire absence of every thing that looked like prejudice against me, on account of my skin - contrasted so strongly with my long and bitter experience in the United States, that I look with wonder and amazement on the transition.<sup>4</sup>

Douglass's sojourn in Ireland proved an important turning point for him in terms of his understanding of the relationship between religion and slavery. In America, he had become accustomed to religious slave owners who raped and killed their own slaves but who still regarded themselves as good in the eyes of God. The hypocrisy of these "Christians" contrasted dramatically with the cordial attitudes of "various religious bodies"<sup>5</sup> encountered by Douglass throughout Ireland, whose support did much to bolster his confidence and harden his resolve as an abolitionist.

McCracken exemplified the latter model of Christian and clearly echoed Douglass's sentiments in a letter of 1851, in which she stated:

Were all who profess to be christians truly so in heart, & practise, obedient to the commands so simple & easy to be understood & imitations of the example of him whose followers they profess to be, there would neither be slaveholding in America (where there is no connexion between Church & State, but much hypocritical profession of piety) nor any of the numerous unjust & oppressive laws with which great Britain abounds.<sup>6</sup>

Several years later she wrote again on the subject:

In the US of America; the diabolical system of slavery is increasing & progressing there & the worst of it is that so many professing to be most pious christians uphold & apologize for the system &

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<sup>4</sup> Frederick Douglass to William Lloyd Garrison, Victoria Hotel, Belfast, 1 January 1846, in *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, ed., Philip Foner ( New York: International Publishers, 1950), 125.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Letter 155 (TCD MS873/71).

won't allow a line to be published in their religious tracts reflecting on slavery, surely that is quite inconsistent with all the teachings of him, whose followers they profess to be.<sup>7</sup>

Evidently, McCracken was much influenced by Douglass's teachings, her words highlighting and condemning such hypocrisy.

However, Douglass's time in Belfast did not pass without incident. Despite a sincere and hospitable reception by the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass came up against criticism when he spoke at Donegall Street Church of the Free Church of Scotland's involvement with slavery.<sup>8</sup> In a letter to the Boston abolitionist Maria Weston Chapman, Mary Ireland (a teacher at Belfast's Royal Academical Institution) dolefully related how those townsfolk who usually, "take the lead in other good works [were] offended by the uncompromising tone of Mr Douglass in regard to the Free Church of Scotland." Ireland reprimanded these fellow Presbyterians as, "avowed enemies to the present movement or very hollow friends."<sup>9</sup> Yet, their disgruntlement may have contributed to the dissolution of the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society, as its secretary Francis Calder "repeatedly claimed in his private correspondence to the BFASS that the attacks on the Free Church were a major factor in the demise of the Belfast auxiliary."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86).

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, a hostility was quick to arise between Douglass and the visiting Rev. Smyth of Charleston (originally from Lurgan and educated in Belfast) over the issue.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Ireland to M.W. Chapman, R.A. Institution, Belfast, 24 January 1846, Weston Papers, Ms.9.2 v22, no. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Ritchie, "'The stone in the sling': Frederick Douglass and Belfast abolitionism," *American Nineteenth Century History* 18, no. 3 (2017): 263. "BFASS" referring to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

In a letter of November 1853 Ireland remarked "the gentlemen's society is actually deceased at present," before supplying the following details of its breakdown: "One gentleman gave his opinion that we needed no lecturers, Uncle Tom's Cabin had done the work - fitter for us now to raise funds to pay lecturers in America. Still [there was] no proposal to collect for the purpose. The secretaries then, seeing that all action was as usual to devolve on them, decided to resign in the hope that their doing so might bring younger men into the field [...] the secretaries have been worn out in a great measure by being left to supply the means and then to collect for their repayment." Mary Ireland to Mary A. Estlin, 7 November 1853, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 184.

It is interesting to note then, that the mural (being the only public reminder of Douglass's time in Belfast) is located in the predominantly Catholic area of the Falls Road. This testament lends strength to Ian Whyte's claim that the freedom of prejudice Douglass encountered in Ireland, "was more true of the largely Roman Catholic south than in the north."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Douglass did appeal to Belfast's "most zealous abolitionists,"<sup>12</sup> making strong and lasting friendships and alliances within the Protestant community. Perhaps his most significant impact however was on the city's women, as Ireland related to Chapman in January 1846, "an intense interest has been excited by the oratory of Frederick Douglass during his late visit to this town and in consequence a female anti-slavery society is about being formed just at present."<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3.1.3 Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association

In September 1846, an "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster," was issued, confirming "Miss McCracken" as one of the twenty one committee members.<sup>14</sup> Written by the corresponding secretary of the committee, Maria Webb of Belfast,<sup>15</sup> the address encouraged fund-raising efforts for both the Boston and Philadelphia anti-slavery fairs, pamphleteering, and called for "strong remonstrances [to be] sent through Abolition Associations, or even individual correspondence addressed to those, who are still in the pro-slavery party."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ian Whyte, *Send Back the Money!: The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2012), 109.

<sup>12</sup> Ritchie, "'The stone in the sling': Frederick Douglass and Belfast abolitionism," 263.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Ireland to M.W. Chapman, R.A. Institution, Belfast, 24 January 1846, Weston Papers, Ms.9.2 v22, no. 14.

<sup>14</sup> "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster, September 23rd 1846," Boston Public Library, accessed 12 March 2014, <https://archive.org/details/addressfromcommi00unse>.

<sup>15</sup> Maria Webb was well known in US anti-slavery circles and was a friend of Douglass's.

<sup>16</sup> "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster, September 23rd 1846," Boston Public Library.

McCracken's high ranking position within the association and her dedication to such fund-raising efforts were highlighted by Miss Hannah Hinks who wrote, "one of the cradle quilts was knit by the President of our Association, a lady of 84 or upwards!"<sup>17</sup> The letter is dated 6 November 1854, therefore, given that Mary Ann had celebrated her eighty-fourth birthday that year, it is highly likely that Hinks was referring to her.

When writing to the Boston Bazaar in 1857, Ireland (also a committee member) sent her apologies as only four ladies had contributed goods that year. In the postscript she remarked:

The doileys knitted by Miss McCracken will not be thought without value when I mention that they were manufactured by a lady aged 87 who for nearly her whole life has been first in every local work of charity and who never forgets the claims of those who are in bonds: but is as ardent now in the cause of American Antislavery as she was formerly in that of the West Indian slave."<sup>18</sup>

McCleery corroborates with Ireland on this point, stating that McCracken was "long a member of an anti-slavery society. She abstained from sugar for many years, which must have been a great privation, as she was fond of it."<sup>19</sup> Although Mary Ann does not remark on her own sugar abstinence within her extant letters, she does refer to the efforts of Thomas Russell, "who in the days of Wilberforce, joined in abstaining from the use of slave labour produce until slaveing [sic] in the West Indies was abolished, & at the dinner parties to which he was so often invited & where confectionary was so much used, he would not taste any thing that had sugar in it, neither in tea or coffee."<sup>20</sup> McCracken saw this "character trait" as "proving his freedom from selfishness, & consistent advocate [sic] for

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<sup>17</sup> Miss H. Hinks to Mrs W.L. Garrison, 6 November 1854, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 185.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Ireland to the Committee of Boston bazaar, 13 November 1857, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 185.

<sup>19</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 195.

<sup>20</sup> Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83).

Liberty;”<sup>21</sup> a statement which could equally be applied to the correspondent herself.

It is McCracken’s age and her long standing activism therefore that sets her apart from other members such as Webb and Ireland. Evidently, she was greatly revered within the association, not only for her longevity, but for her ceaseless determination and commitment. These Belfast women looked to the elderly Mary Ann McCracken and were inspired.

### **2.3.1.4 Black Lives Matter Belfast**

Following the Baltimore Protests of 18 April–3 May 2015, Mary Ann McCracken’s image was assigned as the profile picture for the Twitter account “Irish Statement” (later “#BLM Irish”).<sup>22</sup> This account is linked to the website “Irish Statement in support of #blacklivesmatter,” set up on 31 May 2015.<sup>23</sup> The statement declares:

We the undersigned Irish people stand for the human rights of Black people in Baltimore and across the U.S. We stand with all survivors of racist state and vigilante violence. We stand with Black political prisoners who have been punished for resisting anti-blackness. We stand for the transformation of laws, institutions, and society to bring justice to Black people.<sup>24</sup>

Those signing the statement are said to be continuing “in the tradition of those Irish who acted in solidarity with Black people in the U.S. like Mary Ann McCracken.”<sup>25</sup>

During the summer of 2016, “Black Lives Matter Belfast” was established by Dr Chamindra Weerawardhana, a political analyst and international consultant. Weerawardhana organised a Black Lives

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> #BLM Irish (@blmirish), Twitter, joined May 2015, <https://twitter.com/blmirish>.

<sup>23</sup> “Irish Statement in Support of #Blacklivesmatter,” Irishstatement, accessed 26 March 2016, <https://irishstatement.wordpress.com/2015/05/31/irish-statement-in-support-of-blacklivesmatter/>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Matter vigil to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Mary Ann McCracken's death on 26 July 2016. Prior to the vigil, which was held outside the gates of Belfast City Hall, several of the participants gathered at her graveside to lay flowers and pay their respects to this "powerful figure."<sup>26</sup>

A domino effect has therefore been created, whereby McCracken's association with the anti-slavery movement has led to her being grouped with civil rights activists and by extension, these more recent social movements. Clearly, a number of mediations have taken place in order for her to become the figurehead of Black Lives Matter Belfast.

However, there is justification for linking McCracken's abolitionism with later civil rights struggles and present day campaigns against racism and violence towards black people. In a letter to her brother during his imprisonment in Kilmainham Gaol, Mary Ann declares, "there can be no argument produced in favour of the slavery of woman that has not been used in favour of general slavery and which have been successfully combatted by many able writers."<sup>27</sup> Clearly, Mary Ann did not view slavery as a one-off issue; it bleeds into other injustices and the same logic of oppression can be found underlying other oppressive systems and institutions. Indeed, Weerawardhana argues that it was Mary Ann McCracken's "deep interest in working towards a more equitable society, fighting injustice wherever she saw it," that is of universal appeal. She continues, "Mary Ann is an historical figure people can relate to irrespective of their faith or political positions."<sup>28</sup> This relatability is precisely what opens her up to appropriation.

Interestingly, Twitter's "#BLM Irish" avatar is a cropped version of the photograph, whilst her depiction on the Douglass mural is based on the same image. The photograph is perhaps recurrently used in association with her anti-slavery work owing to McNeill's selected quotation, which emphasises her advanced age. However, the very availability of her photographic portrait (since she happened to live

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<sup>26</sup> "Black Lives Matter: A Global Movement for Justice Comes to Belfast," *The Last Round* (blog), 26 July 2016, <https://lastroundblog.wordpress.com/2016/07/26/black-lives-matter-a-global-movement-for-justice-comes-to-belfast/>.

<sup>27</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>28</sup> "Black Lives Matter: A Global Movement for Justice Comes to Belfast," *The Last Round*.

long enough to have it taken), combined with her personal popularity, has provided the conditions for Mary Ann McCracken to become the face of Belfast's anti-slavery tradition.

### 2.3.1.5 McCracken's Slavery Footprint

It is possible to argue that Mary Ann's abolitionist credentials are compromised by various forms of economic and personal entanglement, including the McCracken family's involvement in the cotton industry and what Dr Nini Rodgers refers to as the "provision trade."<sup>29</sup> Her father, Captain John McCracken, "was constantly engaged in the shipment of linens to the West Indies and America,"<sup>30</sup> and was believed to be the first person to ship raw cotton into the North of Ireland from the port of Liverpool.<sup>31</sup> Mary Ann explains that her father "gave up the command to attend to rope making,"<sup>32</sup> a business which he had started in 1758 while on shore leave. He also opened a factory for the production of sail cloth and canvas. In 1778, the year he gave up his command of the *Hawke*, Captain McCracken, along with his two brothers-in-law Henry and Robert Joy, and Thomas McCabe, set up one of Belfast's first cotton businesses. At the beginning of 1795, he withdrew from the business and set up his own cotton factory on Francis Street. His wife and children followed suit and in 1790, "Mary McCracken, always energetic, proposed to her sister that they should go into business. The project was carried out, and they commenced the business of muslin manufacturers. Her chief object in trying to make money was that she might have some of her own to give away as she wished."<sup>33</sup> The enterprise came to an end sometime around 1815. Taken together, these facts indicate that Mary Ann's economic situation was, like that of many of her class, at least indirectly linked to colonial slavery and its products.

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<sup>29</sup> Nini Rodgers, "Ireland and the Black Atlantic in the Eighteenth Century," *Irish Historical Studies* 32, no. 126 (November 2000): 176.

<sup>30</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 40.

<sup>31</sup> Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Letter 179 (TCD MS873/90).

<sup>33</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 177.

In particular, Rodgers highlights the vulnerability of Mary Ann to the charge of hypocrisy, as one “who condemned the slave trade and slavery, [but] unintentionally helped its extension by her devotion to entrepreneurial textile activity.”<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, there is evidence that the McCrackens were open to alternative sources of raw materials, with William McCracken’s letter of 1797 revealing that he was ordering surat cotton for his business. He wrote to his sisters, “I forgot when writing to Frank that I wished him to buy a bale of surat cotton for the out spinners.”<sup>35</sup> This material was produced in India. It yielded fewer crops and was more difficult to work with, yet it was not a product of slave labour. Indeed, in his 1881 publication *The Cotton Famine of 1862–63*, Hugh McCall sceptically associates the fibre with, “a race of self constituted philosophers, who, while indulging in projects about getting supplies of cotton outside the plantations of the Far West, propounded idealisms wild and fantastic as the dreamiest follies of that respectable class of unbelievers who, some years ago, plagued the Churches with their absurdities on the Bible-wine question.”<sup>36</sup>

Mary Ann’s letters suggest that the geographical extent of her business network did not extend beyond Ireland, with the majority of muslin sales taking place in Dublin through the sister’s agents, James Orr and Hamilton.<sup>37</sup> Letter 57 also provides an example of trade within the family as Grizzel Joy (Mary Ann’s Dublin-based cousin) wrote to her:

Some time ago you sent me patterns of Cambrick. We liked the one marked 6:6 extremely and thought it quite thick enough, I would have begged of you to keep that piece for us, but as we had no immediate opportunity of getting it up, I thought you might get it sold in Belfast and we would get the next you would make. If that

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<sup>34</sup> Nini Rodgers, *Equiano: And Anti-Slavery in Eighteenth Century Belfast* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2000), 20.

<sup>35</sup> Letter 15 (TCD MS873/119).

<sup>36</sup> Hugh McCall, *The Cotton Famine of 1862–63* (Belfast & London: William Mullan & Son, 1881), 8–9.

<sup>37</sup> See Letters 82 (TCD MS873/647) and 85 (TCD MS873/691).

piece, however is still on hand we shall be glad to have it, or if not as soon as possible a piece of the same kind.<sup>38</sup>

The provincial nature of the business therefore would suggest that it was not bound up in the provisioning of the slave colonies.

In her later letters, Mary Ann's disapproval of the interweaving of slavery and business is clear. She supported Madden's *West African Report* of 1842 which exposed links between British commerce and the slave trade.<sup>39</sup> While on the policy of free trade she declared:

I think the advocates of free trade go a step too far, and that is in admitting the produce of slave labour into the British market. If it be not practicable to prohibit altogether, there surely might be such a duty on its admission as would exclude it and is it consistent with common honesty to buy, or promote the traffic in stolen goods, and is it not the most erred species of injustice to rob a man of himself, and to countenance and encourage such injustice is much the same. It used to be a common adage long, long ago, that the receiver was as bad as the thief.<sup>40</sup>

Such a statement makes it difficult to imagine that Mary Ann failed to practise what she preached in her own muslin business. Furthermore, in 1846 Maria Webb, the Corresponding Secretary for the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association wrote to the Secretary of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, apologising for "not being able to get nicer material made from free labour cotton. The muslin is coarse and the only recommendation we can offer for the prints is the fact of

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<sup>38</sup> Letter 57 (TCD MS873/98).

<sup>39</sup> See Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94). In 1840, British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, appointed Madden to investigate slave related activities on the West Coast of Africa. Madden's ensuing *West African Report*, exposed links between British commerce and the slave trade. The report was presented to parliament in 1842 by which time the government had changed from Whig to Conservative. This new government set up a Select Committee to investigate the report with the West African merchant, Matthew Forster as chair. Forster attacked Madden both publicly and privately and disregarded the report. See R.R. Madden, *The Memoirs (chiefly autobiographical) from 1798–1886, of Richard Robert Madden*, ed. Thomas More Madden (London: Ward & Downey, 1891), 113–116.

<sup>40</sup> Letter 150 (PRONI D1748/G/387/3).

being unpolluted by slave labour.”<sup>41</sup> McCracken’s position within the association would suggest that she fully supported the use of free labour derived materials.

However, as a legatee of former United Irishman John Neilson’s will,<sup>42</sup> McCracken did stand to inherit tainted money, considering that the inventory of his estate lists “eleven slaves,” alongside “numerous livestock, and various crops.”<sup>43</sup> Following his involvement in the 1798 Rebellion, Neilson had fled to America where he became an eminent architect, working on the properties of President Jefferson and President Madison. McCracken and Neilson remained friends and correspondents until the latter’s death in 1827, at which time, Andrew Leitch of Charlottesville, Virginia, wrote informing her that she had been appointed the will’s agent in Ireland and that she was the legatee of “one eighth” of Neilson’s estate.<sup>44</sup> Leitch’s further epistles and Letter 114 (the only extant letter from McCracken to Leitch) reveal the dedication with which she fulfilled her role despite it being, “a troublesome and tedious business, for the money came in by degree, and, as time went on, the legatees became more numerous, and the sums smaller.”<sup>45</sup> Whether or not McCracken held onto her share is unknown. Nor do we know the extent to which she was aware of Neilson’s status as a slave owner. Nevertheless, the fact remains that she was a deeply trusted friend of a slave owner (albeit unwittingly) and a beneficiary of his will. Despite her best efforts, McCracken did not escape financial implication in the practice of slave ownership among Irish settlers in America.

Such links were, of course, banal and perhaps unavoidable within Mary Ann McCracken’s social milieu. Moreover, they evidently do not invalidate her conscious and direct efforts to oppose the “peculiar

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<sup>41</sup> Maria Webb to The Secretary of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, 2 November 1846, in Oldham, “Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement,” 182.

<sup>42</sup> The fifth section of which states, “To Mary Ann McCracken of Belfast, Ireland, the friend of my family, and Sister to Henry Joy McCracken, I give one eighth of my estate.” Letter 109 (UVA MSS 9200).

<sup>43</sup> K. Edward Lay, *The Architecture of Jefferson Country: Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia* (USA: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), 99.

<sup>44</sup> Letter 109 (UVA MSS 9200).

<sup>45</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 191.

institution" until its very last days. In a letter to Madden dated 3 September 1858, she lamented that America:

considered the "Land of the free and the brave," may more properly be styled "The Land of the tyrant and the Slave" - the horrors of which seem to be increasing every year, but the hatred of the system seems to be increasing also, and I hope the rising generation may see an end to it and also to war, tho' neither event will be apt to take place in my day, but may not those in a happier state of existence be allowed to rejoice in the happiness of those they had left behind.<sup>46</sup>

However, in her last extant letter of February 1861, she herself was able to rejoice, "and now I have the brilliant hope of the approaching abolition of American slavery."<sup>47</sup> Seven months prior to her death, the 13th Amendment was ratified, and so, contrary to her own expectations, Mary Ann McCracken outlived her nemesis.

### **2.3.2 Mary Ann McCracken: the Proto-Feminist**

McCracken's epistolary statements, highlighting and condemning the societal, political and economic gender imbalances of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, led feminist activist and writer Rosamond Jacob to dub her "the first Irish 'feminist,'"<sup>48</sup> in an article of 1938. Subsequently, McCracken's remarks have been subject to several studies by scholars of history and gender. These commentaries draw almost exclusively upon Letters 9, 30, 59 and 104, giving rise to further epitaphs such as "pioneer of feminism"<sup>49</sup> and "the personification of anti-femininity"<sup>50</sup> and which set her apart as

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<sup>46</sup> Letter 165 (TCD MS873/77). MAM expressed similar sentiments in Letters 155 (TCD MS873/7), 160 (TCD MS873/76) and 163 (TCD MS873/8).

<sup>47</sup> Letter 180 (RIA 24 O 10/48).

<sup>48</sup> "Notable Women of Ninety-Eight Lecture by Miss R. Jacob," *Irish Independent*, 2 December 1938, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Gray, "Mary Anne McCracken: Belfast revolutionary and pioneer of feminism," 47.

<sup>50</sup> Priscilla Metscher, "Mary Ann McCracken: A Critical Ulsterwoman within the Context of her Times," *Études irlandaises* 14, no. 2 (1989): 154.

“one of the few women to write about the contemporary debate on the status of women that the writings of Wollstonecraft and others had provoked.”<sup>51</sup> Although McCracken’s proto-feminist beliefs did not result in direct activism, her words and indirect actions give an insight into her sympathies and solidarity with the emerging cause. Moreover, while many of her philanthropic endeavours can be seen as contributing to female wellbeing in a material sense, this section will approach the subject through her discourse and the expression (or implication) of principles.

### 2.3.2.1 Literary Influences

McCracken’s interest in these ideas is reflected in her choice of literature. In Letter 30, she informed her incarcerated brother, “We send you M<sup>rs</sup> Wollstonecraft’s travels thro Norway Sweden &c.<sup>52</sup> On reading it I think it seems rather a description of her own feelings, which appear uncommonly exquisite, than of the country she passed thro’, but as every production of one possessing such talents is interesting, I hope you will find it a more pleasing amusement than drinking.”<sup>53</sup> Her ensuing comments on the author “reveal an astounding knowledge about the private life of that radical Englishwoman.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in Letter 59, McCracken quotes from William Godwin’s *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,<sup>55</sup> suggesting that she had read the work (which had been published the previous year) and by extension, Wollstonecraft’s *A*

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<sup>51</sup> Mary O’Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500–1800* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005), 259.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (London: J. Johnson, 1796).

<sup>53</sup> Letter 30 (TCD MS873/149).

<sup>54</sup> Metscher, “Mary Ann McCracken: A Critical Ulsterwoman,” 150.

<sup>55</sup> William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, although she does not mention this particular work within her letters.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.3.2.2 The Place of United Irishwomen

Mary Ann wrote most prolifically on the subject of gender equality and integration in Letter 9, dated 16 March 1797, wherein she told Henry:

I have a great curiosity to visit some female societies in this Town (though I should like them better were they promiscuous as there can be no other reason for having them separate but keeping the women in the dark, and certainly it is equally ungenerous and uncandid to make tools of [them] without confiding in them.) I wish to know if they have any rational ideas of liberty and equality for themselves or whether they are contented with their present abject & dependent situation, degraded by custom and education beneath the rank in society in which they were originally placed.<sup>57</sup>

Traditionally, these “female societies” have been construed as United Irishwomen sisterhoods, however, the very existence of such organisations in Belfast has been called into question by historian Ian McBride who argues that:

Although a letter purporting to be from the secretary of the ‘Society of United Irishwomen’ was published in the *Northern Star* in 1796, no evidence has been found to suggest that such a society ever existed. It is true that the loyalist writer Samuel later claimed that women had formed ‘teapot clubs’ whose activities were the gathering of information and fundraising. Whether these groups had any continuous institutional existence, or were simply ad hoc committees established to raise subscriptions for the relief of prisoners, is not clear. If they existed at all, they probably

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<sup>56</sup> Owing to the fact that MAM read these titles within a year of their publication, it is possible that she read Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* of 1792 within a similar time frame.

<sup>57</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

conformed to the prevailing notion that organised female activity should be restricted to philanthropic and domestic concerns.<sup>58</sup>

The said letter which appeared within the *Northern Star* of 17 October 1796 has been described by Catriona A. Kennedy as “a well-executed piece of political rhetoric,”<sup>59</sup> and as this is the only evidence of a Belfast Society of United Irishwomen, it is unlikely that Mary Ann’s reference to “some female societies” alludes to a multitude of such groups. Mary O’Dowd poses the alternative possibility, “that this is a reference to the charitable societies in which Martha McTier and other women were involved.”<sup>60</sup> If indeed McCracken was referring to “female societies” more generally, her intention may have been to investigate these groups in search of like-minded women to recruit. This position is strengthened by Mary Ann’s further comment, “Frank proposed him [John Templeton] at the last meeting of the society, and I hope his sisters will soon follow so good an example.”<sup>61</sup> If McCracken was scouting for female members, presumably she herself was a member of the United Irish movement. Her expectation that her friends, the Templeton women, would join the ranks, caused McNeill to reflect that, “it was out of keeping with her character for her to expect others to undertake responsibilities which she would not shoulder herself.”<sup>62</sup> However, in interpreting the “female societies” as strictly those belonging to United Irishwomen, McNeill reluctantly concedes “it is clear from the letter that the “female societies” were as yet unknown to her, and there is no indication in this correspondence or anywhere else that she ever joined one of them, in fact one would be strongly inclined to assume she was not [a United Irishwoman].”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2009), 391.

<sup>59</sup> Catriona A Kennedy, “What can women give but tears’ : gender, politics and Irish national identity in the 1790s,” PhD diss., (University of York, 2004), 159.

<sup>60</sup> Mary O’Dowd, “Mary Ann McCracken (1770–1866),” in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* 5, ed. Angela Bourke *et al* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>61</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151). Eliza Templeton and her sister whose married name was Mrs McGee.

<sup>62</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 129–30.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

If McNeill had interpreted the societies more broadly, it is unlikely that such a contradiction would have arisen in her thinking.

According to Maria Henrietta and Rose Ann McCracken, the granddaughters of William McCracken, “not only was their grandfather a sworn United-man, but their grandmother was too. Her maiden name was Rose McGladdery.”<sup>64</sup> If accurate, this would suggest that McCracken’s sister-in-law took the oath within the main body of the Society of United Irishmen. Coupled with Mary Ann’s eagerness for her friends to join, it would, as Kennedy admits, “seem surprising if she was not herself a member.”<sup>65</sup>

However, when Rose Ann moved into Kilmainham Gaol to be with her husband in the late summer of 1797, Mary Ann made her opinion on the matter known. In writing to their sister Margaret, William makes the following somewhat barbed comment, “I am perfectly [aware] of Mary’s opinion that in some situations the duty of a mother supercedes [sic] any other,”<sup>66</sup> the implication being that either Rose Ann was pregnant at the time (perhaps with her son Henry McCracken who died in infancy) or that her baby remained at the McCracken household. Either way, Mary Ann clearly thought that Rose Ann’s role as a mother should come before her role as a wife. This view of motherhood was shared by “the foremother of feminism,” Mary Wollstonecraft who believed that a woman’s “first duty is to themselves as rational creatures, and the next in point of importance, as citizens, is that, which includes so many, of a mother.”<sup>67</sup>

### 2.3.2.3 McCracken’s argument for female equality

Returning to Letter 9, McCracken puts forth a passionate argument in favour of educational equality between the sexes, stating “if we suppose woman was created a companion for man, she must of course be his equal in understanding, as without equality of mind

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<sup>64</sup> “In Memoriam - Maria McCracken,” *Shan van Vocht* 6, no. 3 (6 March 1899): 59.

<sup>65</sup> Kennedy, “What can women give but tears,” 158.

<sup>66</sup> Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133).

<sup>67</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Boston: Peter Edes for Thomas and Andrews, 1792), 254.

there can be no friendship and without friendship there can be no happiness in society.”<sup>68</sup> It is unsurprising that she endorsed co-education, given that she and her siblings attended David Manson’s pioneering school where “the young ladies received the same extensive education as the young gentlemen.”<sup>69</sup> This leads into an anatomical comparison whereby McCracken poses the argument that “women were destined for superior understandings,” and “study” owing to “their bodies being more delicately framed and less fit for labour than that of man,” thus dismissing the notion of a “connection between strength of mind & strength of body.”<sup>70</sup> Conversely, Wollstonecraft argued that in order to “earn their own subsistence,” women needed to build up their physical strength from childhood and so “bear those bodily inconveniences and exertions that are requisite to strengthen the mind.”<sup>71</sup> Wollstonecraft further suggested that woman’s “perfection of body” would determine “how far the natural superiority of man extends.”<sup>72</sup> Evidently, McCracken did not see a need for such exertions and justifies her reasoning through an allusion to “three little men possessing much genius.”<sup>73</sup> If these men were weak of body, it did not follow that they were weak of mind.

What comes next reads almost like a rallying cry. Mary Ann asks her brother:

is it not almost time for the clouds of error and prejudice to disperse and that the female part of the Creation as well as the male should throw off the fetters with which they have been so long mentally bound and conscious of the dignity and importance of their nature, rise to the situation for which they were designed [...] I hope the present Era will produce some women of sufficient talents to

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<sup>68</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>69</sup> “Life of David Manson,” *Belfast Monthly Magazine* 6, no. 31 (February 1811): 127.

<sup>70</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>71</sup> Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 152.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

inspire the rest with a genuine love of Liberty and just sense of her value.<sup>74</sup>

Here, Mary Ann applies “the political demands of the radical middle class for the ‘rights of man’”<sup>75</sup> to her own sex in a bid to secure “liberté, égalité, fraternité” for all. Her hopes for future generations of women seem to herald the first wave of feminism of the later nineteenth century. It must be kept in mind however that, in this letter, Mary Ann was addressing her closest confidant, whom she knew to be “capable of forming an opinion from his own experience without consulting the stupid multitude of common thinkers.”<sup>76</sup> Presumably, she did not speak out on these issues beyond her own social circle.

Following the failure of the 1798 Rebellion, Mary Ann’s remarks on gender relations take on a markedly more pessimistic tone. As we have earlier seen, Letter 59 sees her establishing a parallel between national politics and sexual politics which expresses scepticism about the possibility of equal union in either context:

What a wonderful clamour is now raised at the name of Union, when in reality there has always been such an Union betwixt England & this Country, as there is betwixt husband & wife, by which tho’ the former has the power to oppress the latter if he has the inclination, yet if he is a man of justice & humanity, she will almost forget she is a slave, but if on the contrary he is cruel & tyrannical, she will then taste all the bitterness of slavery.<sup>77</sup>

We thus move from a call for Irish women and Irish men to unite in “throw[ing] off the fetters” imposed by Britain to a comparison in which England is imagined as a “husband” and Ireland as a woman whose repression, while the union persists, remains an inescapable fact regardless of the variable proportions of kindness and cruelty evident in the relationship at any given time.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Metcher, “Mary Ann McCracken: A Critical Ulsterwoman,” 150.

<sup>76</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>77</sup> Letter 59 (TCD MS873/101).

### 2.3.2.4 Economic constraints

Following the collapse of the sisters' muslin business in 1815, Mary Ann despaired that "the sphere of a woman's industry is so confined, and so few roads lie open to her, and those so thorny, it is difficult to fix on any."<sup>78</sup> Evidently, she was frustrated by the economic constraints placed on her sex and was compelled to channel her energies into philanthropic work. Indeed, in Letter 105 she concedes:

I have allowed my out-of-door avocations to increase so much, that I have less command of time now than when I was occupied with business. I am not sure whether that is quite right or not. I fear that undertaking too many things prevents me from doing anything as it ought to be; but somehow one gets entangled unawares, and cannot draw back, particularly if they think that they are usefully employed.<sup>79</sup>

It would appear then that the consolation she took in being "usefully employed" distracted somewhat from her desire for equal economic opportunities. This invites the question: if Mary Ann McCracken had not been drawn into multiple charitable commitments, would she have been content to play housekeeper to her brother Francis, in the same manner as her elder sister and niece?<sup>80</sup> It seems unlikely. Regardless, her reflections on gender equality fall silent after Letter 104, perhaps owing to the lack of extant letters written by McCracken between 1815 and 1842 (after which point, the surviving correspondence mainly deals with the history of the United Irishmen).

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<sup>78</sup> Letter 104.

<sup>79</sup> Letter 105.

<sup>80</sup> McCleery tells us, "the elder Miss M'Cracken [Margaret] was a good housekeeper in every sense of the word, and their orphan niece [Maria] was becoming able to assist; so that household occupations did not afford to the younger sister [MAM] scope for her irrepressible energy. She soon became engaged in what was from this time forth her life work — labouring for the poor." McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 194.

### 2.3.2.5 Split in the US Abolitionist movement over women's rights

It is also interesting to note that following the formation of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association (of which she was a member and President), its committee made the decision to contribute handmade goods to both the Boston and Philadelphia anti-slavery bazaars, reasoning that "as the abolitionists of the States are divided into two sections, which prosecute the same objects by means in some respects different, the Committee wish to have it understood, that they are prepared to forward articles to both divisions, according to the wishes of contributors."<sup>81</sup> The first "section" was the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), which conducted the Boston bazaar, while the second was The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) or Liberty Party (a splinter group of the former society) whose bazaar was held in Philadelphia. The split within the movement had occurred due to a disagreement over the incorporation of women's rights into abolitionist doctrines (among other issues); the AASS being in favour of their inclusion and the AFASS against. Despite it being at the individual's discretion as to which bazaar they contributed to, it would seem that in 1846 the majority of the Belfast women favoured the AASS, as Webb informed the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, "the American Anti-Slavery Society has many zealous friends here, which the donations to your Bazaar have abundantly testified."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, in the year of her Presidency of the society, McCracken contributed a "cradle quilt"<sup>83</sup> to the Boston bazaar and a selection of "doileys"<sup>84</sup> in 1847. Whether or not she contributed to the Philadelphia bazaar remains unknown; however, her earlier use of "abolitionist discourse to describe women's position,"<sup>85</sup> (which can be found for instance in the comment, "there can be no argument

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<sup>81</sup> "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster, September 23rd 1846." Boston Public Library.

<sup>82</sup> Maria Webb to The Secretary of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, 2 November 1846, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 182.

<sup>83</sup> Miss H. Hinks to Mrs W.L. Garrison, 6 November 1854, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 185.

<sup>84</sup> Mary Ireland to the Committee of Boston bazaar, 13 November 1857, in Oldham, "Irish Support of the Abolitionist Movement," 185.

<sup>85</sup> Kennedy, "What can women give but tears," 162.

produced in favour of the slavery of woman that has not been used in favour of general slavery”<sup>86</sup>) suggests that she may have favoured the inclusivity of the AASS.

### 2.3.3 Speculation, Fabrication and Dubious Accounts

This section considers written accounts relating to Mary Ann McCracken which remain unsubstantiated. A number of these are easily discredited while others prove more complex, being steeped in various layers of personal and folk memory.

#### 2.3.3.1 “A Model of Manly Beauty:” The Case of Thomas Russell

The nature of Mary Ann McCracken and Thomas Russell’s relationship has sparked much curiosity and speculation in the intervening years since her death. Local folk memory and written history have both generated narratives wherein Mary Ann is portrayed as Russell’s unrequited lover or as his actual lover. The earliest mention of any relationship beyond that of friendship between Mary Ann and Russell can be found within Appendix D of Young’s *Ulster in '98*, which states, “Another version of “Henry’s Ghost,” kindly dictated from memory by Mrs Thos. L’Estrange, and said by her to have been written by Captain Thomas Russell, who was engaged to Miss Mary McCracken, and, when concealed on the Cave Hill in 1798, was supplied by her with food and money to get away”.<sup>87</sup> This preamble to the song “Henry’s Ghost” is problematic on several levels. Firstly, it was in fact Henry Joy McCracken who was “concealed on the Cave Hill in 1798” and supplied with necessities by his sister, not Russell, who was at that time still incarcerated in Newgate Prison. Secondly, it is unclear who exactly is making the claim that Mary Ann and Russell were engaged to be married; Mrs L’Estrange, Young or his source Rev. Classon Porter. If the assertion was made by Young himself, it would certainly be compelling, given the fact that he corresponded with Christopher Aitchison, the

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<sup>86</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>87</sup> Robert Magill Young, ed., *Ulster in '98: Episodes and Anecdotes* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co., Limited, 1893), 94.

husband of Mary Ann's step-grandniece and executor of her will. Indeed, Aitchison is thanked in the book's Preface, having loaned Letter 3 (from Ann McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, dated 16 November 1796) to the author. If Young obtained this account of Mary Ann's and Russell's engagement from Aitchison it would be difficult to discount, given the latter's familial connection and friendship with Mary Ann in her later years.

However, in his Preface, Young acknowledges that Rev. Classon Porter's notes "are given *verbatim*" running from page 18 to page 60. The Appendix preamble to "Henry's Ghost" appears to be a footnote to page 38, where Porter lists Henry as "an insurgent leader and fugitive; hung," and then goes on to give the following reference, "See note to song called 'M'Cracken's Ghost.'"<sup>88</sup> As Porter's notes are "verbatim," it must be assumed that he was the author of the Appendix note. If so, yet another complication arises from the poorly worded reference to Mrs Thos. L'Estrange. It is clear that the song was dictated from her memory, however it is unclear whether, "and said by her" applies only to her assertion that the song was written by Russell or to the other claims that follow. Regardless of who made the claim, the other blatant inaccuracies in the sentence, coupled by the digressive and throwaway nature of the statement, raise serious doubts as to its accuracy.

Three years after Young's publication, William Thomas Latimer reiterated the engagement narrative in his *Ulster Biographies, relating chiefly to the rebellion of 1798*, boldly stating that, "in 1790, M'Cracken became acquainted with Thomas Russell, and Russell won the heart and became the affianced lover of Mary Anne M'Cracken. But this union was never consummated, as Miss M'Cracken's lover was claimed by the scaffold."<sup>89</sup> Latimer fails to divulge the provenance of such intimate details.

In his 1946 work, *As I Roved Out*, Cathal O'Byrne maintains that Mary Ann

was the avowed sweetheart of Thomas Russell, who was hanged at Downpatrick, and he, her brother's dear and true friend, was her accepted lover. As has been well said of Mary McCracken, she bore

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> William Thomas Latimer, *Ulster Biographies, relating chiefly to the rebellion of 1798* (Belfast: James Cleeland, William Mullan & Son, 1897), 3.

a double sorrow to her dying day. She stood beside the scaffold of her brother, as a young girl in her teens, at the Corn Market in High Street, and in her maturity five years later, she wept for him whom she thought would have been her life-long partner - Thomas Russell.<sup>90</sup>

Although O'Byrne does not go so far as to say that they were engaged, the term "life-long partner" strongly suggests that the couple would have married, if not for Russell's death. The speculative nature of this narrative is apparent in the phrase "as has been well said" and in the inaccuracy regarding Mary Ann's age, as she was in fact twenty-eight at the time of her brother's execution, not "a young girl in her teens." It must be taken into consideration that O'Byrne's work is drawn from folk history and memory, as its subtitle, "a series of historical sketches," suggests.

As early as 1911, Charlotte Milligan Fox challenged this version of events:

According to popular tradition in Belfast, Mary M'Cracken is supposed to have been engaged to Russell, and the romance of her love and sorrow is told as a parallel to that of Emmet and Sarah Curran. We shall see presently that tradition has erred, for Russell cherished another attachment. He was, however, her friend, and had sent when leaving prison a message of affectionate regard to her and to Edward Bunting. Her admiration for him was intense, and she seems to have regarded him with distant awe.<sup>91</sup>

Fox names "the lady to whom he was attached" as "Miss Simms, a reigning belle in Belfast Society. She does not seem to have reciprocated Russell's affections, or to have sent any message or offer of help to him in this time of trouble. Probably she had been pleased to make a conquest of him when he was the object of general admiration."<sup>92</sup> Despite acknowledging Mary Ann's "intense admiration" and "awe" of Russell, Fox believed that their relationship was purely platonic.

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<sup>90</sup> Cathal O'Byrne, *As I Roved Out* (Belfast: The Irish News Ltd., 1946), 193.

<sup>91</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 38.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

In 1919, Helena Concannon upended all previous narratives with an account of unrequited love. She claimed that upon their first meeting Russell had “won for ever her [Mary Ann’s] faithful heart,” continuing, “Alas! that he never suspected the treasure that was his!”<sup>93</sup> Concannon maintained that Mary Ann’s “years of silent love”<sup>94</sup> were the result of Russell’s other attachments; firstly to Bess Goddard, swiftly followed by Miss Simms. This treatment concurs with that of Fox’s in recognising Russell’s attachment to Miss Simms, yet it retains and exceeds the tragic romance of the engagement narrative. Concannon placed the blame firmly with Russell, painting his love for Miss Simms as “an unconscious cruelty”<sup>95</sup> and suggesting that Mary Ann did not declare her love for Russell on account of the fact that, from the day they met until the day he died, he was in love with another woman. In her view, then, it was Russell’s “blindness caused by his absorption in his own hopeless passion for another”<sup>96</sup> that was responsible for Mary Ann’s, rather understandable, silence.

Mary McNeill, Mary Ann McCracken’s biographer, followed Concannon in styling Russell as “the man that Mary loved,”<sup>97</sup> but attributed blame to Mary Ann herself, claiming that “[Russell] was unaware of the deep affection Mary felt for him, her shy, proud, nature disdaining any possible demonstration of her feelings.”<sup>98</sup> Given that McNeill’s biography was (and remains) the most comprehensive work to emerge on McCracken’s life, her version of events became the established narrative. Indeed, seven years later, in his biography of Henry Joy McCracken, Fred Heatley stated that “Mary Ann never married, but Thomas Russell went to his death unaware that he had won the heart of this sister of Harry McCracken.”<sup>99</sup> By 1997, Laurence Flanagan could observe that “it is

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<sup>93</sup> Concannon, *Women of '98*, 224–25.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 223.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>99</sup> Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 13.

generally accepted that Mary Ann McCracken was in love with Thomas Russell."<sup>100</sup>

The following year, however, a backlash against Mary Ann's "presumed love for Thomas Russell"<sup>101</sup> appeared within the edited volume *The Women of 1798*. Historian John Gray's chapter on Mary Ann McCracken highlighted the speculative nature of Concannon and McNeill's accounts, stating that "the positive evidence for such feeling is non-existent."<sup>102</sup> Moreover, Gray suggested that McNeill had failed to consider Mary Ann's "own testimony on the subject,"<sup>103</sup> before quoting an extract from Letter 161, in which Mary Ann informed Madden of Russell's love for Goddard.<sup>104</sup> In fact, McNeill did consider this letter, stating that "the story of Russell's love for Bess Goddard and of Miss Simms' secret affection for him is recounted, but only by inference do we gather the depth of her own abiding devotion."<sup>105</sup> Far from overlooking the episode, or taking it as evidence *against* the unrequited love claim, McNeill interpreted its very silences as telling. In asking us to read between the lines, McNeill reveals the key to understanding the (surprisingly resilient) "unrequited lover"<sup>106</sup> narrative; namely, that it operates — for better or worse — outside the requirement for solid evidence altogether, based on a presumed emotional life that by its very nature went unexpressed and that can, by McNeill's own admission, be recovered "only by inference."<sup>107</sup> Gray's chapter *The Women of 1798* makes a compelling argument for adopting an agnostic position; however, given the above, McNeill is unlikely to have been dissuaded. In concentrating on late-arriving contributions to the relationship narrative, rather than placing these in the context of a (much longer) historiographical chain, neither of these authors addresses the earlier and more dramatic claims.

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<sup>100</sup> Laurence Flanagan, *Irish Women's Letters* (Stroud: Sutton Pub Ltd., 1997), 65.

<sup>101</sup> Gray, "Mary Anne McCracken: Belfast revolutionary and pioneer of feminism," 58.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>105</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 305.

<sup>106</sup> Gray, "Mary Anne McCracken: Belfast revolutionary and pioneer of feminism," 47.

<sup>107</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 305.

What then did pass between Mary Ann McCracken and Russell? Their extant correspondence betrays no hint of an engagement nor of a romantic relationship.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, both parties sign-off their letters, “your sincere friend,”<sup>109</sup> a sentiment which Mary Ann reinstates in her final sentence to him: “To be considered worthy of your friendship is an honour which we shall ever most highly value.”<sup>110</sup> The “we” here referring to Mary Ann and her sister Margaret.

In later years, McCracken obliged several Irish historians seeking further information on the life of Thomas Russell. In addition to several of Russell’s letters, it would appear that she contributed a short description of Russell to Charles Hamilton Teeling, then editor of *Ulster Magazine*. This account was incorporated into the article “Sketch of Thomas Russell” and featured in the 1830 edition of the journal.<sup>111</sup> Commenting on the piece, Madden concluded that Mary Ann McCracken was “probably” the author, referring to her as “the intimate friend of Russell.”<sup>112</sup> Yet Concannon took a very different view of the account, remarking, “It is through the eyes of Mary McCracken that we of to-day are permitted to see Thomas Russell. So living and breathing is the portrait, for which a woman’s love has mixed the colours, that though Russell has been lying for one hundred and fifteen years in the grave which she made for him in Downpatrick, it seems to us as if we might have passed him in the streets to-day.”<sup>113</sup> Where Madden saw an “intimate friendship,” Concannon perceived “a woman’s love” and, having quoted the extract in full, assumed no further evidence was required. McNeill also cited this passage, with the exception of the line, “and yet his conversational powers were not of the first order, yet when roused to enthusiasm, he was sometimes more than eloquent,”<sup>114</sup> which she perhaps deemed unfitting to her narrative. For McNeill the extract

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<sup>108</sup> See Letters 48 (NRA 620/16/3/8), 65 (TCD MS873/640), 72 (TCD MS873/688), 76 (TCD MS873/64) and 78 (TCD MS873/644).

<sup>109</sup> Letters 48 and 78.

<sup>110</sup> Letter 78.

<sup>111</sup> James Morgan, “Sketch of Thomas Russell,” 39–60. See section 5.5.5.

<sup>112</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 148.

<sup>113</sup> Concannon, *Women of ‘98*, 225.

<sup>114</sup> Morgan, “Sketch of Thomas Russell,” 45. See section 5.5.5.

proved, “that she [Mary Ann] found him overwhelmingly attractive, for his “manly beauty” as well as for the strength and goodness of his character.”<sup>115</sup> The term “manly beauty” is employed by McNeill on three occasions in a bid to reinforce the unrequited lover narrative.

At the outset of Madden’s “Memoir of Thomas Russell” he acknowledges that “to Miss McCracken, and the surviving friends of Russell, I am chiefly indebted for the information given in the following memoir.”<sup>116</sup> This is reflected throughout Mary Ann’s correspondence with Madden, however, in only two of the letters does she stray from the facts of Thomas Russell’s life to give a more personal insight into his physical appearance and character. Letter 138 was written in an effort to assist Madden in his search for an authentic portrait of Russell (having first had to disappoint him with the news that Russell was not the subject of a picture he had sent her). She draws the following comparisons:

Mr Russell’s head was more beautifully rounded, he had a noble forehead – The picture seems to have a fine forehead but is too much concealed by the hair, & if I recollect right, he did not wear such large whiskers, his nose was more aquiline and his mouth exceeded in beauty and sweetness of expression any mouth I ever saw, particularly when he smiled. His look of confiding affection was so perfectly trustful as if entirely incapable of deceit or of suspecting deceit in others, and I never saw the same degree of dignity and sweetness combined in any other countenance but his own, he was altogether a perfect model of manly beauty & gracefulness; this was allowed by all who saw him. I forgot to say that his eyes were not so large nor so prominent as those in the picture but were good dark eyes, well set & with a pleasing expression.<sup>117</sup>

The phrase “a model of manly beauty” echoes the opening line of the *Ulster Magazine* extract, adding legitimacy to the claim that Mary Ann contributed to the article.<sup>118</sup> However, in 1859 she wrote to Madden,

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<sup>115</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 74.

<sup>116</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 137–38.

<sup>117</sup> Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)).

<sup>118</sup> See section 5.5.5.

highlighting a series of errors in his “Memoir of Thomas Russell.”<sup>119</sup> One of these inaccuracies referred to a phrase from the *Ulster Magazine* quotation. She explained, “Compressed lip is not correct, that would express contempt, which I never saw in his countenance.”<sup>120</sup> As she was correcting a passage which, on the very same page, Madden claimed was composed by Mary Ann McCracken herself (a statement she did not contest in her letter), it would suggest that she was no longer happy with what she had originally written or that Morgan had, in some way, adapted her words.

Nonetheless, she supplied an alternative description to the phrase, stating “his mouth was the most beautiful, particularly when he smiled, I ever saw & so perfectly truthful, as if so truthful himself that he never suspected deceit [sic] in others. I never saw a mouth resembling it but one, not quite its equal.”<sup>121</sup> Evidently, she had studied Russell’s features and could recall them in meticulous detail many decades after his death. Whether this is evidence of her harboured feelings however, remains elusive.

What then was Madden’s opinion on the matter? In preparation for his first meeting with Mary Ann McCracken in early 1842, the historian drew up a questionnaire on the subject of Russell. Three of the questions posed were, “Was he [Russell] attached to any Lady?” “Was he attached to Miss M?” and “Was he attached to Miss Simms?”<sup>122</sup> Presumably, “Miss M” referred to McCracken but unfortunately, these three questions went unanswered, at least on the questionnaire. The fact that Madden was curious and open to the possibility of there having been an attachment between Mary Ann and Russell suggests that either, having read the *Ulster Magazine* extract, his suspicions had been aroused or, that some degree of rumour existed at that time.<sup>123</sup> However, having interviewed and corresponded with McCracken over the course of five years, no such theory appeared in his “Memoir of Thomas Russell.” Indeed, he faithfully recorded what both Mary Ann and Hope had told him,

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<sup>119</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2,

<sup>120</sup> Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Section 5.4.1.

<sup>123</sup> Their first meeting took place on 24 April 1842. See section 3.7.

which was that after Russell's ill-fated attachment to Miss Goddard, he was "strongly attached"<sup>124</sup> to Miss Simms.

In an undated biographical account of the life of James Witherspoon, Mary Ann referred to Miss Simms as "the lady to whom he [Russell] was engaged."<sup>125</sup> However, by 1857, she had changed her position on the matter, informing Madden:

in your work I think there might be an improvement, as I felt considerable regret & self reproach at my injudicious & imprudent communications of private matters, particularly the names of Ladies [...] her [Miss Simms's] niece told me that it was untrue that her aunt was to have been married to Russell & this idea of untruth & falseness tends to throw a doubt on other facts, might not these Ladies names be omitted in the ensuing edition & the particulars more lightly touched on? It is most probable that Russell never spoke of marriage to either of these Ladies.<sup>126</sup>

The fact that she had entertained the idea of an engagement between Russell and Miss Simms strongly suggests that the McCracken/Russell engagement narrative (which originated in Young's *Ulster in '98*) was purely speculative. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of his other attachments does not necessarily rule out Concannon and McNeill's theory of unrequited love; for them it merely made the narrative all the more poignant.

### 2.3.3.2 Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*

In 1919, historian James Winder Good claimed that, "Mary M'Cracken maintained to her dying day - and she lived well into the middle of the nineteenth century - that the *Age of Reason* was written by the orders of the British Government and fathered on Tom Paine in order to create prejudice against the author of the *Rights of Man*."<sup>127</sup> A similar assertion was made by McCleery, though in reference to Mary

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<sup>124</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 148.

<sup>125</sup> Section 5.3.2.

<sup>126</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>127</sup> James Winder Good, *Ulster and Ireland* (Dublin and London: Maunsel and Co., 1919), 40.

Ann's mother, Ann McCracken: "Paine's *Rights of Man* was read and admired. Tone called it — The Koran of Blefescu (Belfast). Mrs. M'Cracken, afterwards hearing of his *Age of Reason*, said it could not be his, but must have been written by some one who attributed it to him to discredit him."<sup>128</sup> Here, not only is the belief accredited to a different person but the "British Government," is replaced by the much more neutral "some one."

However, McCleery went on to state that, "Paine afterwards fell in the estimation of at least her younger daughter, for she spoke of his vulgarity and inordinate self-conceit."<sup>129</sup> Indeed, Mary Ann expressed her disapproval of the work in two of her letters. In 1835, she stated, "It was a pity that Paine's *Age of Reason* had so soon succeeded his *Rights of Man*, as notwithstanding the latter had much effect on many of natural good understandings, but not in the two last-mentioned, and many who had been led astray by the infidel publication recovered from their delusion."<sup>130</sup> Over twenty years later she wrote to Madden:

I cannot recollect whether you are aware of the effects of Paine's *Age of Reason*, I mean in regard to its effects on the public mind. The Revd Mr McClure, the presbyterian clergyman of Carnmoney at that period, said that a great number of this work had been thrown into the houses of his congregation by unknown individuals & at the camp at Ballynahinch, a great number of pious covenanters left the camp in consequence of the irreligious expressions & profanation of the sabbath day, saying it could not have the blessing of God.<sup>131</sup>

Evidently McCracken, like many other radical Protestants of the time, took issue with the publication. Indeed, upon reading *Age of Reason*, Tone dismissed it as "damned trash."<sup>132</sup> Although there is a possibility

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<sup>128</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 181.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Letter 119.

<sup>131</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>132</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, ed., William Theobald Wolfe Tone, 2 vols (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1826), 22.

that Mary Ann adopted her mother's opinion, Good's implication that she held a conspiracist view on the matter remains unsubstantiated.

### 2.3.3.3 Mrs Duffin's account of Mary Ann McCracken

In *Belfast and its Charitable Society*, Strain related the following memory of Mrs Maria Duffin of Summer Hill, "I remember Miss Mary Ann McCracken at a party at my Grandmother's, Mrs Drennan, at 23 Chichester St. Miss McCracken lived next door with a niece, a Mrs. McCleery or McCreery - she is associated with sparkling jelly in long glasses, and custards, in cups!"<sup>133</sup> A week before Mrs Duffin's death, McNeill interviewed the elderly lady who, "related to me [McNeill] how as a small child she had, with her grandmother, visited Miss McCracken."<sup>134</sup> The proximity of McCracken's accommodation to that of Mrs Drennan's has been dropped from this account. It seems unlikely that McNeill would have overlooked such a detail. *Martin's Belfast Directory 1841-1842* does place Mrs Drennan at 23 Chichester Street, however, no evidence exists to prove McCracken or Maria McCleery also lived on the street.<sup>135</sup> It must be taken into consideration that when conveying this information, Mrs Duffin was in her 100th and 101st year respectively, therefore the accuracy of her memories may have been questionable.

### 2.3.3.4 "Into their aprons"

Although the author of *General History of the rebellion of 1798* set out with good intentions, stating in his Preface "that nothing devoid of truth and justice (as must appear to every impartial reader,) will be admitted into our pages,"<sup>136</sup> O'Kelly preceded to recount Henry Joy McCracken's final moments with such outrageous inaccuracy and

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<sup>133</sup> R.W.M. Strain, *Belfast and its Charitable Society: A Story of Urban Social Development* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 122.

<sup>134</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 11.

<sup>135</sup> *Martin's Belfast Directory for 1841-2*, (Belfast: Martin, 1841), 124.

<sup>136</sup> Patrick O'Kelly, *General History of the rebellion of 1798, with many interesting occurrences of the two preceding years* (Dublin: J. Downes, 1842), iii.

hyperbole that it reads like a scene from *Titus Andronicus*. He states that it was in Belfast where Henry was “tried, condemned, executed, quartered, and beheaded. His sisters and mother attended the horrible scene of butchery that was ferociously acted upon the body of M’Cracken: they received it, cut into quarters, into their aprons, from the bloody hands of the monster his executor.”<sup>137</sup> Ironically, Madden’s “Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken,” containing Mary Ann McCracken’s personal testimony was published the following year.<sup>138</sup>

### 2.3.3.5 Frank Roney’s account

Frank Roney’s *Irish Rebel and California Labor Leader; an autobiography* has received new attention as a source for ceremonies of remembrance of the United Irishmen. However, as we will see there are good reasons for caution (and even skepticism) when interpreting Roney’s reminiscences of a Belfast boyhood heavily influenced by his mother’s radicalism. As the daughter of a former United Irishman (Jack Thompson), Mrs Roney deeply revered Henry Joy McCracken, so much so that Roney recalled how:

His sufferings and his death upon the scaffold at Corn Market and his sister Mary’s courage in being present at the execution, dressed in green, and her cutting off a lock of his hair as a souvenir, were recited to me time and time again, and made such an impression on my young mind that I felt that if, when I became a man, I failed to avenge his death, I would be derelict in my duty to my God and my Country.<sup>139</sup>

That Mary Ann was “present at the execution” is inaccurate, given that she informed Madden, “I suffered myself to be led away,”<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>138</sup> For Madden’s “Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken” see Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99 and for a revised version of the Memoir (as corrected by MAM), see section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>139</sup> Frank Roney, *Irish rebel and California labor leader; an autobiography*, ed. Ira B. Cross (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1931), 12.

<sup>140</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 494.

before the noose was placed around his neck.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, Roney continued:

This feeling was intensified by our annual visit to his sisters, the Misses McCracken, who lived in a large house on Donegall Street. All the year round the blinds of the windows of their house were drawn, denoting their mourning for their hero brother, except on St. Patrick's day, the National holiday, when the light was admitted and the two antiquated ladies, dressed in green for that one day, would hold high and solemn festival. No others but my mother and I and the old servants were ever present on those solemn occasions. The impressions made upon me became permanent.<sup>142</sup>

This statement is problematic on several levels. Most significantly, Roney was born on 13 August 1841, eleven years after Margaret McCracken's death. Therefore his claim to have visited both of Henry's sisters cannot be taken seriously. Furthermore, Mary Ann moved from the house on Donegall Street in early 1843, at which point Roney was a one year old infant.<sup>143</sup> The assertion that their blinds were drawn all year around (with the exception of St Patrick's Day), is called into question by Mary Ann's statement, "I wrote the foregoing nearly in the dark with my back to the window so that you will have difficulty to decypher [sic] some of it."<sup>144</sup> This would suggest that the window was a light source and given that it was written on 26 December 1849, when Roney was eight years old, it goes some way to disproving his recollection.

Historian Guy Beiner refers to this account in his *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster*; however, he reworks the narrative to exclude Margaret McCracken stating, "on annual visits to the McCracken household on Donegall Street, he met Mary Ann McCracken and 'the descendants of the old rebel stock that remained in Belfast,' all of

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<sup>141</sup> A full analysis of MAM's recollections of the day of HJM's execution, can be found within 2.1.1.

<sup>142</sup> Roney, *Irish rebel and California labor leader*, 12.

<sup>143</sup> See section 4.1.

<sup>144</sup> Letter 151 (PRONI D1748/H/29/5).

whom were Presbyterian.”<sup>145</sup> Despite Roney having stated that “no others but my mother and I and the old servants were ever present on those solemn occasions,”<sup>146</sup> Beiner continues, “attendance at these gatherings was confined to an inner circle of former United Irishmen.”<sup>147</sup> It is clear that Beiner has merged Roney’s comments on the St Patrick’s Day gathering with the sentence that follows, which states, “With these ladies and the descendants of the old rebel stock that remained in Belfast, no sentiments of sectarian bias ever existed.”<sup>148</sup> As a result of this confusion, Beiner concludes that “the reminiscences of Ninety-Eight that were retold in such cloistered forums were shrouded in secrecy.”<sup>149</sup> A further misreading causes Beiner to state, “These surreptitious encounters left an imprint on the young Roney, who later wrote that ‘the impressions made upon me became permanent,’”<sup>150</sup> when in fact, this quotation refers to the stories told to him by his mother.

It is possible that Roney misremembered the who and the where of the situation, given that he was only a child when the alleged gatherings took place. He may have mistaken Maria McCracken for Mary Ann’s sister. Likewise, the “large house” with its “old servants” may have been Bankmore House as opposed to the house on Donegall Street. It is also plausible that these sisters were relatives of Mary Ann, for instance, John McCracken Junior’s daughters. However, the many incongruities cast considerable doubt on Roney’s account in general.

### 2.3.4 Mary Ann McCracken: the Historian

By definition, an historian is someone who studies and writes about history and who is considered an expert in their given field. Although Mary Ann McCracken was not a published author of historical works or otherwise, it has been argued that “she is deserving of the fame due

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<sup>145</sup> Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 250.

<sup>146</sup> Roney, *Irish rebel and California labor leader*, 12.

<sup>147</sup> Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 250.

<sup>148</sup> Roney, *Irish rebel and California labor leader*, 12–13.

<sup>149</sup> Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 250.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

to a historian.”<sup>151</sup> This section will endeavour to draw out the implications of such a judgement, which is not a contemporary one but was rather formulated in 1911 by Edward Bunting’s biographer, Charlotte Milligan Fox (who was arguably deserving of the same recognition).

Although scholars have traditionally focused upon Mary Ann McCracken’s contribution to Madden’s *United Irishmen* (their correspondence dating between 1842 and 1861), her interest and involvement in the dissemination of history can be seen to have much earlier origins. Her music notebook, found within QUBSC’s Bunting Collection,<sup>152</sup> proves that as early as 1808 she was assisting Bunting in recording the ancient music of Ireland, which was published with the intention to “restore a page in the history of man.”<sup>153</sup> Indeed, in Letter 141, James Orr recognised Bunting’s works as “giving so valuable a history of ancient Ireland.”<sup>154</sup> Drawing upon Letter 95, in which Bunting wrote to Mary Ann, “I received your letter and shall take care to have the paper enclosed which you sent inserted in its proper place relative to the Brass Trumpets, &cc,”<sup>155</sup> historian Robert Magill Young concluded that “in addition to Mary M’Cracken assisting in the collecting of the material, it would appear that she had written part of the disquisition on musical instruments given in his volume published in 1809.”<sup>156</sup> Bunting’s ensuing suggestion that some cuts be made to Mary Ann’s “notes” further substantiates Young’s assertion. Furthermore, Bunting benefited greatly from her flair for networking, with her acting as intermediary between key contributors such as Mary Balfour, Henry Joy and Dr O’Conor,<sup>157</sup> and providing Bunting with invaluable contacts, as Letter 87 demonstrates: “I find that your friend (to whom I am indebted for many favours), Mr Alfred Blest,

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<sup>151</sup> Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), 34–5.

<sup>152</sup> See section 5.5.3.

<sup>153</sup> Letter 127.

<sup>154</sup> Letter 141.

<sup>155</sup> Letter 95.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Magill Young, “Edward Bunting’s Irish music and the M’Cracken family,” *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1898), 176.

<sup>157</sup> See Letter 87, in which Bunting instructs MAM to write to Dr Charles O’Conor.

has put all the 'irons in the fire' for me."<sup>158</sup> Although Mary Ann's efforts went unacknowledged within Bunting's works, Young speculated "that the M'Crackens did not wish their names to appear, in view of circumstances at that time,"<sup>159</sup> the implication being that the McCrackens may have preferred to keep a low profile (following their involvement in the rebellion), fearing the association could hurt Bunting's work. Nevertheless, within *The Ancient Irish Music's* "Index to the English Names of the Airs," John McCracken Junior is acknowledged as a "procurer" of several pieces.<sup>160</sup>

Mary Ann McCracken's first opportunity to contribute to a history of the United Irishmen came when Charles Hamilton Teeling, editor of *The Ulster Magazine*, requested a loan of her materials relating to Thomas Russell, which she obliged. These documents were passed on to James Morgan to assist with his article, "Sketch of Thomas Russell," which appeared in the January 1830 edition of the journal.<sup>161</sup> However, Morgan did not make use of any of the papers and failed to return them. Although authored by James Morgan, it would appear that Mary Ann contributed several hundred words, which may then have been adapted in some manner by Morgan. Indeed, Madden was of the opinion that "in the sketch of Russell's life, published in the *Ulster Magazine*, there is an admirable description of his address and personal appearance, for which the writer was probably indebted to the faithful recollection of the intimate friend of Russell, the sister of Henry Joy McCracken."<sup>162</sup> Madden proceeded to quote the extract, as did Mary Ann's later biographers, Concannon and McNeill. What adds legitimacy to the claim, is that some of the language and phrases in this extract are mirrored in Letter 138. For instance, as we have

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<sup>158</sup> Letter 87.

<sup>159</sup> Young, "Edward Bunting's Irish music and the M'Cracken family," 176.

<sup>160</sup> See Edward Bunting, "Index to the English Names of the Airs," *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never Before Published, and also the Compositions of Conolan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers &c. in the Different Provinces of Ireland, and Adapted for the Piano-Forte, with a Prefatory Introduction*, vol. 1 (London: Preston & Son, 1797), viii and x.

<sup>161</sup> James Morgan, "Sketch of Thomas Russell," *Ulster Magazine* 1, no.1 (1830): 39–60.

<sup>162</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 148.

seen, Mary Ann describes Russell as a “model of manly beauty,”<sup>163</sup> echoing the opening line of the passage.<sup>164</sup>

A second opportunity arose when antiquarian and local historian Samuel McSkimin entreated Mary Ann to lend him some of her materials relating to the rebellion. In spite of the fact that McSkimin was a former yeoman and “a strong opponent of the political party with which she was connected,”<sup>165</sup> McCracken consented; a decision which McCleery viewed as “evidence of her liberality and toleration.”<sup>166</sup> However, McSkimin’s failure to put the papers to full use in his publications, coupled with his failure to return them “though she [McCracken] made frequent applications for them,” suggested (perhaps understandably) to McCleery that her step grandaunt had misplaced her trust.

That Mary Ann McCracken willingly handed over her remaining papers of relevance to Madden in 1841 testifies, therefore, not only to her character but also to her desire and determination to see a history of the United Irishmen realised. Indeed, historian Guy Beiner argues that during this period “the remaining old guard of the northern United Irishmen,” having “weathered the years after the rebellion, unable to openly commemorate their lost loved ones, and, realizing that soon they too would pass away, were more intent than ever to bequeath a heroic memory of the rebellion.”<sup>167</sup> Moreover, Madden sought to expand upon and correct the accounts of Morgan and McSkimin, “with a determination ‘to extenuate nought, and to set down nought in malice.’”<sup>168</sup> These objectives appealed to Mary Ann, who offered the following justification when attempting to retrieve McSkimin’s papers after his death:

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<sup>163</sup> See Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)).

<sup>164</sup> The entire passage can be found in section 5.5.5.

<sup>165</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 197.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. In a letter to Madden, Hope claimed McSkimin had been “a spy, and in arms against them [the United Irishmen] in 1798.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 1, 223.

<sup>167</sup> Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 219.

<sup>168</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, First Series, vol. 1, ix. Here Madden paraphrases Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Act V, Scene 2.

my motive in wishing for the papers was that truth and falsehood might be separated while there were living witnesses competent to do so; I do not think it would be consistent with truth (the legitimate object of history) to suppress any well authenticated fact, let the blame rest where it may, the run of history being to promote the knowledge of mankind, and the service of governing.<sup>169</sup>

Evidently Mary Ann McCracken had read and disapproved of McSkimin's publication, yet her engagement with the history of the United Irishmen extended beyond those works in which she had a vested interest. For instance, we know that she owned a copy of Edward Hay's *History of the insurrection of the county of Wexford, A.D. 1798*,<sup>170</sup> while in Letter 108 she commented upon the reception of Tone's *Life*, having looked "over a little" of her brother Francis's copy.<sup>171</sup> A year before the publication of William Hamilton Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798 with Memoirs of the Union and Emmet's Insurrection of 1803*, Mary Ann wrote to Madden, "I dare say the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Sirr has handed over Mr Russell's papers to Maxwell, that they may appear in a garbled state in his villainous publication."<sup>172</sup> Not only does this illustrate that McCracken kept abreast of forthcoming publications in the field but also that she had a strong view on the manner in which the history should be disseminated.

In assisting Madden, Mary Ann assumed the roles of facilitator and contributor, with the latter function including her work as an informant and as a written contributor in her own right. She facilitated his research by entrusting him with many contemporary documents and letters (many of which were either penned by or to herself), some of which he reproduced within his works. In this capacity she also mediated between Madden and other parties, drawing on her contacts to secure additional testimonies and

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<sup>169</sup> Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156). Beiner has also drawn attention to this passage as an example of "counter-forgetting." See Guy Beiner, "Disremembering 1798?: An Archaeology of Social Forgetting and Remembrance in Ulster," *History and Memory* 25, no.1 (Spring/Summer 2013): 23 and Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 219.

<sup>170</sup> See section 5.5.4.

<sup>171</sup> Letter 108.

<sup>172</sup> Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155). William Hamilton Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798 with Memoirs of the Union and Emmet's Insurrection of 1803* was intended as a corrective to Madden's work.

materials, as the following extract illustrates: “I have got the letters from Mrs Templeton, that is, the correspondence between Mr Russell & Mr Templeton which she gives you free liberty to make any use of you think proper, only to return them safely when you have done with them.”<sup>173</sup> Although appeals such as those made to Mrs Templeton, Ellen Rabb and Israel Milliken (among others) bore fruit, others were less successful, as James D. Rose Clelland and John McAdam’s regretful letters of reply demonstrate.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, McCracken was persistent in tracking down leads such as Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent and in following up requests, as revealed by her prompting of Doctor McDonnell’s granddaughter, Miss Armstrong:

I called on her [Miss Armstrong] since & enquired if her uncles had seen your letter, she replied, they had not. I reminded her of the propriety of her sending it to them, in consequence of the information you desired & which the Doctor would most gladly have given you. I think you would do well to write to either of the Mr McDonnells on the subject, and you might at the same time, introduce another of some interest.<sup>175</sup>

Indeed, in the final line of this passage, Mary Ann can be seen to be coaxing Madden himself into making a direct appeal. That he failed to implement her suggestion, perhaps indicates the extent to which he relied upon her as his intermediary in the north. Indeed, it was she who introduced Madden to contributors such as James Hope and John Alexander Russell, with whom he went on to strike up independent correspondences.

In her role as informant, Mary Ann granted Madden an interview on the subject of her brother’s life, meticulously recalling “the period of his defeat at Antrim to his execution.”<sup>176</sup> These reminiscences were reproduced “in her own words,”<sup>177</sup> within Madden’s “Memoir of

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<sup>173</sup> Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693).

<sup>174</sup> See Letter 137 (TCD MS873/626) and 158 (TCD MS873/160).

<sup>175</sup> Letter 142 (24 O 10/ 22 (iii)).

<sup>176</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479. For a more detailed account of this interview see section 5.4.3.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* Despite this claim, MAM later drew Madden’s attention to minor inaccuracies in the account, suggesting that he did not record all of her words verbatim.

Henry Joy McCracken," accounting for roughly twenty percent of the memoir as a whole.<sup>178</sup> She also provided answers to Madden's pre-prepared questionnaire on the subject of Thomas Russell, on the reverse of which he recorded the minutes of their conversation.<sup>179</sup> Her written contribution included three biographical sketches on the lives of Elizabeth Grey, James Witherspoon and William Neilson, all of which were reproduced within Madden's works (albeit subject to varying degrees of paraphrasing and editing).<sup>180</sup> Within her letters, Mary Ann answered Madden's enquiries, supplying him with an abundance of information (frequently on the subject of Thomas Russell) which he utilised and cited within his works. In the following instance, Madden refers directly to their correspondence, stating:

Respecting Tone's religious sentiments, having heard conflicting opinions expressed regarding them, I made some inquiries on the subject of Miss M'Cracken, who had been intimately acquainted with him. Miss M'Cracken, in reply to my inquiries, stated that 'Tone was not sceptical. There was a society in Belfast, of a political kind, all of whose members were sceptics. They would not admit Tone, because he believed in the truths of religion, and he had given them some proofs of the fact, for they presented him with one of Paine's works, which he refused to read,' and I think Miss M'Cracken added, 'to accept.'<sup>181</sup>

Mary Ann also took on an editorial role, supplying Madden with lists of corrections to her brother's memoir within Letters 177 and 178.<sup>182</sup> However, these corrections were never brought to print as the second edition of *United Irishmen* remained unfinished.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99.

<sup>179</sup> See section 5.4.1.

<sup>180</sup> For the account of Elizabeth Grey's life see Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 1, 397–98; for James Witherspoon's biography see Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 219–21; and for William Neilson's life see Madden, *United Irishmen*, First Series, Second Edition, 336–339 and also Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 475–77.

<sup>181</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 1, 161–62.

<sup>182</sup> See section 5.4.3.

<sup>183</sup> See Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 7.

As has been previously suggested, Madden did not shy away from acknowledging Mary Ann's contribution. Although he opened Henry's memoir with a general recognition of "the fidelity of female friendship or affection on the part of their female relatives" he proceeded to identify Mary Ann as the chapter's key contributor:

The name of Mary McCracken has become associated in the North with that of her beloved brother. The recollection of every act of his seems to have been stored up in her mind, as if she felt the charge of his reputation had been committed to her especial care. In that attachment there are traits to be noticed, indicative not only of singleness of heart and benevolence of disposition, but of a noble spirit of heroism, strikingly displayed in the performance of perilous duties, of services rendered at the hazard of life, at great pecuniary sacrifice, not only to that dear brother, but at a later period to his faithful friend, the unfortunate Thomas Russell.<sup>184</sup>

This is followed by the more specific acknowledgement, "we are principally indebted to the sister of Henry Joy M'Cracken for the materials which enable us to give the following sketch of her brother's ancestry, character and life."<sup>185</sup> Subsequently, in Chapter 24, Mary Ann's interview is introduced thus: "For the following account of the short career of M'Cracken, from the period of his defeat at Antrim to his execution, we are indebted to his sister. And without injustice to his memory, the statement could not be given except in her own words."<sup>186</sup> Similar preambles set up Mary Ann's biographical sketches, such as that attached to Grey's life: "The following account of this village heroine, whose memory will yet be done honour to in Ireland, I received from Miss M'Cracken, and on her authority the facts stated will be held entitled to credit."<sup>187</sup> Madden was also diligent in attaching Mary Ann McCracken's name to documents and letters which she had supplied.

Her enthusiasm for Madden's project and the significance she attributed to it is demonstrated in the following glowing accolade, "you have the satisfaction to feel that your own country in particular,

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<sup>184</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 389–90.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.

<sup>187</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 1, 397.

and mankind in general, are deeply indebted to you for the pains you have taken to give a faithful narrative of an interesting portion of Irish history, affording a useful lesson, both to Rulers, and to people, which at the present juncture, comes with additional force."<sup>188</sup> Her dedication to the work's dissemination saw her taking on the promotion and advertising of the third series. Yet again, we see her networking skills in action as she related her efforts to Madden:

I had the pleasure of receiving your welcome letter & felt much gratified by your allowing me to be in any way instrumental in forwarding the publication of your valuable work, the advertisement of which should have appeared in the next day's Whig but that I had to wait for advice from Mr Getty & Mr Cogan, the former gentleman was in London on town business & before I received his answer, Mr Cogan to whom I had also written, forbid me to advertise until further instructions as he thought it could be published without subscription & had written to you on the subject. No doubt it may, but having a sufficient number of subscribers would be the most certain way of avoiding any risk of loss. Mr Getty is not yet returned from London but he wrote to me saying that two in each of the papers you mentioned would be sufficient, on different weeks alternatively, so as to be a month before the public be recommended Henry Greer as the Belfast Agent, his father having been a State prisoner in 1797.<sup>189</sup>

However, a decade later, when Madden was setting the wheels in motion for the second editions, Mary Ann raised the important question of there being sufficient interest:

I fear the republication of the United Irish will be a losing concern, as the history is neither new enough, nor old enough, to excite a general interest, the wonders of the present day, the discoveries in nature, inventions in art & all the extraordinary changes in the mind of man, are of such absorbing interest that the politics of half a century back, is little thought of, if the work is to go on, I think there were a few inaccuracies which might be corrected.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156).

<sup>189</sup> Letter 142 (24 O 10/ 22 (iii)).

<sup>190</sup> Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

At the time of writing she was eighty-three years of age and therefore it is possible that she felt satisfied to have lived to see her original goal realised through the first editions of *United Irishmen*. Yet, in spite of these doubts, she fully embraced the renewed undertaking. Considering that, as Mary Ann stated in her next letter, “there are few now living who took an active part at that unfortunate period of Ireland’s history & those who are, in general have defective memories,”<sup>191</sup> Madden was fortunate in securing Mary Ann’s multi-faceted assistance once again. Indeed, historian David Brundage remarks that Mary Ann McCracken “made a more enduring contribution to Irish republican nationalism as a kind of “movement historian” than she ever could have as a rank-and-file United Irish member.”<sup>192</sup> It was therefore through Madden’s work that she emerged as the in-house historian of the northern United Irishmen.

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<sup>191</sup> Letter 157 (TCD MS873/73).

<sup>192</sup> David Brundage, “Matilda Tone in America: Exile, Gender, and Memory in the Making of Irish Republican Nationalism,” in *New Hibernia Review* 14, no. 1 (2010): 109.

## 2.4 Literary Images of Mary Ann McCracken

The following table details the manner in which the literary character and historical figure are distinguished from one another within this section:

Name	Literary Character	Historical Figure
Mary Ann McCracken	Mary	MAM
Henry Joy McCracken	Henry	HJM
Thomas Russell	Russell	TR
Richard Robert Madden	Madden	RRM
James Hope	Hope	JH
Margaret McCracken	Peggy	MM
John McCracken Junior	John	JM

### 2.4.1 Drama

This genre is, by far, the most given to representing MAM through the theatrical stage production, the radio play and the dramatic re-enactment. The form has proved most suited to capturing both her energy and vocal nature.

#### 2.4.1.1 Jack Loudan's *Henry Joy McCracken* (1945)

MAM first appeared as a dramatic character in Jack Loudan's play *Henry Joy McCracken* which opened on 31 March 1945. It was performed by the Ulster Group Theatre company, then in its infancy. The role was performed by the twenty-seven year old Belfast actress,

Margaret D'Arcy. Upon its revival in 1998, as part of the 1798 bicentenary commemorations, Sorcha McMahon stepped into the role.

Throughout the play, Mary is given a relatively central role, featuring in all three acts. She is introduced in the stage directions as "a pretty young woman of 26."<sup>1</sup> The play's plot draws heavily upon MAM's recollections of her brother's final days as a fugitive, his eventual arrest, trial and execution. These details are recorded within RRM's *Lives of the United Irishmen*<sup>2</sup> which were based on an interview between the historian and MAM. Drawing heavily on such material results in much of the action taking place offstage, leaving the cast to provide lengthy explanations from the confines of "a room in the Military Barracks" and "a room in the Exchange Buildings." Furthermore, it is the English military men who account for a large portion of the dialogue.

The character of Captain Hilary, an English Officer, is an amalgamation of several different soldiers mentioned in RRM's "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken."<sup>3</sup> Loudan draws his initial inspiration for the character from an incident involving the soldiers who escorted HJM to Dublin upon his arrest in October 1796. RRM explains that "during the journey he [HJM] contrived to gain the confidence of some of the soldiers, and an intimation was made to him that he would be suffered to escape;"<sup>4</sup> an offer which he declined. Loudan distinguishes Captain Hilary as "the officer in charge" of this escort party, who, Mary recalls, "had been considerate" to her brother by giving him "the opportunity to escape."<sup>5</sup> Captain Hilary is also based on MAM's recollection of a "young officer" who led her and her sister to HJM's Belfast cell:

We hurried there, and sent a message to Colonel Barber, who instantly sent out a young officer to accompany us to my brother; and when we apologized to this gentleman for giving him so much trouble, he said, "He did not consider it any trouble, and would be glad to serve us." I did not learn his name. When we reached the

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Loudan, *Henry Joy McCracken*, (Dubin: New Frontiers Press, 1946), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–499.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 389–506.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 404

<sup>5</sup> Loudan, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 9–10.

place of confinement, he very kindly stood at a distance from the door of the cell, that we might have an opportunity of conversing at our ease with our brother.<sup>6</sup>

In the play, Hilary does not take Mary to her brother. However, upon their reunion he clears the other soldiers from the room and kindly states, "I'll leave you, you may have something to say in private. I'll give you as long as possible together,"<sup>7</sup> before exiting.

Hilary's sympathies towards Henry and his cause are framed by his blossoming feelings for Mary. Their interactions are cordial, yet no hint of romantic interest is ever expressed on Mary's part. When Hilary's fellow officer Lieutenant Lumley relays Major Fox's suspicions about his loyalties, he further reveals, "He says that you're prejudiced because you're the lover of McCracken's sister."<sup>8</sup> Pressed on whether or not he is in love with Mary, Hilary declares, "I don't mind telling you, Lumley. I believe I am."<sup>9</sup> Pollock, the Crown Attorney, later accuses Hilary of allowing personal motive to cloud his judgement, causing Fox to laugh, "By God, you're right Pollock. Hilary's a lady's man. He has his eye on the pretty sister...It's true. You watch the way he looks at her,"<sup>10</sup> thus suggesting that Hilary has allowed himself to be bewitched by Mary.

In the court scene, Loudan replaces the defence witnesses, Mrs Holmes and Miss Tomb (MAM and HJM's first and second cousins respectively) with Mary, giving the audience an insight into MAM's resolve, honesty and even her "quick and hasty temper," a trait which her step-grandniece Anna McCleery explains was roused "if a helpless person were wronged" and often resulted in "her hot, indignant words."<sup>11</sup> Clearly Loudan was drawing upon this account as Mary's stage directions require her to deliver her lines "indignantly"<sup>12</sup> and

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<sup>6</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 486.

<sup>7</sup> Loudan, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 197.

<sup>12</sup> Loudan, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 45.

“hotly”<sup>13</sup> during her cross-examination. Mary is not afraid to admit an interest in politics before the court, despite the fact that it may have played to her advantage to feign ignorance.

Upon Fox’s announcement that Henry has been ordered for immediate execution, Mary breaks down; as the stage directions indicate, “She throws her arms round his neck and cries. Dickson takes her gently away.” The Reverent Dixon then tells her rather condescendingly, “Come, Mary, we must be brave.”<sup>14</sup> This runs contrary to MAM’s recollections in which she does not weep until her brother begged her to leave him at the foot of the scaffold. The execution scene takes place offstage and is related to the audience by Hilary, who is watching from a window. Upon spotting the siblings he comments, “they’re walking arm in arm. Their heads are held high. And she’s looking at him — proudly.”<sup>15</sup>

#### 2.4.1.2 John Hewitt’s *The McCrackens* (undated)

Having attended a performance of Jack Loudan’s *Henry Joy McCracken* in 1948, the poet John Hewitt wrote to a friend to express his disappointment with the play’s “failure to grasp period politics and to realise adequate characterisations of historical figures.”<sup>16</sup> Hewitt subsequently wrote a play “provisionally titled ‘The Parting of Friends’ and posthumously renamed *The McCrackens*,”<sup>17</sup> which was discovered amongst his manuscripts and published posthumously in 1999.<sup>18</sup> In the introduction, Damian Smyth (the play’s editor) suggests that *The McCrackens* was written as a “pacy retort”<sup>19</sup> to Loudan’s work. However, the exact date of the play’s composition remains

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>16</sup> Damian Smyth, “Introduction” in John Hewitt *Two Plays: The McCrackens and The Angry Dove*, (Belfast: Lagan Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>17</sup> Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance*, 519.

<sup>18</sup> The John Hewitt Collection is housed at the Ulster University’s Special Collections Library in Coleraine.

<sup>19</sup> Hewitt, *The McCrackens*, 16.

unknown. In 1998, a staged reading of the play was performed at the Eleventh John Hewitt International Summer School.

Growing up a short distance from the Belfast Charitable Society, Hewitt quickly became acquainted with the city's radical roots which, in turn, found their way into his poetry. Hewitt's expertise on eighteenth century Ulster was such that McNeill enlisted him to read over drafts of *Life*. McNeill thanks Hewitt in her introduction, "for reading the manuscript and for much valuable help and advice."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the book's jacket features a line of Hewitt's review of the work which reads, "the best biography of an Ulsterman or woman to have come out in this century."<sup>21</sup> Such an endorsement places Hewitt's understanding of MAM in line with McNeill's, which is reflected in the play through Mary's unrequited love for Russell.

Mary features in all six scenes and is arguably the play's central character. Hewitt dismisses the "pretty young woman" of Loudan's play, with her feminine and virtuous ways, in favour of "the whole mosaic,"<sup>22</sup> ranging from "a goodness from above,"<sup>23</sup> to "the amazon."<sup>24</sup> The final scene is a key example of Hewitt's pursuit of the bigger picture. Time has jumped forward by forty-seven years to offer a rare glimpse into MAM's later life. Despite several incorrect details in this scene,<sup>25</sup> another piece of the mosaic is unearthed when Madden comments to Hope, just moments before meeting Mary, "I hardly realise she is old - remember I've never met her. Her letters are extremely legible and unfaltering in their penmanship. I always think of her as young and eager, busy here and there, tireless."<sup>26</sup> This reference to MAM's longevity, various commitments, epistolary zeal

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<sup>20</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> John Hewitt, "The longest campaign: a review of The life and times of Mary Ann McCracken, 1770–1866, by Mary McNeill," in *Threshold* 5, no. 1 (Spring–Summer, 1961): 64.

<sup>22</sup> John Hewitt, *Mosaic* (Dundonald: Blackstaff Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Hewitt, *The McCrackens*, 55.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, the scene is set within the McCracken's Rosemary Lane home which the family had moved from sometime around 1814. Furthermore, Madden first met MAM in April 1842, not in 1845 as indicated in the script. See section 3.7.4.

<sup>26</sup> Hewitt, *The McCrackens*, 68.

and unceasing energy, works to broaden her image and to reveal elements of her life beyond the events of 1798.

From the play's outset, Mary's interest in the politics of the United Irishmen is coupled with her proto-feminist views. When Russell teases Henry that he is "more overpowering with the ladies and those of more than in one station and rank,"<sup>27</sup> Henry replies, "Tom, if it's that gamekeeper's girls you're thinking of - it's only my patriotism that intrigues 'em."<sup>28</sup> Mary is quick to put their patronising tones in check, declaring, "I'm glad that our tragic nation has such devoted daughters. If either of you two gallants can suggest any more susceptible females - susceptible to the lofty claims of national dignity - I shall surely inaugurate a new and allied Society of the United Irishwomen - with Matilda as President and Commander-in-Chief."<sup>29</sup> Mary turns the image of low-born, love-lorn women into that of a band of patriotic rebels. Hewitt therefore paints Mary as a woman who expects her sex to aspire beyond traditional gender roles, envisioning a united, empowered, politically aware group of women.

Hewitt may be drawing upon a letter written by MAM to her brother in Kilmainham Gaol dated 6 March 1797, in which she expresses "a great curiosity to visit some female societies in this Town."<sup>30</sup> However, Hewitt overlooks Mary's desire for equality between the sexes, as she continues, "though I should like them better were they promiscuous, as there can be no other reason for having them separate but keeping the women in the dark, and certainly it is equally ungenerous and uncandid to make tools of without confiding in them."<sup>31</sup> This would suggest that MAM did not see a benefit to Irishwomen mirroring the male societies but rather preferred a more balanced approach, thus undermining Hewitt's depiction of her militant proto-feminist attitude.

Throughout the play, Mary offers up her advice both when called upon and when not. Either way, her advice is always taken, as Hope tells her, "I always feel like obeying your every word for ye've a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

judgement I respect above any in this town.”<sup>32</sup> It is Mary who instructs her brother to “write the orders”<sup>33</sup> for the upcoming battle and who steps in to manage the aftermath of its failure. Her pragmatic approach cuts through the bewilderment and despair, giving Henry an opportunity to think clearly. Taking him to one side, she tells him, “I didn’t want to be too pessimistic before the others but I can be frank with you. The fight is over. It wasn’t much at the best. A scramble here and a skirmish there. No matter whose fault — the United Irishmen are finished, smashed, wiped out. Now all’s left is for you is to save your skins, each for himself.”<sup>34</sup> Henry may be the General but it is Mary who now gives the orders in a harsh, hardheaded manner. Earlier in the play, Mary plants this idea of herself as leader when she responds to Dr McDonnell’s question, “Mary, are you Commander-in-Chief in the absence of the others?”<sup>35</sup> with, “Not exactly,”<sup>36</sup> suggesting that to some degree she is. She then goes on to hatch a plan to bust her brother and other members of the United Irishmen out of Kilmainham Gaol, to which John Templeton responds, “And playing into your hands! Bravo, Mary!” further reiterating Mary’s leadership qualities and rebellious nature. These images reach a crescendo in Dr McDonnell’s comment, “If she’d got an offer to go to the South Seas, she’d have gone and upset the world. Set Australasia in turmoil and the Islands in a blaze of democracy and rebellion. Phew!” To which Templeton replies, “Not while Ireland needed her.”<sup>37</sup>

Despite this depiction of Mary as a fiercely strong and independent woman, this very conversation is rooted in Templeton’s admission that he has thought about asking Mary to marry him. After considering her revolutionary potential however, he quickly

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<sup>32</sup> Hewitt, *The McCrackens*, 47.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. This is a reference to McCracken’s proclamation “To the Army of Ulster” dated 6 June 1798, “The First Year of Liberty,” which states, “Tomorrow we march on Antrim - drive the garrison of Randalstown before you, and hasten to form a junction with the Commander-in-Chief”.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 43.

concludes, "But marry Mary! You forget she's set on Russell."<sup>38</sup> The latter's failure to take an interest in Mary, despite his womanising ways, provokes Dr McDonnell to issue the mild insult "the scamp."<sup>39</sup> However, Templeton is quick to lay the blame with Miss Simms, whom he accuses of toying with Russell's affections. He indignantly refers to this lady as a "hussy" and a "bitch" not worthy of the, "good man, soul of honour, paladin, knight errant," seen to be "wasting his golden affections" on "a light-headed slip of a girl who runs off after the next elegant ensign who struts down High Street."<sup>40</sup>

Miss Simms was the sister of United Irishmen William and Robert Simms, both close friends of TR. Both MAM and JH confirm that Miss Simms and TR were attached, however no evidence exists to suggest Miss Simms was in any way devious. In Letter 161, MAM explains that, "Miss Simms' attachment was discovered by M<sup>rs</sup> McTier sister of the late Doctor Drennan, a Lady of first rate abilities who informed Russell of the fact, who of course had no doubt of being accepted when circumstances should permit him to declare himself, but at that period when engaged in what he considered the liberation of his country, every selfish feeling must be postponed."<sup>41</sup> Upon receiving word of TR's death, Miss Simms is said to have fainted and subsequently never married. It may be argued therefore, that her commitment to TR appears to have been much more steadfast than his commitment to her. Hewitt has perhaps confused Miss Simms with Miss Goddard, TR's first love in Belfast. From childhood, Miss Goddard had been bound to another and so despite her feelings for TR, she was obliged to obey her father's wishes and was married to Captain Kingston in 1795. Whether intentional or not, Hewitt depicts the play's female characters in terms of stereotypes; Mary conforming to the "great woman," while Miss Simms is cast as the promiscuous "bitch."

Despite this, Hewitt does attempt to reveal the breadth of Mary's greatness, albeit in a rather patronising manner, when Dr McDonnell enquires of her, "Is it orphans this time? Or sweep boys? The Sunday school maybe? Or the charitable society?" To which Mary replies,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>41</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

“None of them doctor. It’s more pressing business.”<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately these references to MAM’s charitable deeds appear shoehorned into the dialogue, not to mention anachronistic. Mary’s reply also reads uneasily as she appears to affirm Dr McDonnell’s insinuation that her commitments were significantly less important than the cause of the United Irishmen, while her textile business is assigned her lowest priority, “I shall still attend my shop. That is after I have seen adequate legislation for chimney sweeps.”<sup>43</sup>

Hewitt clearly wished to present a truer, more rounded version of MAM than his predecessor, however, as the extant manuscript exists in draft form, having been “hastily conceived and executed,” it must be assumed that it was “not a script which Hewitt would have released to the public.”<sup>44</sup> It is possible that he intended to redraft the play, further refining the characters and dialogue.

#### 2.4.1.3 Stewart Parker’s *Northern Star* (1984)

Stewart Parker’s “masterpiece”<sup>45</sup> *Northern Star* is by far the most widely recognised literary work featuring MAM. It was first performed at Belfast’s Lyric Theatre in 1984 and was directed by the playwright. This production was bestowed with the alternative title *McCracken’s Night Thoughts* in homage to Edward Young’s poetic volume *Night Thoughts*, a copy of which appears as a prop in the play.<sup>46</sup> Subsequently, it has been directed by the playwright’s niece, Lynne Parker on three occasions and by actor Stephen Rea to mark the bicentenary of the rebellion in 1998.<sup>47</sup> Rea’s production was staged in Rosemary Street’s First Presbyterian Church which was described by

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<sup>42</sup> Hewitt, *The McCrackens*, 40.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Marilynn Richtarik, *Stewart Parker: A Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), viii.

<sup>46</sup> A line from this poem was etched by HJM upon the wall of his cell in Carrickfergus Jail. See section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>47</sup> These performances occurred in 1996 at the Dublin Theatre Festival, in 2015 at The Lir in Dublin and at Belfast’s Lyric Theatre in 2016.

Peter Collins as a “very appropriate and evocative setting.”<sup>48</sup> The play first premiered outside of Ireland in 2011 when it was directed by Caitlin McLeod and performed at London’s Finborough Theatre. Most recently, in May 2018, a “Rehearsed Reading” was staged, once again, at Rosemary Street’s First Presbyterian Church.

While Mary’s role is limited to a meagre six pages of Act One, allusions to her character and influence can be found throughout the play. She is initially introduced to the audience as a highly regarded employer who is “universally beloved.”<sup>49</sup> This sentiment is later echoed by the “ghost” of Hope (specifically, an apparition from the future) when Henry asks him, “Are you still working for her?” and he replies, “It’s changed now Harry. She was a lady, Miss Mary-Anne. I’m afraid your brother John’s no gentleman, though.”<sup>50</sup> Parker was evidently drawing upon Letter 94, dated 28 November 1808, in which JH informed MAM that he had left her brother’s employment due to inadequate wages. He commented, “But as to Mr. John although he never Checked me much, he allwise treated me (when Ever I spoke to him about my own Situation) with a silence which in another I would have taken for Contempt.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Parker suggests that it is Mary’s humanity towards her employees that has earned her the respect of many.

Mary first appears on stage in the role of “the doting sister,” wishing to wait in the semi-dilapidated cottage rather than wake her fugitive brother for their reunion. However, she does not have to wait long as Henry bounds down the stairs and embraces her upon hearing her voice. Their mutual feelings quickly become apparent as each expresses concern for the other. Mary exclaims, “Harry! Thank God you’re safe,” to which Henry replies, “It’s you I was worried for, I’d felt sure you’d been lifted on the road.”<sup>52</sup> Despite Henry’s failure as commander at the Battle of Antrim, Mary showers him with praise,

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<sup>48</sup> Peter Collins, *Who Fears to Speak of '98?* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2004), 151–2.

<sup>49</sup> Stewart Parker, *Plays*, vol. 2 (London: Methuen Drama, 2000), 24.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>51</sup> Letter 94.

<sup>52</sup> Parker, *Plays*, 30.

describing him as “a patriot”<sup>53</sup> and a “national hero.”<sup>54</sup> She goes so far as to anticipate that “the coming generations will finish what you’ve started, they’ll model themselves on your example,”<sup>55</sup> to which Henry firmly objects. Her pride and admiration is apparent, regardless of their precarious circumstances.

Before they part, Henry similarly praises Mary; “You’ve been the best friend in the world to me Mary-Anne. From the very beginning;” “There’s nobody I’d sooner have beside me in a tight corner”<sup>56</sup> and “What a sister! Better than I deserve.”<sup>57</sup> These words are more than Mary can bear as she begs him, “Don’t! We’ll talk it all through, in years to come. Not now. Action now, that’s what counts.”<sup>58</sup> She embraces him again before she leaves. The siblings’ bond appears indestructible and yet as soon as she has departed, Henry “leans back with a deep sigh of relief” and announces, “I have observed that a man is never less true to himself than in the presence of his own family.”<sup>59</sup> With Mary gone, Henry drops the bravado to return to the doubts and fears he has been harbouring. Indeed, Mary’s previous line, “I knew your spirit wouldn’t be broken, they all said you’d be in despair, but I told them,”<sup>60</sup> suddenly smacks of irony.

By contrast, Mary’s spirit appears far from broken. She is sincere in her unwavering belief in her brother and their cause, having bravely ventured onto Cavehill to assist him in his hour of need, despite the area “crawling with militia.”<sup>61</sup> Having provided Henry with the means for his escape, she runs him through the role he will be playing, that of “Owen Pollock, Master Carpenter.”<sup>62</sup> She questions him on the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 33.

information she has just imparted, ensuring he is prepared for his flight. Mary's courage, practicality and conviction act to construct an image of Mary as a resilient, determined and devoted Irishwoman.

However, Mary fails to recognise her own strength. When Henry proclaims, "If only *you* had led the Rising, we would have walked it," she replies, "Don't poke fun at me, Harry."<sup>63</sup> Her response reveals a somewhat frustrated awareness of the limitations placed upon her as a woman. Henry reassures her, "I was never more serious," before asking "How have you been anyway, Mary-Anne?"<sup>64</sup> She replies, "Oh, you know. Sit at home. Mind the business. That's all that's allowed of me, I can do nothing, there's nothing at all I can make happen."<sup>65</sup> Although this line reinforces her exasperation, a modest, slightly vulnerable side is also exposed. Henry draws her attention back to the reality of her abilities as he points to the bundle of documents and the disguise she has acquired for him, saying, "What do you call this?"<sup>66</sup> Henry is clearly more aware of Mary's strength than she is herself.

After Mary's departure, Henry's lover, Mary Bodel rejoins him. Upon expressing her suspicion that Mary does not approve of their relationship, Henry remarks, "She has principles," followed by the somewhat ironic statement, "We're a high-minded sort of family you see."<sup>67</sup> Mary's principles are suddenly cast as somewhat aloof judgements. Bodel argues that, unlike his sister, her love for him is unconditional when she states, "Isn't it fear alone that makes us human? What else do you think I love you for? Your great doings of renown? Let your sister idolise you for that, to me it's just a load of bells ringing."<sup>68</sup> Bodel resents what she perceives to be Mary's ability to put "the cause" before her brother's life, bitterly stating, "I'll not be there, Harry. I hope your sister enjoys it,"<sup>69</sup> in reference to his execution. Thus, when an imagined female gaze is turned on Mary's

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 53.

patriotic devotion, it is no longer perceived as a strength but as a cold, militant oversight of the consequences in store for Henry.

That Mary can display such acts of devotion to her brother, yet at the same time be complicit (albeit subconsciously) in his martyrdom, reveals what could be read as a contradiction in her character. In Parker's play, it takes a woman to highlight Mary's complexities, jarring with the traditional, clichéd roles allotted to women both in daily life and on the stage. Indeed, earlier in the play, Mary makes this very point when she remarks, "So when the big issues come to be decided, you see, we get cast in the same old roles again. Mothers, wives and mistresses. Goddesses, whores and sisters. Trophies and symbols. The Shan Van Vocht and the Roisin Dubh."<sup>70</sup> Indeed, "devoted sister" is the epitaph on MAM's grave and a role she has been cast in time and time again.<sup>71</sup> Here, she makes the metatheatrical observation that Irish history has itself been a kind of role play — surely bringing to mind, for example, W. B. Yeats and Augusta Gregory's nationalistic *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), the first performance of which saw Maud Gonne herself occupy the Sean-Bhean Bhocht role. Evading such archetypal restrictions, Parker's Mary is a complex human being; kind and caring to her brother and employees, yet somewhat blinkered by her practical and sanguine nature. By assigning the critique of female archetypes to the character of Mary, perhaps Parker implies that the historical MAM herself did not fit the mould.

#### **2.4.1.4 John Gray's *Who Fears to Speak* (1988)**

John Gray's play *Who Fears to Speak* "was first performed in 1988 in Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church as part of the programme to mark the bicentenary of the Linen Hall Library. A marginally revised version was performed in 2003 in the Masonic Hall in Rosemary Street as part of a programme organised by the United Irishmen Commemoration Society to mark the bicentenary of Emmett's

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>71</sup> See section 2.1.1.

Rebellion and the execution of Russell."<sup>72</sup> Although unable to send the thesis writer a copy of the work in its entirety, Gray did supply Mary's speeches in context. He explained that "Mary Ann McCracken only plays a minor part, partly because I don't subscribe to the romantic myth that she was in love with Russell, and, because the piece is substantially based on documentary sources, I relied more heavily on Martha McTier as a female voice."<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, Gray's play does much to dispel this "romantic myth," as Mrs McTier states, "Mary Anne McCracken found him [Russell] attractive, as did we all, but theirs was to be the association of a cause, rather than of lives ever joined."<sup>74</sup> Mary approves of Russell's "manly beauty" and "manners of the finished gentleman," yet she does not flinch when Mrs McTier speaks of his ill-fated love for Eliza Goddard. Instead she coolly responds, "I too knew of the attachment, and believed it was mutual." This measured and unsurprised reaction suggests that Mary is far from offended. What does give her offence however, is the refusal of Eliza Goddard's father to give the couple his consent, owing to the fact that Eliza had been attached to another since childhood. Mary remarks disapprovingly, "Evidently this is a sphere in which the new spirit of freedom has made but little progress." Here Gray turns the stereotypical depiction of MAM as the unrequited lover on its head. Not only is Mary not in love with Russell but she sympathies with the woman he *is* in love with and rebukes the patriarchal chains that prevent their union.

Later in the play, Mary recounts the various ways in which she assisted Russell after the failed rising of 1803 and her regret at being prevented from attending his trial. These narratives are faithfully recounted from MAM's letters to TR and RRM. As such, they reveal no romantic attachment but do act to highlight MAM's commitment and loyalty to her friend.

In a bid to portray MAM as authentically as possible, Gray reproduces the following extract from a draft letter of 1799, "What a wonderful clamour is now raised at the name of Union, when in reality there has always been such an union between England and this country, as there is between husband and wife by which the former

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<sup>72</sup> Email correspondence with John Gray, 29 March 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

has the right to oppress the latter.”<sup>75</sup> Mary’s further comment, “I did not wish that they had taken any other part than they did,” is rooted in a passage within RRM’s *United Irishmen*.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, Gray has selected dialogue which channels MAM’s own voice, reinforcing her proto-feminist opinions and dispelling the stereotype of the love-lorn heroine.

#### **2.4.1.5 Jane Cassidy’s *The Man From God Knows Where* (1997)**

Broadcast as part of BBC Radio 4’s Saturday Playhouse on 20 September 1997, *The Man from God Knows Where* was written by Jane Cassidy and directed by Pamela Brighton. It consisted of seventy five minutes of poetry read by Birdy Sweeney, melodies sung by Jane Cassidy and dramatic performances from Brendan Gleeson who played TR and Maggie Cronin as MAM.

#### **2.4.1.6 Martin Lynch’s *Rebellion: the Henry Joy McCracken Story* (1997)**

Described by Ian Hill as “a curious and sometimes heartfelt mix of West End Musical, village pageant, socialist polemic, tableaux vivants and yearnings for liberty, fraternity and equality,”<sup>77</sup> *Rebellion* ran as part of the 1997 Belfast Festival at Queen’s. It was directed by Paddy McCooey and performed at St Kevin’s Hall in North Queen Street by Belfast’s Dock Ward Company. Although the original writer, Ken Bourke, withdrew from the project as a result of the Provisional IRA’s ceasefire,<sup>78</sup> Martin Lynch, among other writers, stepped forward to assist with its completion.

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<sup>75</sup> Letter 59 (TCD MS873/101).

<sup>76</sup> “I never once wished that my beloved brother had taken any other part than that which he did take.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 497. Also see section 5.4.3.1.

<sup>77</sup> Ian Hill, “Festival at Queen’s: Rebellion sets the scene,” *Belfast News Letter*, 21 November 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Ken Bourke, “The Play I didn’t write about Henry Joy McCracken (1997),” *Ken Bourke Plays* (blog), 2 November 2011, <http://kenbourkeplays.blogspot.fi/2011/11/play-i-didnt-write-about-henry-joy.html>.

Attempts to uncover the script have been unsuccessful, however, a programme for the play, found within the Belfast Charitable Society's archives, reveals that MAM featured as a character. Selected from "a wide range of age and background...women interviewed claimed involvement with the group had changed their lives, not only in terms of friendships formed, which made them think beyond apparent differences between people, but also in growing self-confidence."<sup>79</sup>

#### 2.4.1.7 John McIllduff's *The Turnout* (1998)

*The Turnout* was created and directed by Belfast-born writer, film maker and stage director John McIllduff to coincide with the 1798 bicentenary commemorations. It was devised and performed throughout the spring and summer of 1998 by the Shibboleth Theatre Group, a company of five multi-national actors. The play ran for approximately fifty performances in such locations as Belfast's Old Museum Arts Centre, Downpatrick's Down Arts Centre, Royal School, Armagh the Dublin City Arts Centre, Antrim, Tralee, Kildare and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Adopting a physical approach, the techniques of mime and clowning were employed. Reversible coloured clown noses allowed the actors to switch between characters. The green nose symbolised a United Irishman, which could then be turned inside-out to reveal a red nose, symbolising an English soldier. In an interview with John McIllduff conducted on 19 April 2017, he recalled that the clowning method was inspired by the "Apes and Angels" political cartoons which expressed the Victorian caricature of Irishmen as monkeys.

In a bid to represent the layman of the rebellion, garden tools were used as props to indicate the simple weapons taken up by farmers and other ordinary people. However, it is the viewpoints of three Ulster women; MAM, Elizabeth Gray and Peggy Gordon which form the crux of the narrative. Mary, played by Heather Childs, is described by one reviewer as "a bloodthirsty Mary Poppins, secreting tactical advice to her brother Henry Joy [McCracken]"<sup>80</sup>. The reviewer goes on

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<sup>79</sup> Margaret Llewellyn-Jones, *Contemporary Irish Drama & Cultural Identity*. Bristol: Intellect Ltd., 2002, 158–59.

<sup>80</sup> Ian Hill, "Moving denunciation of the horrors of war," review of *The Turnout*, by John McIllduff, Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast, *The News Letter*, 28 May 1998.

to describe Gray, played by Alessandra Celesia, as “Ulster’s Jeanne d’Arc,” and Gordon, played by Emily Mytton, as “an Antrim amazon.”<sup>81</sup> When asked about Mary’s portrayal, McIllduff cited McNeill’s biography as his primary source of research. He further commented that in today’s climate, the play would be considered a feminist piece.<sup>82</sup>

#### **2.4.1.8 James Mateer’s *A Star When the Moon Wanes* (2000)**

A rehearsed reading of *A Star When the Moon Wanes* was performed by Bangor Drama Club in early 2000. The script was written by Northern Irish author and playwright, James Mateer and features only three characters; Mary, Henry and Mary Boal (Bodel). The nonlinear narrative spans from 1794 to 1798, charting two interweaving plots. The main thread is set after Henry’s execution and deals with Mary’s reaction to the discovery of his illegitimate child, Maria. Mateer presents a series of interactions between Mary and Mary Boal as he imagines they may have transpired, ultimately resulting in the latter’s daughter falling under the guardianship of her aunt.

Running parallel with this plot, is an exploration of MAM and HJM’s relationship in a variety of settings. Throughout, Henry is in a weakened position, for instance; recovering from an illness in Holywood, riddled with arthritis in Kilmainham Gaol and in hiding on Cave Hill after being defeated at the Battle of Antrim. This is the only work of literature to consider the immediate aftermath of HJM’s execution and the circumstances and conversations which led to Maria joining the McCracken household.

#### **2.4.1.9 Helen Earley’s *Dramatic Re-enactment* (2016)**

On 29 September 2016 a “dramatic re-enactment” depicting MAM’s struggle to establish an infant school within the Poor House was staged at Clifton House. The script draws upon the minutes of the Belfast Charitable Society’s Ladies’ Committee and also those of the Gentlemen’s Committee. It was written by television producer Helen

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Skype interview with John McIllduff, 19 April 2017.

Earley and performed by Actually Belfast Theatre Productions. Mary and Peggy are the only characters to appear onstage, while a male servant and “a gentleman,” from the Belfast Charitable Society’s Gentlemen’s Committee, are heard in voiceover. Although not indicated within the script, “Peggy” refers to MAM’s sister.<sup>83</sup> Her role is, in part, anachronistic; she died on 11 December 1829, while the events depicted within the play unfolded between mid-1829 and 1831. However, this marks the only literary work to feature MM and to explore the sisters’ relationship.

Presumably for dramatic purposes, Earley reformulated the minutes of the Ladies’ Committee into handwritten letters, composed on stage by Mary. The first, an appeal to the Gentlemen’s Committee recommending the establishment of an infant school, is related by Mary via voice-over. The second, she reads aloud and is a direct quotation from the minutes, requesting that the infants receive sweet milk on a daily basis. Despite adhering closely to the sources, Earley’s artistic licence in regard to MAM’s personality often leads to departures from the historical record. For instance, throughout the play Mary is guilt-ridden by her “privilege,” remarking to her sister, “most people don’t live like us.” Lines such as, “Why else are we blessed with privileges if not to use them to bless others?” and “my comfort embarrassed me,” suggest that Mary’s good deeds are motivated by guilt.

This is to neglect the fact that the McCrackens were financially ruined by the expense of TR’s trial and MAM’s attempts to secure his escape.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, her brother Francis McCracken (with whom the sisters and Maria lived) was twice declared bankrupt. Upon his death, a subscription had to be raised by the townsfolk to release MAM from a lease on the property. Indeed, in Letter 170 she states, “we were much embarrassed by the house we were living in at the time.”<sup>85</sup> Conversely then, MAM was embarrassed to be living in diminished circumstances as opposed to “privilege.”

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<sup>83</sup> This familial nickname for Margaret McCracken can be found in Letters 3 and 27 (TCD MS873/129). The thesis writer shared this information with Earley prior to her writing the script.

<sup>84</sup> See Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80).

<sup>85</sup> Letter 170 (TCD MS873/8). This refers to the property at 80 Donegall Street, where they lived between 1814 and 1843.

Another inaccurate rendering can be found in Mary's self-doubt. She chastises herself for not keeping a "closer watch" on one of the Poor House girls and after approaching the Gentleman's Committee reflects, "I could hear their laughter and condescending chatter ringing in my ears already. I wondered if after all ... I was wrong. Maybe the world is set this way by God's Plan and it's not for me to alter it. Maybe I am just a silly bored little woman, and my gentlemen had the measure of that. Still, to thine own self be true." Firstly, it must be noted that MAM was known to and highly respected by the gentlemen of the committee, despite their unwillingness to support the initiative. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that she would ever have been addressed thus: "The Gentlemen would politely remind Miss (very slightly emphasised) McCracken that their first priority must remain the most prudent and economic use of their resources." Secondly (and by her own admission), self-doubt was not something MAM entertained: as she explained to Madden, "My pecuniary losses & difficulties were owing to my too sanguine temper, in overrating my own abilities."<sup>86</sup> In MAM's view then, it was her confidence which resulted in these monetary problems. The play, on the other hand, suggests that it was MAM's financial stability which allowed her to override self-doubt and carry out the proposal at her own expense, as Mary remarks, "I should have liked to work alongside the gentlemen's committee. However, (I am not without personal resources) if you will not assist me, I shall precede without your support."

## 2.4.2 Prose

### 2.4.2.1 Rosamond Jacob's *The Rebel's Wife* (1957)

Republican and suffragist, Rosamond Jacob authored five novels between 1920 and 1960. Her historical fiction, *The Rebel's Wife*, was based on the life of Theobald Wolfe Tone's spouse, Matilda Tone nee Witherington. Prior to the story's opening, Jacob makes a claim for the authenticity of its events through a brief "Author's Note." She explains that "scarcely any of the incidents in this tale are imaginary... almost all [will] be found described in the writings of Tone, Matilda,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

and Mary Ann McCracken,"<sup>87</sup> suggesting that Jacob had consulted MAM's letters during her research.

Upon the Tones' arrival in Belfast, Mary is initially introduced as "a tall, strong-faced, dark-eyed girl."<sup>88</sup> On reflecting on their new acquaintances Mary Tone remarks, "Miss McCracken is as good as any man there - or better."<sup>89</sup> In an attempt to capture the breadth of Mary's virtues and abilities, Matilda presents her as embodying both masculine and feminine attributes:

And Mary McCracken, that noble girl who carried on cotton manufacture herself, like a man, and loved and served those around her, like a woman - independent, gentle, self-sacrificing and quite unconscious of her own nobility - the men should be all at her feet. She would be braver than any man, thought Matilda, in situations where I should do nothing but faint and scream.<sup>90</sup>

Matilda clearly admires Mary's otherness, yet she is unable to relate to those qualities she deems masculine, viewing them as responsible for Mary's ongoing unmarried status. Indeed, Matilda takes comfort in the fact that "the men like me better, because I am not so brave."<sup>91</sup> Despite having an "angel's heart, full of love and kindness,"<sup>92</sup> Mary's strength is deemed intimidating and therefore unappealing to potential suitors. This recalls the female gaze of Parker's play, whereby Mary Bodel perceives Mary's strength as callousness. By contrast, in the present context, Matilda views Mary's strength as detrimental to her marriage prospects.

At one point, Matilda speculates that Mary may be in love with Russell and asks her husband, "'And are you clever enough to see how lucky a man would be if Mary McCracken loved him?'" To which he replies, "'No...for he would then have to live up to her. But I grant

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<sup>87</sup> Rosamond Jacob, *The Rebel's Wife* (Tralee: The Kerryman Ltd., 1957), iii.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

you she is the finest woman in Belfast.”<sup>93</sup> Therefore, Mary is assigned to the shelf as her exceptionality is seen as a threat to the male ego.

Following her husband’s death (and the loss of many other relations), Russell sympathises with Matilda, “‘Matty, you have been tried beyond all imagining. Even Mary McCracken has not suffered like you,’” referring to Henry’s execution. Matilda’s unspoken response is revealing: “At least, Matilda said to herself, I have had my beloved, and I have his children.”<sup>94</sup> Despite her high regard for Mary, Matilda evidently pities her inability to secure a husband, deeming spinsterhood even more disagreeable than widowhood.

### 2.4.3 Poetry

#### 2.4.3.1 Anon, “Harry’s Sword” (published 1858)<sup>95</sup>

“Harry’s Sword,” was first published in 1858 within *Poems of Ireland*; a collection of poetry edited and annotated by Samuel Lover.<sup>96</sup> In a short introduction, Lover attributes the poem, “to a distinguished Presbyterian clergyman.”<sup>97</sup> He further claims that the poem was “supposed to be addressed to the sword of Harry M’Cracken by his sister,”<sup>98</sup> thus ascribing the first person voice to Mary. Lover praises MAM’s “unflinching love and Spartan fortitude,”<sup>99</sup> in the face of her brother’s execution, comparing her to Flora M’Ivor, the heroine of Walter Scott’s novel *Waverley*, whose brother is hung for his part in a Jacobite uprising. The similarities incite Lover to suggest a fictional analogue to the McCracken siblings.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>95</sup> Section 5.13.1 contains the poem in its entirety.

<sup>96</sup> Samuel Lover (24 February 1797–6 July 1868), Dublin-born poet, song writer, portrait painter and novelist.

<sup>97</sup> Samuel Lover, ed., *Poems of Ireland* (NY & London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1858), 295–96.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

At the time of the poem's publication, HJM's sword was in MAM's possession and remained so until her death. It was then donated to the Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery by Christopher Aitchison (her step-grandniece's husband). Throughout the poem, the sword acts as a poignant reminder of HJM's absence. The passage of time and by extension, MAM's longevity, is marked in the following lines, "The tooth of the fell Time has been trying the blade, / And a spot of dark rust marks the pressure it made."<sup>100</sup> Over the years, Mary has found solace in the sword, personifying it thus, "How it drinks up my tears, as it shar'd in my woe."<sup>101</sup> This image of Mary weeping over a sword, which is standing in for her brother, recalls the line on her headstone "Wept by her brother's scaffold." She then reflects on the futility of her tears, "Oh! would that these tears might its splendour restore!"<sup>102</sup> Mary recognises that weeping cannot restore her brother and yet it is all she is capable of within the poem.

#### **2.4.3.2 Thomas Charles Stewart Corry, "The Battle of Antrim: A Reminiscence of 1798" (1879)<sup>103</sup>**

In 1879, Thomas Charles Stewart Corry<sup>104</sup> produced a book of poetry dedicated to RRM, entitled *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*.<sup>105</sup> The volume's opening poem, "The Battle of Antrim: A Reminiscence of 1798"<sup>106</sup> is served with a lengthy introduction in which Corry quotes from RRM's

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<sup>100</sup> Lover, *Poems of Ireland*, 296.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> The full poem can be found in section 5.13.2.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Charles Stewart Corry (c. 1825–1896), Belfast physician, poet and entrepreneur, whose most noted invention was a diorama depicting Irish scenery. In 1864, these moving pictures were put to music creating a show known as "Dr Corry's Diorama." The hugely successful show toured throughout Ireland, Scotland, England and America.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Charles Stewart Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems* (Belfast: D. & J. Allen, 1879). A second edition was published in 1884.

<sup>106</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 18–24.

interview with MAM.<sup>107</sup> These reminiscences inform the second part of the poem which deals with HJM's capture and execution. However, as Fred Heatley points out, "throughout the poem the author has taken 'poetic licence' in his narrations of the facts."<sup>108</sup> For instance, the line, "She halts –the crowd moves quickly on, and leaves her there alone,"<sup>109</sup> is inaccurate as, by MAM's own account, she accompanied her brother to the place of execution and was led away by Mr Boyd.<sup>110</sup> The poem does much to reiterate the "devoted sister" motif, describing Mary as "that angel comforter, his Sister kind and true."<sup>111</sup> MAM's intelligence and political awareness is replaced with a naive innocence in the line, "In Harry's arms she feels secure – what thought has she of fear?"<sup>112</sup> However, rather than restricting emotion to Mary's experience, Corry also presents Henry's mutual feelings towards the sister "he so fondly prized."<sup>113</sup> Indeed, the image of Mary weeping is turned on its head in the following lines:

M'Cracken dashes from his eyes the first unbidden tear,  
And turning round, in broken tones, says, "Sister, Sister dear,  
Proceed no further! for the sight would break your bursting heart -  
One kiss, my darling, 'tis our last! for ever we must part:  
I wish (as I have lived) to die undaunted, without dread,  
And would not that my foes could boast a single tear I've shed."<sup>114</sup>

Here, the "unbidden tear" and "broken tones," traditionally assigned to Mary, issue instead from her heroic brother. Henry's heightened emotional state breaks with conventional renderings of the scene, wherein he faces death with a strong and stoic demeanour.

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<sup>107</sup> See section 5.4.3.

<sup>108</sup> Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*, 58.

<sup>109</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 23.

<sup>110</sup> See section 5.4.3.

<sup>111</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 23.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

### 2.4.3.3 Thomas Charles Stewart Corry, "Ode to the Memory of Mary Ann McCracken" (1879)<sup>115</sup>

A further poem within the collection celebrates and pays tribute to MAM, opening, "I knew her worth, and joy'd to call her friend."<sup>116</sup> This personal connection between poet and subject adds weight to Corry's descriptions of her later life, charitable deeds and character. However, the poet's familiarity with MAM does not preclude grand imagery or even the evocation of sanctity. The tireless help MAM offered the "lonely poor" and "friendless in their hour of need,"<sup>117</sup> makes her, in Corry's account, an angelic figure who "sped on mercy's wings, To whisper words of comfort, peace, and hope," and whose very "presence shed a holy, hallow'd light."<sup>118</sup> This "hallow'd light," however, acts as a link to her earlier life: Corry suggests that it shines "Brighter, perchance, because in years gone by, / Of grief's dark cup she'd drained the bitter dregs."<sup>119</sup> Recounting her brother's death, Corry details the ways in which he imagines it affected MAM throughout the rest of her life:

In sorrow's mould her youthful days were cast,  
So, well she knew what 'twas to mourn and weep –  
Full fifty years had left their furrowed tracks,  
And dimmed the brilliant lustre of her eye.<sup>120</sup>

MAM's weeping is no longer restricted to the scaffold side, but is drawn out over a lifetime. In this poem, her personal suffering is the principal source of her compassion.

A short second stanza sees the poet return to a present in which "she is gone, and severed is the chain / Which linked our generation

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<sup>115</sup> Section 5.13.3 contains the poem in its entirety.

<sup>116</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 113.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 113–14.

to the past.”<sup>121</sup> Belfast has been deprived of one of the last witnesses to the city’s radical era, as well as “A voice that soothed so oft the bed of woe.”<sup>122</sup> However, Corry takes comfort in the fact that her voice “still survives” within RRM’s work and as such, will prove exemplary to “Erin’s daughters yet unborn.”<sup>123</sup>

#### 2.4.3.4 Ruth Carr’s *Feather and Bone* (2018)

Described by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin as a collection of “verbal portraits,”<sup>124</sup> *Feather and Bone* explores, in parallel, the lives of Dorothy Wordsworth and MAM. Of the fifty-seven poems, nineteen are specifically about MAM, while a further four work to unite their experiences, rendering “the two of them feather and bone.”<sup>125</sup>

In a brief introduction (reminiscent of Jacob’s “Author’s Note”) Carr addresses the biographical nature of these poems, stating, “In writing about them I have kept to the facts – where there are facts – but I have drawn on my imagination to respond to these two women’s deep and lengthy lives. There are a lot of gaps – this is not a biographical history. The poems are essentially a personal response to two remarkable women.”<sup>126</sup> This method can be seen at work throughout the collection. For instance, the poem “Grief” explores Mary’s sorrow following her brother’s execution. The presumption of first person narrative is avoided, freeing the poet up to question her subject on those facts which remain unknown. Given the ongoing speculation surrounding MAM’s feelings for TR, it seems appropriate that “That ‘Comely Smile’” (which focuses on TR) poses the most questions, opening, “And did it draw you in as well?”<sup>127</sup> This approach allows Carr to explore the issue without entering into or

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ruth Carr, *Feather and Bone* (Dublin: Arlen House, 2018), back cover.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 68.

endorsing either argument. In relation to this poem Carr notes that, “Mary Ann remarks on Thomas Russell’s *comely smile* in a letter to a friend.”<sup>128</sup> However, the word “comely” does not appear in any of MAM’s letters. As we have seen, she did write to Madden on the subject of TR’s smile, describing how “his mouth exceeded in beauty and sweetness of expression any mouth I ever saw, particularly when he smiled.”<sup>129</sup> This sentiment was reiterated in a later letter: “His mouth was the most beautiful, particularly when he smiled, I ever saw.”<sup>130</sup>

The poem “Kilmainham Letters” concludes with an extract taken from Letter 10, dated 26 March 1797. In an endnote, Carr acknowledges its origin stating, “the closing quote is taken from one of of Mary Ann’s letters to her brother Harry (Henry Joy) held in Kilmainham Gaol.”<sup>131</sup> Carr has modernised the spelling within the quotation and omitted the politically radical lines by way of ellipsis.

The poems examine many of the main events in MAM’s life, however, in turning to her “own unsinkable craft,”<sup>132</sup> that of MAM’s own writings, Carr unearths the methods and tools through which her life story was originally captured. In the following lines, the material aspects are examined:

the scrape of nib on paper; the writing tightly  
argued, cajoling, pressing the case  
for human right – all in her slight,  
unshakable hand.<sup>133</sup>

MAM’s writing apparatus is brought to life through “the scrape of nib on paper,” while her script is captured in “her slight, / unshakable hand.” Here, the argument is predicated on the written word. The

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>129</sup> Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)).

<sup>130</sup> Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89). A further error exists within the notes, whereby Edmund Bunting is misnamed “Edmund Burke.”

<sup>131</sup> Carr, *Feather and Bone*, 85.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

line, “No more fullstops to halt the flow,”<sup>134</sup> reveals a keen awareness of MAM’s writing style. It is clear therefore that Carr consulted MAM’s papers (whether her letters or the minutes she recorded for the Ladies’s Committee) in order to demonstrate such an understanding of her penmanship. “The Liberating Art” of writing is a common interest shared by MAM and Wordsworth, with both “She Writes” and “But for their Dipping Pens” dealing with their writings simultaneously.

The final poem within the collection is named for the notorious inscription on MAM’s tombstone: “Wept by her Brother’s Scaffold.” Carr expresses frustration at this image, venting, “How purblind / to narrow her to that heart-pour of tears.” She acknowledges the freeze-frame nature of the depiction and the false closure it creates through the following lines:

A frame of words completely missing out  
the years and years and years  
she practised what he died for:  
*díleas go héag*.<sup>135</sup>

The poem attempts to correct the headstone’s narrative by highlighting “the years and years and years” which are overlooked. In this context, the phrase “*díleas go héag*” (faithful to the end) applies not merely to her brother but extends to those she helped and whose rights she fought for throughout the rest of her life.

## 2.4.4 Music

### 2.4.4.1 Jane Cassidy’s “Mary Ann McCracken 1770 – 1866” (Album released 1987)

In 1986, traditional folk singer and song writer Jane Cassidy struck upon the idea for a “musical-theatrical show”<sup>136</sup> depicting the life of MAM. She states “as soon as I read Mary McNeill’s wonderful book... I was determined to tell Mary Ann McCracken’s story. Like so many

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>136</sup> Collins, *Who Dares to Speak of '98?*, 151.

wonderful women in the past, she had been all but written out of history and it is left to the testimony of her own correspondence to prove the considerable achievements of her long life.”<sup>137</sup> Cassidy worked alongside her husband, musician Maurice Leyden, to produce the show, simply entitled *Mary Ann*. Combining history with folksong it tells, “the story of ‘98 through the life of Mary Ann McCracken.”<sup>138</sup> Building on the show’s success, the album *Mary Ann McCracken 1770 – 1866* was released in 1987 and was rereleased some thirty years later, on 6 May 2018.

The album is comprised of traditional songs, spoken word pieces (such as letter extracts and poetry) and five original compositions, including the first track, “Rosemary Lane.” Written in the first person, this opening song explores Mary’s feeling towards the old family home. She reminisces:

I was only twenty when I came to live in Rosemary Lane  
There was always music there, ideas and poetry in the air  
When the bad times broke our hearts  
Rosemary Lane was our Noah’s Ark.

The house is presented as a cultural and political hub where Mary lived out her brightest and darkest days, while the reference to “Noah’s Ark” draws upon Anna McCleery’s comment, “their house was known by some as Noah’s Ark,” owing to the “numerous inmates;”<sup>139</sup> animals included.

Cassidy’s second composition “expresses what Mary Ann might have felt at the death of Thomas Russell.”<sup>140</sup> Entitled, “I Will Remember You,” the song focuses upon Mary’s grief and her determination to preserve TR’s memory in the following lyrics, “I will remember you till every tear is shed, And the story has been told, Till the last word has been said.” Given the assertions of local folk history (reinforced by McNeill) that MAM was in love with TR, Cassidy could

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<sup>137</sup> Jane Cassidy, “Introduction,” liner notes for *Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866*, by Jane Cassidy and Maurice Leyden, Ashgrove Music, 1987, compact disc.

<sup>138</sup> Collins, *Who Dares to Speak of ‘98?*, 151.

<sup>139</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 177.

<sup>140</sup> Cassidy, “I Will Remember You,” liner notes for *Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866*.

have been forgiven for turning this piece into a love song, however, she is careful to avoid the nature of her subject's relationship and in doing so, adheres to what can be found in the letters.

The next original composition entitled "The Scythe and the Sickle" is based the following line from Letter 19: "Though not in the least inclined to superstition yet the lingering situation of affairs frequently reminds me of an old prophecy which Dr McDonnell told us of in winter, which said that the disturbances in this country were to begin between the scythe and the sickle."<sup>141</sup> The song works to fulfil this prophecy as Irishmen rise up "between the scythe and the sickle" only to be "cut down."

"Cavehill Side" deals with emigration from Belfast and is most likely based upon the belief that MAM helped Mary Bodel and her family to move to America, while the fifth original composition is an instrumental piece entitled "Mary Ann."

Extracts are read aloud from Letters 78, 19, 104, 177 and 161, covering MAM's final words to TR, Dr McDonnell's prophecy, her proto-feminist tendencies, commitment to abolition and to "the happiness of others."<sup>142</sup> A passage from Madden's "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken," based upon an interview with MAM (See Appendix D3) is also recited, however it is incorrectly described in the liner notes as, "Mary Ann writes to Thomas Russell describing the last hours of her brother Henry Joy McCracken."

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<sup>141</sup> Letter 19 (TCD MS873/122).

<sup>142</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

## 3. Perspectives on the Letters

### 3.1 Script

#### 3.1.1 Handwriting

The majority of the letters contain mixed scripts as a result of endorsements and edits made by the recipient or a third party. A total of twenty-eight hands can be found throughout the McCracken letters and their appendices, flowing from the pens of Edward Bunting, James D. Rose Clelland, Sir John Gray, Grizzel Joy, Counsellor Henry Joy, Henry Joy Junior, Andrew Leitch, Patrick Lynch, David Lyons, John McAdam, Henry Joy McCracken, John McCracken Junior, Mary Ann McCracken, Rose Ann McCracken, William McCracken, Richard Robert Madden, James Orr, Ellen Rabb, James Ramsey, John Alexander Russell, Margaret Russell, Thomas Russell, Charles Hamilton Teeling, Eliza Templeton, Eliza Tennent, Robert James Tennent, William Thompson and one author posing as the Commander of the Augereau Luggier.<sup>1</sup>

Mary Ann's extant letters date between 16 March 1797 and 23 February 1861.<sup>2</sup> Over time, her hand became tremulous, making it distinctly different from her earlier script. In her later letters, she cites several factors as hindering her handwriting, the use of candlelight arising most frequently. She concludes Letter 156, "Pray excuse all errors[,] I have no time for writing but by candle light on a very wet day,"<sup>3</sup> and similarly in Letter 161, "finished with candlelight."<sup>4</sup> In both letters, these remarks appear as marginalia on Fol. 1a, forewarning the reader of the effect this has had on the letter's script. Letter 161 begs Madden to, "Excuse all mistakes[,] I have written in twilight & candlelight,"<sup>5</sup> while Letter 163 states, "part of this has been written with candle light & I have have [sic] made mistakes owing to the

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5.2.1.

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 9 (TCD MS873/151) and Letter 180 (RIA 24 O 10/48).

<sup>3</sup> Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>4</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>5</sup> Letter 162 (TCD MS873/74).

thinness of the paper which I fear will give you some trouble.”<sup>6</sup> Clearly, her time was so preoccupied with other commitments that she was restricted to writing after dark, as her step-grandniece confirms; “her evenings were frequently occupied in letter-writing.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it would seem that Letter 151 was written almost completely blind, as she admits to her niece, “I wrote the foregoing nearly in the dark[,] with my back to the window[,] so that you will have difficulty to decypher [sic] some of it.”<sup>8</sup> The fading light must also have prompted her to pick up her writing pace, causing her to remark in Letter 153, “Excuse my mistake thro haste.”<sup>9</sup> Ultimately though, age and physical decline must have played a significant role in altering her handwriting style, also causing her to make mistakes and repetitions. In her final extant letter she gives Madden a rare glimpse into her state of health, commenting “my sight & hearing are greatly impaired & I stoop much & lean to the one side.”<sup>10</sup> Evidently though, the regret of her correspondents having to wrestle with, at times, illegible script did not outweigh her desire to continue writing letters to her family and friends.

### 3.1.2 Endorsements

An endorsement is a brief record, usually written by the letter’s recipient or a third party. It may supply information relating to the sender, the receiver, the letter’s date of arrival, its contents or to the reader’s response or reply. For instance, Robert James Tennent often endorsed his letters with the name of the sender, the letter’s date and a brief outline of the letter’s contents. To indicate that he had read the letter, Tennent placed a large tick next to his endorsement and a strike through the tick to signal that he had replied to the letter. For the benefit of Madden, Mary Ann McCracken endorsed a selection of letters relating to the United Irishmen before bestowing them upon

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<sup>6</sup> Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86).

<sup>7</sup> McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 195.

<sup>8</sup> Letter 151 (PRONI D1748/H/29/5).

<sup>9</sup> Letter 153 (PRONI, D1748/G/387/5).

<sup>10</sup> Letter 180 (RIA 24 O 10/48).

him.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, Madden wrote his own notations and endorsements on these letters to aid him with the writing of his histories of the United Irishmen. As a result, multiple endorsements are often to be found within a single letter. Instances in which Mary Ann has endorsed her own letter allow for a comparison between her earlier and later hand.

### 3.1.3 Crossed Letters

Three instances of cross-writing occur within the McCracken letters and its appendices (all of which were penned by Mary Ann McCracken.)<sup>12</sup> The act of writing vertically across a folio which had previously been written upon horizontally, not only allowed the author to save on stationery but also on postal expenses. Indeed, “prior to the introduction of the Penny Postage in 1840, one of the factors affecting the cost of posting a letter was whether it was a single sheet of paper. Two sheets would double the cost.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore cross-writing effectively allowed the author to “send two sheets for the cost of one.”<sup>14</sup> Notably however, Letters 130 and 140 were written several years after the introduction of the Uniform Penny Post, in 1842 and 1844. In the former, the entirety of folio 1a is cross-written, while folio 1b is crossed by four lines of follow-on text. As there seems to be no link between the final sentence of folio 1b and the crossed text of folio 1a, there is a possibility that further folios are missing. Letter 140 is a less remarkable instance of a crossed letter, with only five lines covering the left hand side of folio 1a. Finally, folio 1a of Mary Ann’s biographical account of William Neilson is crossed with comments on the contents, suggesting that it was added after the letter had been completed.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See section 3.7.4.

<sup>12</sup> Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692), Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156) and section 5.3.3.

<sup>13</sup> Eunice Shanahan, “A ‘crossed’ letter,” *Letters From the Past, The Victorian Web*, accessed 14 November 2018, <http://www.earsathome.com/webgil/xltr.html>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> See section 5.3.3.

### 3.1.4 Transcription Style

I have attempted to produce semi-diplomatic editions of the extant McCracken letters, rendering them as close to their original form as is practically possible.<sup>16</sup> However, some aspects have been adjusted for the sake of clarity. For instance, where a sign-off appears as marginalia on Fol. 1a, I have placed it sequentially, at the letter's conclusion. Its original position is marked by way of a footnoted page break: [Fol. 1a].<sup>17</sup>

Grammatically, Mary Ann tended to write in fused sentences and to overuse commas, resulting in a confusing sentence structure. Indeed, on several occasions Madden mistook her meaning owing to her ambiguous grammar. As a result, I have taken the editorial decision to omit commas where I believe it is necessary in order to avoid confusion. Where such omissions occur, they are recorded in the footnotes. At other times, I have inserted punctuation to clarify what seems to be the intended expression. Due to the insertion of full stops, capital letters have replaced lower-case characters when opening the new sentence. Grammatical edits are placed within square brackets to indicate that they do not appear as such in the original documents.

I have attempted to impinge on the letters' structure as little as possible. Page breaks are signalled by a blank line. The first line of the new page is marked with a folio number within square brackets which is aligned to the right. Line breaks are faithfully reproduced, allowing material aspects of the letter to be most accurately represented. For instance, where a tear appears along one side of a folio, the reader will be able to discern that it is the same tear that has interfered with the text across multiple lines. I have regulated the structure of each letter's opening by leaving a blank line between the salutation and the first line of every letter, which is consistently indented.

Editorial decisions are particularly indebted to Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue's *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (2008). Also consulted were Michael Hunter's *Editing Early Modern Texts* (2009) and Michael E. Stevens and Steven B. Burg's *Editing Historical Documents: A Handbook of Practice* (1997).

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<sup>16</sup> These do not include source letters.

<sup>17</sup> Examples of this can be found in Letters 145 (RIA, 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)), 156 (TCD MS873/72), 161 (TCD MS873/70) and 173 (TCD MS873/78).

## 3.2 Materiality

### 3.2.1 Watermarks

Watermarks were created by changing the thickness of the paper with wires whilst it was still wet to create designs, symbols, text and numerals. These marks can be detected by holding the paper up to light or through closer examination under a light box. Watermarks can reveal significant information about the source of the paper. They may take the form of motifs, the name of the paper manufacturer, the location of the paper mill or the year in which the paper was produced. Such watermarks can be found throughout the McCracken letters and are detailed in the table below:

<b>Letter Number</b>	<b>Reference Code</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Watermark Features</b>
4	TCD MS873/113	13 December 1796	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn
6	TCD MS873/112	10 January 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	circle, 1796
7	TCD MS873/153	29 January 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn
8	TCD MS873/111	15 March 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn
11	TCD MS873/116	8 April 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn, GR <sup>1</sup>
18	TCD MS873/121	18 May 1797	William McCracken	crown, post horn
22	TCD MS873/125	10 June 1797	William McCracken	illegible
26	TCD MS873/128	12 July 1797	William McCracken	[...] [...] LINCH <sup>2</sup>

27	TCD MS873/129	22 July 1797	William McCracken	[...] [...] LINCH
28	TCD MS873/130	26 July 1797	John McCracken Junior	crown, post horn, GR
30	TCD MS873/149	10 August 1797	Mary Ann McCracken	J LARKING <sup>3</sup>
31	TCD MS873/132	24 August 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn, GR
33	TCD MS873/133	1 September 1797	William McCracken	J LARKING 1795
34	TCD MS873/134	11 September 1797	Mary Ann McCracken	LINCH 1795
39	TCD MS873/139	19 November 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn, GR 1796
41	TCD MS873/141	28 November 1797	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn, GR 1796
45	TCD MS873/145	12 May 1798	Henry Joy McCracken	crown, post horn
49	TCD MS873/147	July 1798 (shortly after 17 July)	Mary Ann McCracken	1796 A BLACKWE LL <sup>4</sup>
50	TCD MS873/92	22 July 1798	Henry Joy Junior	crown, post horn
68	TCD MS873/656	2 October 1803	Nelly Rabb	crown, post horn, GR

134	TCD MS873/662	23 April 1843	John Alexander Russell	crown, post horn
139	TCD MS873/155	2 July 1844	Mary Ann McCracken	JOYNSO N 1843 <sup>5</sup>
174	TCD MS873/84	22 June 1859	Mary Ann McCracken	A PIRIE & SONS 1859 <sup>6</sup>
Appendix A4 (See section 5.1.4)	TCD MS873/670	27–28 February 1843	John Alexander Russell	crown, post horn

**Table Notes:**

1. “GR” featuring alongside a crown and post horn, refers to King George III who reigned from 25 October 1760–29 January 1820.
2. Possibly the Linch (or Lynch) family of booksellers based in Skinner-Row and the Four Courts of Dublin.
3. John Larking’s paper mill located at East Malling, Kent, England.
4. Ann Blackwell’s paper mill located at Nash Mills, Abbots Langley Parish, Hertfordshire, England. Ann took over the running of the mill after the death of her husband William in 1777. Griffith Jones took over the mill some time after 1800.
5. William Joynson of Snodland, England, managed the paper mill at St Mary Cray, Kent.
6. Alexander Pirie & Sons paper mill, located at Stoneywood Mill near Aberdeen. Their watermark first appeared in 1802.<sup>1</sup>

Although only five of Mary Ann McCracken’s letters contain watermarks, it is interesting to note that three of these indicate that the paper stemmed from England and one from Scotland, despite there being at least nine paper mills located in the north of Ireland by the

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<sup>1</sup> See Alexander Pirie and James Cruickshank, *Alex. Pirie & Sons, Limited, Paper Manufacturers. Stoneywood and Waterton Works, 1770–1945. The history of a notable enterprise and world-known incorporation* (Unknown Binding, 1945).

end of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that Belfast's Cromack Paper Mill, run by Mary Ann McCracken's cousin Henry Joy Junior, sold "imported writing paper and a variety of stationery goods."<sup>3</sup> In later years, Mary Ann's choice of paper may have been restricted by her stationery supplier. The extent to which she considered the source of her writing paper is undeterminable, yet it is interesting to note that in 1796 she was writing on paper watermarked with a woman's name. Peter Bower remarks that, "although women have always played a very large part in making paper by hand...it is rare to find their names recorded in watermarks."<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2.2 Mourning paper

Both Letter 143 and 144 are written on black edged paper, suggesting that there had been a death in the family. Victorian women were advised, "when in mourning, use paper and envelopes with a black edge."<sup>5</sup> The envelope originally containing Letter 143 is also lined in black and was sealed with black wax. The period of mourning varied depending on the relationship with the deceased. It is unclear who Mary Ann was in mourning for during early 1846, however, the recipient of these letters, Eliza McCracken, lost several of her children during infancy and early childhood and so it is possible that she was grieving the loss of a grandnephew or grandniece.

### 3.2.3 Embossed Designs

Between 1840 and 1890, paper manufacturers and stationers embossed their paper with distinctive designs or images. There are ten instances

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<sup>2</sup> Alison Muir, "Eighteenth Century Paper Makers," in *Familia: Ulster Genealogical Review* 20 (2004): 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Bower, "British watermarks: Martha Lay and Anne Blackwell," *International Paper History*, 6 (1996), 41.

<sup>5</sup> Florence Hartley, *The Ladies' Book of Etiquette and Manual of Politeness* (Boston and New York: Lee Shepard, 1872), 130.

of such imprints within the McCracken letters, as detailed in the following table:

<b>Letter Number</b>	<b>Reference Code</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Shape</b>	<b>Interior Design or Text</b>
145	24 O 10/ 22i	14 July 1847	Oval	Thistle
148	D1748/G/ 387/2	30 November 1849	Crest	LAMONT BR <sup>S</sup> BELFAST <sup>1</sup>
155	MS873/71	26 November 1851	Crest	LAMONT BR <sup>S</sup> BELFAST
157	MS873/73	16 December 1853	Circular	Crowned lion standing on crown
162	MS873/74	1853	Crest	LAMONT BR <sup>S</sup> BELFAST
164	D1748/G/ 387/7	23 August 1858	Crest	LAMONT BR <sup>S</sup> BELFAST
168	MS873/80	2 February 1859	Oval	Thistle
169	MS873/81	13 February 1859	Oval	Moore Belfast <sup>2</sup>
170	MS873/82	22 February 1859	Oval	Moore Belfast
177	MS873/83	2 August 1859	Circular	PATENT STRAW PAPER

178	MS873/87	4 November 1859	Oval	Thistle
180	24 O 10/48	23 February 1861	Crest	Crown

**Table Notes:**

1. Lamont Brothers, stationers, booksellers and publishers of Castle Place, Belfast
2. James Moore, printer and newsagent of Belfast

### 3.2.4 Letter Locking

Jana Dambrogio coined the term “letter-locking” in 2009 to describe the manner in which a letter is folded and secured to conceal its contents, thus allowing the letter to function as its own envelope.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the letter-locked McCracken letters follow the “tuck and seal” method, whereby all four sides of the letter are folded to form a central rectangle, upon which the address is written. The larger side is then tucked into the smaller side and sealed. As a result, the address appears in the centre of the final folio’s “b” side.

### 3.2.5 Adhesives

Two types of adhesive were used to seal the McCracken letters. Firstly, the wafer, consisting of a thin disk of dry coloured paste which became sticky when moist, usually as a result of licking. Once wet, it was pressed between two sheets of paper to secure the letter’s contents. This form of adhesive was employed in less formal correspondence and so can signal the level of intimacy between the correspondent and the recipient. Patrick Lynch makes the following reference to a wafer in his letter of 2 July 1802, “When I went to the post office I had no wafer[.] I asked the post master to seal it for me[;] I s<sup>d</sup> it was for Belfast - [H]e looked very sour - [H]e gave me the wafer

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<sup>6</sup> See Jana Dambrogio, accessed 18 January 2018, <http://www.janadambrogio.com>.

but refused to take the letter into his hand - [H]e told me very roughly to put it in outside and immediately he closed the door against me.”<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, a resin-based coloured sealing wax was melted from a stick onto a folded letter. A ring or handheld sealing tool was then pressed down into the wax to bind the letter closed. Red wax is most recurrent throughout the McCracken letters but black occurs on several occasions to indicate bad news, such as in Letters 48 and 52, whereby the former refers to the execution of Henry Joy McCracken and the latter to the death of Bartholomew Teeling.

### 3.2.6 Envelopes

During the mid-nineteenth century, letter-locking as a security method was gradually replaced by the envelope, yet as pre-gumming was not introduced until the late 1860s, wax and wafers continued to be employed as adhesive sealants. Unfortunately, Madden did not retain any of Mary Ann McCracken’s envelopes, however six examples dating between 1849 and 1851, remain within the Tennent Papers at PRONI. In each instance, the seal was created through the use of an intaglio sealing tool. Five of these envelopes were sealed as result of the tool being pressed into the triangular flap, sealing the adhesive below. The seal remains intact in four of these cases and so the adhesive remains invisible. However, the seal of D1748/H/29/5B is broken, revealing a red wafer. The sixth envelope, D1748/H/29/1B, was sealed as a result of the intaglio sealing tool being applied directly into black wax on the outside of the flap.

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<sup>7</sup> See Letter 61 (LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 3).

<b>Letter Number</b>	<b>Envelope Reference Code</b>	<b>Shape of intaglio seal</b>	<b>Motif</b>	<b>Method and Adhesive</b>
146	D1748/ G/387/1C	Circular	Flowers	Impressed into paper to secure adhesive to the lower flap
148	D1748/ G/387/2B	Shield	Greyhound with a letter in its mouth running across a patch of grass	Impressed into paper to secure adhesive to the lower flap
150	D1748/ G/387/3C	Circular	Crisscross	Impressed into paper to secure adhesive to the lower flap
154	D1748/ G/387/6B	Circular	Spiral	Impressed into paper to secure adhesive to the lower flap
143	D1748/ H/29/1B	Circular	Standing bird	Impressed into black wax across the upper and lower flaps
151	D1748/ H/29/5B	Circular	Tear obscuring image	Impressed into paper which had adhered a red wafer to the lower flap

### 3.2.7 Tearing

Tears of various size occur throughout the McCracken letters. The majority of these are the result of “intentional damage” i.e. the opening of the letter.<sup>8</sup> For instance, when the adhesive seal of wafer or wax is peeled off, it often takes a disk of the adjoined paper with it. Sometimes this piece of paper remains attached to the wax allowing any text written upon it to be deciphered. The missing text can then be reinserted into the body of the letter. Other factors include repeated folding or creasing and in some cases, a degree of careless handling. Tears which do not interfere with the text are recorded in “Material Features” rather than within the body of the letter.

### 3.2.8 Ruled paper

Ruled or lined paper was first introduced in 1770 when John Tetlow was “granted a patent for his machine for ruling paper for music and other purposes”<sup>9</sup> Within Mary Ann’s extant letters, two instances of ruled paper can be found in Letter 9 and Letter 36. These were both written in 1797 to Henry Joy McCracken who was then imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol. Letter 136, from Mrs Nelly Rabb to Mary Ann McCracken, is also entirely written upon ruled paper.

### 3.2.9 Binding

When attempting to secure delicate folia together, Madden’s main binding technique involved pasting strips of thick blue or white paper along the folio sides. This rather slapdash method often resulted in the first word or words of each new line being obscured on the front page and similarly, the last word or words of each line on the final page. He also used strips and patches of such paper to secure tears. His other manners of attaching folios included stitching and the use of metal

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<sup>8</sup> Jana Dambrogio, Smith, Daniel Starza and the Unlocking History Research Group 2019, “Dictionary of Letterlocking (DoLL),” accessed 12 February 2017, <http://letterlocking.org/dictionary>.

<sup>9</sup> James Ward, *The Perfection of the Paperclip: Curious Tales of Invention, Accidental Genius, and Stationery Obsession* (New York: Touchstone, 2015), 83.

eyelets. In some instances, I have found it possible to discern some obstructed text through the use of digital colour adjustment.

### **3.2.10 Folios**

The majority of the McCracken letters are composed of bifolia, whereby a sheet of paper is folded in half to form two leaves or four pages, however single leaf folios are also prevalent. Indeed, in some cases single folios have been cut to the size of the bifolium that preceded it.

### **3.2.11 Handstamps**

When examining the post marks within the McCracken letters, it is important to keep in mind that the Irish and British Post Offices were separated following an Act of Parliament in 1784 and did not reunite until 1831. Therefore, many of these stamps were unique to Ireland, for example the “straight line town name” which many Irish post offices used “to identify that they handled the letters they sent to Dublin.”<sup>10</sup> Pre-paid stamps feature in Letters 138 and 139, which were sent from Belfast to Madden’s Lisbon residence in 1844. Circular date stamps can be found throughout the letters, proving beneficial in establishing an exact postage date and confirming or approximating a date of composition. The circular date stamps within Letter 139 reveal the letter’s journey: it was posted from Belfast on 4 July 1844, passing through Boulogne four days later and finally arriving in Lisbon on 22 July 1844.

### **3.2.12 Postal Charges**

Those extant letters that passed through the post office, retain handwritten postal charges marked on the letter’s front panel, next to, or in some cases, across the address. Letters posted between Belfast and Kilmainham Gaol during 1796 and 1797 were routinely charged at 5d. (5 pence), with the exception of Letter 35 where, “5” has been

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<sup>10</sup> David Feldman, *Handbook of Irish Postal History* (Dublin: David Feldman Ltd., 1975), 73.

struck through and replaced with “6.” Letters 45 and 48, both written in 1798 and posted between Belfast and Dublin, are similarly charged at 5d. Deciphering the hand of the postmaster can be challenging, especially when faced with scrawled numerical calculations and strike throughs.

In Letter 3, Mary Ann’s mother Ann tells her daughter that she will be able to write to her in Dublin often as she “got a frank,” entitling her to free postage. Franks were intended for official business but “most people who wrote letters were related to, or acquainted with an M.P. who would sign or frank their letters giving them free postage.”<sup>11</sup> Another instance can be found in Letter 84, in which Grizzel Joy, who is about to leave for Wales, requests her cousin to, “have the goodness to tell my two Belfast correspondents, Ellen Tomb, & Mary Holmes, that Harry will have a frank for us every day, and if they direct their letters to Temple Street, he will forward them to me.”<sup>12</sup> Despite various efforts to prevent the misuse of franks, the issue continued until the introduction of the Uniform Penny Post in 1840.<sup>13</sup>

In Letter 150, dated 8 December 1849, an extremely faint “Penny Post” hand stamp is smudged upon the envelope’s reverse. The actual postage stamp is missing but a partial diamond obliterating hand stamp remains.<sup>14</sup> A more complete version is found in Letter 154, dated 23 September 1851, revealing the inner numeral, ‘62,’ otherwise known as a “Belfast 62.” Although Letter 151, dated 26 December 1849, was delivered through the postal system, no adhesive stamp remains. However, the envelope’s front surface has been disturbed in the top right hand corner, indicating that an adhesive stamp may have been removed. Unfortunately, Madden did not retain any of McCracken’s envelopes but considering the examples above, it would seem likely that those written from the mid-1840s onwards were also sent via the Penny Post.

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<sup>11</sup> Mairead Reynolds, *A History of the Irish Post Office* (Dublin: MacDonnell Whyte Ltd., 1983), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Letter 84 (TCD MS873/678).

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds, *A History of the Irish Post Office*, 41.

<sup>14</sup> The remainder must have been imprinted upon the missing adhesive stamp.

### 3.3 Methods of Conveyance

Given that the collection of letters under consideration spans a period of sixty-five years (1796–1861), changes in the methods of conveyance must be expected. Such changes are connected with historical developments including the gradual introduction of the Penny Post, which had the obvious effect of making postal delivery more affordable and commonplace. Furthermore, sensitive communications called for a more cautious approach to conveyance, which brought with it increased risk. In 1797, William McCracken observed that some of his fellow Kilmainham inmates blamed poor prospects of release, at least in part, on “these secret correspondings.”<sup>1</sup>

A close examination of the Kilmainham Gaol correspondence reveals three means of conveyance; through the postal system, by way of a bearer and via a safe house. Postal delivery is by far the most easily discerned owing to the presence of postal marks, such as circular date stamps and handwritten fees on the letter’s superscription.<sup>2</sup> For the prisoners, this method was not a straightforward one as they faced the added challenge of having to find someone to transport the letters to the post office on their behalf. Once in the postal system, these letters were at risk of being intercepted by postmasters, such as Belfast’s notorious Thomas Whinnery. Indeed, in Letter 19 Mary Ann told her brother, “A packet of letters was dropped yesterday by a gentleman on his road to Dublin which unfortunately came into Whinnery’s hand, however there were none from any of this family in it.”<sup>3</sup> In his reply, Henry Joy McCracken apologised for not writing more regularly, explaining that “the certainty of all letters for you, or from you being opened by that Scoundrel Whinnery has made it unpleasant.”<sup>4</sup> Ironically, this letter was sent via the post, perhaps with the wry intention of insulting the postmaster. C. J. Woods explains that “as a state official he [Whinnery]

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<sup>1</sup> Letter 26 (TCD MS873/128).

<sup>2</sup> Nine of the extant Kilmainham letters bear postal marks. See Letters 4 (TCD MS873/113), 20 (TCD MS873/123), 31 (TCD MS873/132), 33 ( TCD MS873/133), 35 (TCD MS873/135), 38 (TCD MS873/138), 40 (TCD MS873/140), 42 (TCD MS873/142) and 45 (TCD MS873/145).

<sup>3</sup> Letter 19 (TCD MS873/122).

<sup>4</sup> Letter 20 (TCD MS873/123).

had a duty to open and read letters passing through his premises at 6 Church Street for evidence of subversion. This he did diligently, communicating much information on the United Irishmen to Dublin Castle. In 1797 he even threatened to prosecute a person carrying letters privately.”<sup>5</sup> Interception quickly came to be expected, so much so that the delay of an anticipated letter caused Mary Ann to suppose, “it had been detained at the post office on account of some unguarded expression.”<sup>6</sup> In order to avoid such a scenario, some wrote “intentionally obscure” letters “only meant to be intelligible to the person to whom it was addressed.”<sup>7</sup> However, in the hands of the wrong person, cryptic messages risked misinterpretation. This occurred on 5 September 1797 when such a letter misled the citizens of Belfast to believe that the prisoners had been freed.<sup>8</sup>

Alternatively, the postal system could be avoided entirely and delivery entrusted to a bearer. Those letters carried by hand often state the fact within their contents. For instance, in the opening line of Letter 6 Henry informed his sisters, “I take the opportunity of writing you by our very good friend Mrs Neilson.”<sup>9</sup> Having travelled from her home in Belfast to visit her incarcerated husband, Mrs Neilson was evidently willing to carry this letter with her on her return journey (presumably along with others) and deliver it to the McCracken sisters. Yet this method was also vulnerable to delay and interception. In the following instance, it would appear that several bearers failed to complete the relatively short journey between the jail and the post office, as William McCracken wrote:

I think Rose Ann must in this have received some of four letters I wrote her since this day, eight days and all of them design’d for the post & sent by people I thought would have taken the trouble of putting them in the office. I can account no other way for this not going to hand than the neglect of the persons I entrusted them with.

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<sup>5</sup> C. J. Woods, “Thomas Whinnery,” in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, ed. James McGuire and James Quinn, vol. 9 (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 882.

<sup>6</sup> Letter 34 (TCD MS873/134).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See Letter 34 (TCD MS873/134).

<sup>9</sup> Letter 6 (TCD MS873/112).

If the last I wrote Rose Ann is received, it will show that private hands are not any more to be depended on.<sup>10</sup>

Such suspicions were well founded, as several months later Henry told his sister Margaret, “there are very few private hands that I would either wish to send or receive a letter by, as the one by Mr W, whoever he is, from Mary to me, I got ready opened to my hand.”<sup>11</sup> Evidently, reliable bearers were difficult to come by and even those who were considered trustworthy could turn out to be quite the opposite, as was the case with John Hughes. Several references to Hughes carrying letters between Kilmainham Gaol and the McCracken household can be found within the corpus. In Letter 12 for instance, Mary Ann wrote, “I was sorry to hear from your letter to John by J. Hughes, whom we have not yet seen, that you are still kept such close prisoners.”<sup>12</sup> The following year, Hughes was publicly exposed as “a complicit informer.”<sup>13</sup>

Although many of the prisoners’ visiting family members bore letters back to the north with them (for example, Mrs Neilson, John McCracken Junior and George Joy) there is no documented evidence to suggest that Mary Ann McCracken undertook such a role. Presumably however, she did carry letters to the Belfast post office, and in Letter 16 we find Henry calling on her to “get some person to deliver the letters enclosed & any that are left for the people here, cover them to me as it will be the safest way.”<sup>14</sup> She was therefore responsible for enlisting a bearer to dispatch “the letters enclosed” to the other prisoners’ correspondents in Belfast. Furthermore, Henry requested that letters “left” at the McCracken household for “the people here,” i.e. the prisoners at Kilmainham Gaol, were to be “covered” by Mary Ann to Henry Joy McCracken. Based upon the latter’s assumption that there was some degree of stockpiling occurring at the McCracken residence, it may be possible that 30 Rosemary Lane was being used as a safe house for letters before their dispatch to Kilmainham Gaol.

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<sup>10</sup> Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133).

<sup>11</sup> Letter 39 (TCD MS873/139).

<sup>12</sup> Letter 12 (TCD MS873/117).

<sup>13</sup> Letter 52 (TCD MS873/93).

<sup>14</sup> Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120).

A definitive example of a safe house can be found in Oliver Bond's property on Dublin's Bridge Street. Letters were carried to the house (either from the north or Kilmainham Gaol) and remained on the premises until another bearer could collect them. This method of conveyance was prone to delays which could, in turn, give concern to both the writer and recipient. For example, Henry experienced "a good deal of uneasiness" upon finding out that Mary Ann had "had no account of this place since since Will<sup>m</sup> came."<sup>15</sup> Yet, he continued, "but I now understand that all the letters from this place for the North remained in O. Bond's untill thursday night when they went by H Bell."<sup>16</sup> Another drawback to the safe house method was the increased risk of interception, given that letters passed through the hands of at least two bearers. To return to the mysterious Mr W. of Letter 39, we find that he may or may not have been responsible for opening Mary Ann's letter to her brother, as Henry speculated, "I suppose to was [sic] save me trouble as they knew that my arm was weak with the Rheumatism. This attention I do not know who I am oblidge [sic] to for, as I believe it was left in Bond's & it came to the jail by M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, he was unable to determine which particular bearer had broken the letter's seal, given that Mr W. bore it from Belfast to Bond's house and Mrs Neilson transported it from the safe house to the jail. The two-leg journey also created a disconnect between the named bearer (identified within the letter's contents) and the reality of its final conveyor. These issues, coupled with the threat of safe houses being raided, made this a similarly risk-laden mode of conveyance when compared to postal delivery.

Following the 1798 rebellion, postmasters remained wary, as Patrick Lynch soon discovered while on his mission to collect Irish airs. In July 1802 he wrote to Mary Ann McCracken:

I must now tell you Madam, something about a bitter orange. When I went to the post office I had no wafer. I asked the post master to seal it for me, I s<sup>d</sup> it was for Belfast. He looked very sour. He gave me the wafer but refused to take the letter into his hand. He told me very roughly to put it in outside and immediately he closed the door against me. I found before I was three days in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Letter 39 (TCD MS873/139).

Westport that this post master, whom they call Sergeant Kelly, had told several persons that I should and would be apprehended as one on some secret mission from Belfast.

When Lynch later enquired if any letter of reply had come for him, Kelly refused to answer, leading Lynch to “suspect that Kelly had suppress’d my letter.”<sup>18</sup> There was a further crackdown within the postal system following Emmet’s uprising of 1803. This had a direct impact on Mary Ann’s line of communication with her business agent, James Orr in Dublin, who was liaising the incarcerated Russell. In 1859 she explained to Madden, “we dare not at that period send any letters thro’ the Post office but such as might be public, as all were opened but as we sent our muslins by the mail coach they were in such demand, & our factor knew how to answer them,”<sup>19</sup> the implication being that their letters were smuggled within the muslins. However, even these measures were not foolproof, as Orr’s letter dated 1 October 1803 reveals: “I would have sent this according to your wish but from very extraordinary appearance respecting the parcel of Muslin which we this day received, it was evidently opened and the letter both to me and the enclosed open’d.”<sup>20</sup> Evidently, interception was a threat to every mode of conveyance during this period.

In the absence of postal marks and direct references to a bearer, it would be easy to assume that, during these turbulent years (1796–1803), letters must have been conveyed by a private hand. However, this would be to overlook the possibility that some may have been sent via the post as part of a parcel of letters or as enclosures within other posted letters or packages.

As the nineteenth century progressed and the political climate changed, interception became less of a threat. Indeed, in the later letters, delivery methods are rarely alluded to. Those references which do arise reveal a renewed trust in the postal system. In 1858, McCracken told Madden of a letter to a third party which she had “dropped into the Post office by my own messenger,”<sup>21</sup> and by 1859,

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<sup>18</sup> Letter 61 (LHL, Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 3).

<sup>19</sup> Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80).

<sup>20</sup> Letter 67 (TCD MS873/684).

<sup>21</sup> Letter 166 (TCD MS873/88).

she found “the post the safest way of sending the picture & book.”<sup>22</sup> Although there are relatively few instances of postal marks throughout the later letters, this is mainly owing to the absence of their envelopes. Letters 138 and 139, which were sent to Madden at his Lisbon residence, are exceptional within their correspondence in that they are locked by a tuck and seal method and, as such, are marked with postal stamps. Examples of envelopes bearing postal stamps include those which enclosed Letters 150 and 154.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Letter 173 (TCD MS873/84).

<sup>23</sup> For further details on the presence of postal marks and envelopes see section 3.2.

## 3.4 Intertextuality

Taking Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen's study of "intertextual networks"<sup>1</sup> within a correspondence as a model, this chapter explores the relationship between letters and in doing so reveals a variety of references to other letters both within and outside of the chain, as well as intratextual or reflexive references which create internal connections within individual letters.

### 3.4.1 Acknowledgement of receipt

Acknowledgements of receipt feature throughout the collection, generally within the letter's opening lines. These frequently adhere to the formula, "I received your letter dated," or "I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of," before stating the date of the recipient's previous letter, for instance, "I received your letter dated Nov<sup>r</sup> last"<sup>2</sup> or "I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of the 8<sup>th</sup>."<sup>3</sup> Acknowledgement of receipt was particularly important in the Kilmainham letters due to the precariousness of delivery, as discussed above in section 3.3. Likewise, those travelling between continents (such as Leitch and Mary Ann McCracken's correspondence, sent between Virginia and Belfast) were attended by a proportional increase in the uncertainty of transit, adding to the import of confirmation of delivery. Indeed, Leitch reflected explicitly upon these inconveniences in Letter 122:

Your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> of last month came to hand yesterday evening, and am much surprised to learn that you had not received my letter dated early in January in reply to yours of November previous, however as mail routes in new countries are liable to delay, I am in hopes my letter has reached you before this. Those two are all that I have received from you[.] I cannot imagine what has become of the third[.]<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, "Intertextual networks in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston," 73.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 122 (MSS 9200, Box 1).

<sup>3</sup> Letter 12 (TCD MS873/117).

<sup>4</sup> Letter 122 (MSS 9200, Box 1).

Such delays were especially problematic since Leitch's letters often contained important financial documents and instructions which directly impacted the extended Neilson family.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.4.2 Indirect references to recipient's previous letters

Indirect references to the recipient's previous letters also provide confirmation of receipt, albeit more generally. For instance, in Letter 11 Henry Joy McCracken tells Mary Ann, "All your letters I recd."<sup>6</sup> However, as no further information is provided, it is impossible to determine whether or not these letters are extant.

### 3.4.3 References to writer's previous letter

References to the writer's previous letter or letters occasionally occur in cases where a reply was expected but not received. For instance, Rose Ann McCracken wrote to Henry Joy McCracken, "as William will not answer my letters, I am now going to try what success I have with you,"<sup>7</sup> the implication being that William had received her letters but did not have the courtesy to reply (despite the possibility that his letters had been lost in transit). Similarly, Patrick Lynch wrote to Mary Ann McCracken on 2 July 1802 when he did not receive a reply from her brother John McCracken Junior, declaring "I am too long detained in this place expecting the return of letters I wrote to y<sup>r</sup> Brother John, one on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and the other on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Finding no answer comming to either, I have taken the liberty to write to you."<sup>8</sup> However, Lynch did consider the possibility that the letters had been detained as he "began to suspect that Kelly [the postmaster] had suppress'd my letter."<sup>9</sup> He also speculated that the letters had been received but not

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<sup>5</sup> See Letter 114.

<sup>6</sup> Letter 11 (TCD MS873/116).

<sup>7</sup> Letter 35 (TCD MS873/135).

<sup>8</sup> Letter 61 (Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 3).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

opened, postulating, “Or is it possible that Mr John M<sup>c</sup>Cracken is not at home and that there is no one allowed to open or answer his letters?”<sup>10</sup> When Mary Ann failed to answer, he wrote to her again on 9 July 1802 reiterating his situation: “On Monday 21 of June I wrote to Mr John M<sup>c</sup>Cracken on the same subject; got no answer. Saturday the 3<sup>d</sup> of July, I wrote to you. I have got no answer. I fear there is something wrong.”<sup>11</sup> Then, before signing off he reflected, “I hope you have got my letter.”<sup>12</sup> The distress caused by this uncertainty highlights the importance of acknowledgements of receipt, especially in such perilous circumstances.

In her letter to Madden dated 22 June 1859, McCracken referred back to hers of the previous day, owing to her confusion over its content. She commented, “I believe I mentioned in my last, some trifling errors which I observed in Russell’s life but am not certain.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, she had written on the subject within Letter 171, dated 21 June 1859. Although this may, in part, be attributed to her advanced age, she was quick to explain: “I found an old sheet of paper containing them but am not certain whether I copied it as I am apt to write so diffusely & circumstantially that I frequently write my letters over again with the intention of shortening, in which I do not always succeed.”<sup>14</sup> This gives an insight into the intricacies of Mary Ann McCracken’s letter writing process and accounts for some repetitiveness within her later correspondence.

#### **3.4.4 References to letters written by a third party**

References to letters written by a third party can act as an acknowledgement of receipt in cases where the third party is highly likely to have read the letter or been privy to the information. For example, when Mary Ann received Henry’s letter stating “I rec<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Letter 62 (Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 4).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Letter 173 (TCD MS873/84).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Marg<sup>t</sup>'s letter yesterday with a note for 5 guineas,"<sup>15</sup> it would seem logical to assume that she made her sister (with whom she lived) aware of its receipt. Such references also occur when updating the recipient on the situation of mutual friends or relatives, as is illustrated in Mary Ann's comment to Henry, "I have just rec<sup>d</sup> a most agreeable letter from M<sup>r</sup> Bunting, the Irish Music is complete."<sup>16</sup> In cases where the third party is unrelated to the recipient or falls outside their close circle, the writer is often highlighting relevant information imparted in their letter. For instance, in keeping Mary Ann abreast of his efforts to locate a portrait of his uncle, John Alexander Russell wrote, "by this morning's post I received a letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Joseph D'Arcy Sirr."<sup>17</sup> It was important for Russell to highlight this letter and its contents, as both he and Mary Ann McCracken suspected Sirr's father of having stolen the painting.

### **3.4.5 References to letters written to a third party**

In Letter 6, Henry informed Mary Ann that he had written to Frank "by Ja<sup>s</sup> Haffey," thus making her aware that their brother could expect a letter, if he had not already received one. This notice of dispatch to a third party was of relevance to the recipient as Mary Ann could warn the rest of the McCracken household to be on the lookout for such a letter. Indeed, the majority of references to letters to third parties indicate a notice of dispatch to a person with whom the recipient lived or was close to.

### **3.4.6 References to letters written between third parties**

References to letters written between third parties occur most frequently within the Kilmainham Letters. In Letter 41, the reference was a request for an acknowledgement of receipt on behalf of another: "Ja<sup>s</sup> Haffey requested me to enquire, the first time I would be writing,

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<sup>15</sup> Letter 41 (TCD MS873/141).

<sup>16</sup> Letter 30 (TCD MS873/149).

<sup>17</sup> Letter 133 (TCD MS873/658).

if Frank had rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from him?"<sup>18</sup> Such a request could be made of Mary Ann owing to her close proximity to her brother Frank. Another third-party reference appears in Anne McCracken's letter to her daughter, wherein she states, "I was sorry to find by John's letter to his wife that you don't like Dublin tho' I was sure it would be the case."<sup>19</sup> Here, the reference explains how the writer came into possession of this information. A further example can be found in Letter 38, in which William McCracken tells Mary Ann, "We hear this day that you are all well by a letter James Greer had from his wife."<sup>20</sup> Evidently then, Mrs Greer's letter, informing her husband that their Belfast friends were well, was shared with William, among other fellow inmates. Finally, such references reveal the perceived effects of letters on third parties. For instance, Henry Joy McCracken reports that, "W<sup>m</sup> has been in excellent spirits ever since he rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from Rose Ann."<sup>21</sup>

### 3.4.7 References to future letters

The most elusive references are those to future or planned letters, which may or may not have been composed. These fall into two categories, the first being letters which the correspondent intended to write. For instance, in 1797 William McCracken wrote to his sister Margaret, "I don't believe I can write to her [Rose Ann McCracken] this day but will tomorrow."<sup>22</sup> If William had written this letter it would have been dated 2 September 1797, however, no such letter remains and nor do any intertextual references to its existence. Another example can be found in Letter 29, wherein Henry tells Mary Ann, "the first day I can force myself to sit down, I will write Marg<sup>t</sup>."<sup>23</sup> This reference is vaguer still, given that Henry does not specify a day. However, those most impossible to account for are the broader

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<sup>18</sup> Letter 41 (TCD MS873/141).

<sup>19</sup> Letter 3.

<sup>20</sup> Letter 38 (MS873/138).

<sup>21</sup> Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120).

<sup>22</sup> Letter 25 (TCD MS873/127).

<sup>23</sup> Letter 29 (TCD MS873/148).

references to future letters, as Mary Ann's advice to Madden illustrates: "in future let M<sup>rs</sup> Madden read my letters & she can read to you what is necessary for you & omit the rest."<sup>24</sup> What this does reveal is her intention to continue their correspondence indefinitely.

The second category is comprised of references to letters the writer expected to receive from the recipient in future. These references tend to be instructive and therefore can be seen as attempts to influence the content of the recipient's future letters. In Letter 14, Henry directed Mary Ann, "when you write let me know how R's children are."<sup>25</sup> Presumably, this request was made on behalf of Henry's fellow inmate, Thomas Richardson. Similarly, in anticipation of Madden's subsequent letters, she instructed him, "Pray date your letters inside as when it falls out of the envelope I am at a loss for the date."<sup>26</sup>

### 3.4.8 References to the current letter

Tanskanen argues that "references to the current letter actually represent intratextuality rather than intertextuality," given their self-referential nature, "but [they] nevertheless throw light on how references are used in correspondence."<sup>27</sup> Some such references are remarkable in their ability to transport the reader into the moment of composition. Indeed, in Letter 11 Henry Joy McCracken captured the urgency with which he was writing in the following line, "Not having had much time to write, as I did not know of this conveyance [sic] untill this minute & only two or three to write."<sup>28</sup> Conversely, in Letter 16, Henry recorded an instance of writer's block, stating, "I never found myself so absent as since I sat down to write this letter."<sup>29</sup> The limitations of letter writing as a form of communication are

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<sup>24</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>25</sup> Letter 14 (TCD MS873/118).

<sup>26</sup> Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81).

<sup>27</sup> Tanskanen, "Intertextual networks in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston," 77.

<sup>28</sup> Letter 11 (TCD MS873/116).

<sup>29</sup> Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120).

highlighted in James Ramsey's intratextual comment, "many things I have to communicate which I cannot do thro this medium."<sup>30</sup> The fear of interception evidently prevented Ramsey from writing everything he wished to relate. In Letter 51 Mary Ann McCracken acknowledged a further constraint, stating, "yet independent of other objections to mentioning it by post, the particulars are too tedious for the bounds of a letter."<sup>31</sup>

Reflexivity also occurs as a result of "the writer's dissatisfaction with the appearance of the letter."<sup>32</sup> Examples of both male and female correspondents apologising for or drawing attention to the physical state of their letters can be found throughout the McCracken correspondence. These include references to length, detail, errors, handwriting and paper quality.<sup>33</sup> James Daybell's observation (based upon a selection of early eighteenth century letters found within the Bodleian Library's Walker collection) that "men's letters are more likely to apologise for the lack of information than for anything to do with expression or length, as the women's do," is in concord with the following findings.

Having been chastised by his sister thus: "your letters are never as long or particular as we could desire,"<sup>34</sup> Henry Joy McCracken made sure to justify the brevity of his reply, commenting, "so much of my time has been engaged by our new admitted fellows that it has prevented me from writing as long a letter as I would wish or being as particular as you would like."<sup>35</sup> Three months later he wrote, "you must excuse the shortness of this epistle & want of others on the same acct."<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in Letter 112, Leitch implores McCracken to "please excuse the haste and brevity of this letter."<sup>37</sup> Contrarily, Mary Ann was

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<sup>30</sup> Letter 75 (TCD MS873/696).

<sup>31</sup> Letter 51 (TCD MS873/106).

<sup>32</sup> Tanskanen, "Intertextual networks in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston," 82.

<sup>33</sup> See sections 3.1 and 3.2 for further details on handwriting and paper quality.

<sup>34</sup> Letter 12 (TCD MS873/117).

<sup>35</sup> Letter 14 (TCD MS873/118).

<sup>36</sup> Letter 27 (TCD MS873/129).

<sup>37</sup> Letter 112 (UVA MSS 9200).

concerned by the verbosity of her letters, apologising in Letter 140, "Pray excuse the enormous length of this,"<sup>38</sup> while in Letter 130 she reflected, "I have been tediously minute but I wished to make you thoroughly acquainted with all circumstances."<sup>39</sup> She repeatedly speculated on the effect her long letters might have upon the reader, resulting in a series of somewhat formulaic apologies, many of which beg forgiveness for "trespassing" or "imposing" on the reader's "time & patience"<sup>40</sup> and in one extreme example, for "wasting time so precious as yours."<sup>41</sup> Indeed, in Letter 156 Mary Ann expressed fear of "tiring your patience with my tedious details, which is a general fault of mine."<sup>42</sup> Notably, these apologies occur most frequently within her letters to extra-familial men, namely, Madden and Robert James Tennent. However, Daybell argues that "this manner of self-criticism was governed less by gender than by social status or position [and] acted as a way for subordinates to demonstrate respect or deference to superiors."<sup>43</sup> Given that Mary Ann considered both men her friends, it must also be taken into consideration that she knew how preoccupied they were with their work.

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<sup>38</sup> Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156).

<sup>39</sup> Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692).

<sup>40</sup> Letters 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)), 146 (PRONI D1748/G/387/1), 161 (TCD MS873/70), 170 (TCD MS873/82) and 176 (TCD MS873/85).

<sup>41</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>42</sup> Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>43</sup> James Daybell, "Female Literacy and the Social Conventions of Women's Letter-Writing in England, 1540–1603," in James Daybell ed., *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 62.

## 3.5. Missing Letters

### 3.5.1 Chronology of missing letters

Below is a chronological list of missing McCracken letters brought to light through intertextual references.<sup>1</sup> For the most part these letters were penned by or to Mary Ann McCracken. However, those sent amongst her close family circle (particularly during Henry Joy McCracken and William McCracken's incarceration in Kilmainham Gaol) are also included, as is Thomas Russell's final letter to his sister which was entrusted to Mary Ann but which was never returned to her after she lent it to Charles Hamilton Teeling. References to letters between distant third parties and to planned future letters (for which there is no evidence of their actual composition) have not been recorded.

#### 1796

Eliza McCracken [Moneymore] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. September 1796

See Letter 1: "I rec<sup>d</sup> yours last night."

Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Francis McCracken [Belfast], October 1796

See Letter 22 (TCD MS873/125): "In all the letters I have received I have never got a sentance [sic] or word of information on how Frank comes on, tho the very first letter I wrote when I came here was to him."

Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Margaret McCracken [Dublin], 14 November 1796

See Letter 3: "I wrote your sister the 14th."

Member of the McCracken family [Belfast] to Henry Joy [Dublin], November or December 1796

See Letter 5 (TCD MS873/115): "I had a letter yesterday from Belfast."

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<sup>1</sup> These do not include those missing letters of which transcriptions remain.

1797

Henry Joy [Dublin] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol],  
January 1797

See Letter 6 (TCD MS873/112): "A note I rec<sup>d</sup> from Hy Joy."

Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Francis McCracken  
[Belfast], January 1797

See Letter 6 (TCD MS873/112): "The other day I wrote Frank by Jas  
Haffey."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham  
Gaol], prior to 29th January 1797

See Letter 7 (TCD MS873/153): "In Mary's last letter."

Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to John McCracken Junior  
[Belfast], c. March 1797

See Letter 10 (TCD MS873/150): "The intelligence contained in your  
letter to John fills us with a variety of contradictory sensations."

Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to John McCracken Junior  
[Belfast], c. April 1797

See Letter 11 (TCD MS873/117): "I am sorry to hear from your letter to  
John by J. Hughes."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Rose Ann [Belfast], April  
1797

See Letter 15 (TCD MS873/119): "I wrote Rose Ann since I came here  
desiring her to take as much exercise as the weather would permit."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Francis McCracken  
[Belfast], April 1797

See Letter 15 (TCD MS873/119): "I forgot when writing to Frank."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham  
Gaol], 2 May 1797

See Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120): "I have recd your letter that came by  
post dated 2d May without its being opened."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], 2 May 1797

See Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120): "also yours by private hand of same date."

Rose Ann McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], April or May 1797

See Letter 16 (TCD MS873/120): "Speer told me this morn<sup>s</sup> that W<sup>m</sup> has been in excellent spirits ever since he rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from Rose Ann."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Rose Ann McCracken [Belfast], May 1797

See Letter 18 (TCD MS873/121): "I doubt I will loose [sic] the morn<sup>s</sup> music I mentioned in my letter to Rose Ann."

Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], 1 June 1797

See Letter 22 (TCD MS873/125): "I received yours of the 1<sup>st</sup> and am obliged to you for your care in giving me so early intelligence of the racking in Belfast."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to a member or members of the McCracken family [Belfast], hand delivered on 2 June 1797 by "R.S."

See Letter 19 (TCD MS873/122): "Three letters came to hand today from W<sup>m</sup> by R.S." The other two letters mentioned were Letter 18 (TCD MS873/121) and the letter from William to Rose Ann mentioned in Letter 18's postscript.

Mary Ann McCracken and other McCracken family members [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], between 20 May and 26 May 1797

See Letter 19 (TCD MS873/122): "We wrote several times to you last week which I suppose you have by this time rec<sup>d</sup>."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 19 June 1797

See Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156): "I was sorry I did not in time think of sending you an old letter of my brother W<sup>m</sup>[']s[,] written in Kilmainham 19<sup>th</sup> June 97."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to McCracken family [Belfast], 27 June 1797

See Letter 24 (TCD MS873/126): "Will<sup>m</sup> is writing by the same oppty."

Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], c. July 1797

See Letter 25 (TCD MS873/127): "I was very much pleas'd to find by your letter."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] x2, acknowledged 22 July 1797

See Letter 27 (TCD MS873/129): "I rec<sup>d</sup> two letters from you."

Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], acknowledged 22 July 1797

See Letter 27 (TCD MS873/129): "I rec<sup>d</sup> two letters from you<sup>2</sup> & one from Peggy with money."

Edward Bunting [presumably London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 10 August 1797

See Letter 30 (TCD MS873/149): "I have just rec<sup>d</sup> a most agreeable letter from M<sup>r</sup> Bunting."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], 30 August 1797

See Letter 32 (TCD MS873/131): "This day I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of the 30<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup>."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to McCracken family [Belfast], 30 August 1797

See Letter 32 (TCD MS873/131): "Yesterday & the day before, he wrote."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to McCracken family [Belfast], 31 August 1797

See Letter 32 (TCD MS873/131): "Yesterday & the day before, he wrote."

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<sup>2</sup> Two missing letters, MAM to HJM.

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], c. August 1797

See Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133): "As Henry has wrote Mary this day, I must this to you, tho it will be rather an answer to Mary's letter than the last I had from you."

Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], c. August 1797

See Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133): "As Henry has wrote Mary this day, I must this to you, tho it will be rather an answer to Mary's letter than the last I had from you."

William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to McCracken family, received 20 September 1797

See Letter 35 (TCD MS873/13): "there has been no letters from him since this day week."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Rose Ann McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], 3 November 1797

See Letter 37 (TCD MS873/137): "I wrote this morning to M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup>."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], November 1797. This letter was delivered to Oliver Bond's house in Dublin by "Mr W" and later hand delivered by Mrs Neilson

See Letter 39 (TCD MS873/139): "Indeed, there are very few private hands that I would either wish to send or receive a letter by, as the one by M<sup>r</sup> W, whoever he is, from Mary to me, I got ready opened to my hand."

Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], received 27 November 1797

See Letter 41 (TCD MS873/141): "I rec<sup>d</sup> Marg<sup>th</sup>'s letter yesterday with a note for 5 guineas."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken or Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], late November or early December

See Letter 42 (TCD MS873/142): "We receiv<sup>d</sup> your two letters and the money."<sup>3</sup>

## 1798

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Dublin], 4 May 1798

See Letter 44 (TCD MS873/144): "I should have answered yours of the 4th May sooner."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken, received 17 June 1798

See Letter 46 (TCD MS873/154): "yesterday I recd a letter from you enclosing two guineas."

Thomas Hughes to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 19 August 1798

See Letter 51 (TCD MS873/106): "I fear you will charge me with indifference or neglect in delaying so long to answer yours of the 19th."

## 1799

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Alexander Maguire [Dublin], 1799

See Letter 59 (TCD MS873/101): "I wrote to Maguire desiring him to send you two pieces of Plaid Muslin."

## 1803

Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], September 1803

See Letter 67 (TCD MS873/684): "I receiv'd yrs with a letter enclosed for the Sister of your friend."

Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Margaret Russell [Dublin], September 1803

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<sup>3</sup> Presumably, the second letter was that sent by Margaret McCracken to HJM containing the five guineas and which was received on 27th November 1797.

See Letter 67 (TCD MS873/684): "I receiv'd yrs with a letter enclosed for the Sister of your friend."

Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], received 1 October 1803

See Letter 67 (TCD MS873/684): "parcel of Muslin which we this day received, it was evidently opened and the letter both to me and the enclosed open'd."

Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], October 11 1803

See Letter 69 (TCD MS873/683): "I am this day favor'd with yours of 11<sup>th</sup> inst inclosing £93.13.2."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James Ramsey [Belfast], 13 October 1803

See Letter 70 (TCD MS873/108): "I know of no other course I can pursue than to write by Mr Ramsey tomorrow."<sup>4</sup>

Eliza Templeton [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 15 October 1803

See Letter 73 (TCD MS873/107): "Your advice, my dear Eliza, I approve of entirely but am sorry part of it came too late as you will see by the enclosed copy of a letter which I sent by Mr Ramsay last night. It was written before the letters came from the post office."

James Ramsey to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 18 October 1803

See Letter 75 (TCD MS873/696): "I enclose the answer to your letter mentioned in mine of yesterday."

Reverent James Nelson [Downpatrick] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], November 1803

See Letter 81 (TCD MS873/682): "I received your letter of introduction from the barrister."

Mary Ann McCracken and Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to Hamilton and James Orr [Dublin], eighth day of unknown month, following the events of 21 October 1803

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that Letter 75 (TCD MS873/696) is Ramsey's reply to this letter: "I enclose the answer to your letter."

See Letter 82 (TCD, MS873/647): "We were yesterday favour'd with yours of 8 inst."

Thomas Russell [Downpatrick Gaol] to Margaret Russell [Belfast], 21 October 1803

See Letter 135 (TCD, MS873/693): "[H]is last letter to his sister Miss Margaret Russell, commenced thus: My Ever Dear Sister I write this on the day [...] on which I am to die."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mrs Rabb [Ballysallagh], 11 November 1803

See Letter 136 (TCD MS873/627): "I received your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup>."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Counsellor Joy [Dublin], post 21 October 1803

See Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692): "I wrote shortly after M<sup>r</sup> Russell's death to M<sup>r</sup> Joy."

## 1809

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], February or March 1809

See Letter 95: "I received your letter and shall take care to have the paper enclosed, which you sent, inserted in its proper place relative to the Brass Trumpets, &cc."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], c. May 1809

See Letter 99: "I really forget whether I answered your last letter or not relative to Miss Balfour's Question."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], c. August 1809

See Letter 100: "I received your letter and am obliged for the song."

## 1815

Unknown to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 7th [...] c. 1815

See Letter 105: "Ever since I received yours of 7th I have daily intended writing to you."

## 1825

Johnston Hamilton to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. 1825

See Letter 176 (TCD MS873/85): "it was soon after the account of Hamilton's death, when I was trying to raise funds to enable Mrs Hamilton to join her daughter in America, a letter came from Johnston."

## 1827

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 27 August 1827

See Letter 111 (UVA MSS 9200): "I received your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Aug last about the 1<sup>st</sup> November."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 31 August 1827

See Letter 111 (UVA MSS 9200): "I received your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Aug last about the 1<sup>st</sup> November."

## 1828

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James Dinsmore [Charlottesville, Virginia], 12 April 1828

See Letter 112 (UVA MSS 9200): "It is about a month or five weeks since Mr Dinsmore received yours of 12<sup>th</sup> April."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 1828

See Letter 113 (UVA MSS 9200): "I have before me a letter of yours received a few days ago."

## 1838

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 16 September 1838

See Letter 121 (UVA MSS 9200): "I have delayed upwards of a month since the rec<sup>t</sup> of your last letter dated Sept 16<sup>th</sup>."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], November 1838

See Letter 122 (UVA MSS 9200): "yours of November previous."

## 1839

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 15 February 1839

See Letter 122 (UVA MSS 9200): "Your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> of last month came to hand yesterday evening."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 1839

See Letter 122 (UVA MSS 9200): "Those two are all that I have received from you[.] I cannot imagine what has become of the third."

## 1841

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to unknown male, 1841

See Letter 128: "We had a good laugh at your expense in reading that part of your epistle where you say 'we middle-aged women.'"

## 1842

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Madden [Dublin], April/May 1842

See Letter 129 (TCD MS873/159): "I rec<sup>d</sup> from my wife the kind letter you were good enough to address to me at Dublin."

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 29 September 1842

See Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94): "I should ere this have thanked you for your very kind letter of 29<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup>."

### 1843

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to John Alexander Russell [Carlisle], 9 February 1843

See Letter 133 (TCD MS873/658): "Mary & myself were truly grieved to find by your letter of 9 Feb that you had lost your good & dear Brother."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mrs Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh], 11 November 1843

See Letter 136 (TCD MS873/627): "I received your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup>."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mr James Dowsett Rose Cleland [[Rathgael House, Bangor], 1843

See Letter 137 (TCD MS873/626): "I have to apologize [sic] for not answering your letter, but just after I had written a few lines, I was interrupted by persons on business."

### 1844

Madden [Lisbon] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 4 February 1844

See Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)): "I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> instant, which in a great measure relieved me from much anxiety on your account, as from your long silence."

Madden [Lisbon] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 11 February 1844

See Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)): "I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> instant, which in a great measure relieved me from much anxiety on your account, as from your long silence."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Madden [Lisbon], c. 30 April 1844

See Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155): "It is now about nine weeks since I wrote you by post."

Madden [Lisbon] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], prior to 15 October 1844

See Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156): "I ought long ere this to have acknowledged the receipt of your welcome letter."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh], c. 1844

See Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155): "M<sup>rs</sup> Rabb of Ballysallagh, to whom I wrote on the subject."

Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. 1844

See Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155): "M<sup>rs</sup> Rabb of Ballysallagh, to whom I wrote on the subject, says 'I do not believe M<sup>r</sup> Russell ever said that the French had landed at Ballywalter, he was too much a man of honour to assert what he knew to be an untruth. Downpatrick was I think not more than ten miles distance from Ballywalter, and the circumstances in which he (M<sup>r</sup> R) was placed for some time before, rendered all communication with the people out of the question. He told me that when he went to the place of rendezvous (a Hill near Downpatrick) dressed in his green uniform, & where he expected to find a multitude, there were no more than three individuals, one of whom suffered along with him, nor do I think he had any wish for assistance from the French. He said Ireland might as well be an English, as a French colony, but even if it was given in evidence, I for my part would not believe it.'"

Madden [Lisbon] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], prior to 15 October 1844

See Letter 140 (TCD MS873/15): "I ought long ere this to have acknowledged the receipt of your welcome letter."

## 1845

Madden [Lisbon] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. May 1845

See Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)): "I had the pleasure of receiving your welcome letter."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Edmund Getty [London], c. May 1845

See Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)): "I had to wait for advice from Mr Getty & Mr Cogan, the former gentleman was in London on town business & before I received his answer, Mr Cogan to whom I had also written forbid me to advertise until further instructions, as he thought it could be published without subscription & had written to you on the subject."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to William Forde Cogan, c. May 1845  
See Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)): "I had to wait for advice from Mr Getty & Mr Cogan, the former gentleman was in London on town business & before I received his answer, Mr Cogan to whom I had also written forbid me to advertise until further instructions, as he thought it could be published without subscription & had written to you on the subject."

Edmund Getty [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. May 1845

See Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)): "Mr Getty is not yet returned from London but he wrote to me saying that two in each of the papers you mentioned would be sufficient."

## 1849

Eliza Tennent [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 6 October 1849

See Robert James Tennent's endorsement within Letter 146 (PRONI D1748/G/387/1): "Answ<sup>d</sup> by Eliza 6. Oct<sup>r</sup> 49."

See Robert James Tennent's endorsement within Letter 147 (PRONI D1748/H/29/3): "Answ<sup>d</sup> by M<sup>rs</sup> T. 6. Oct<sup>r</sup> 49."

Robert James Tennent [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 4 December 1849

See Robert James Tennent's endorsement within Letter 146 (PRONI D1748/G/387/1): "Answ<sup>d</sup> by Eliza 6. Oct<sup>r</sup> 49- & aft<sup>ds</sup> by self on 4. Dec<sup>r</sup> 49."

See Robert James Tennent's endorsement within Letter 148 (PRONI D1748/G/387/2): "4 Dec<sup>r</sup> 49 - authorizing her to affix my name to docum<sup>t</sup> of [...] copy sent me, & retaining copy to try for some other good names &c."

Either Sarah Elizabeth Bunting or Mary Ann Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 6 December 1849  
See Letter 149 (PRONI D1748/H/29/4): "today I had a letter from Miss Bunting on the same subject."

Robert James Tennent [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 6 December 1849  
See Letter 150 (PRONI D1748/G/387/3): "I duly received your kind letter respecting M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting's business."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to George Dunbar, 1849  
See Letter 151 (PRONI D1748/H/29/5): "M<sup>r</sup> Dunbar to whom I also wrote on the subject."

Mary Anne Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. December 1849  
See Letter 151 (PRONI D1748/H/29/5): "M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting, in a late letter, said that it is not material as to the order in which the signatures appear on the list."

## 1850

Sarah Elizabeth Bunting or Mary Ann Bunting Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 7 June 1849  
See Letter 152 (PRONI D1748/G/387/4): "I received a letter yesterday from Miss Bunting requesting me to forward, by return of post, the list of names which had been obtained in Belfast to her mother's memorial."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mr Davison, 28 January 1850  
See Letter 153 (PRONI D1748/G/387/5): "M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting requested I would write to him which I did eight days ago but no answer has been returned."

## 1851

Robert James Tennent [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 22 September 1851

See Letter 154 (PRONI D1748/G/387/6): "I received your note yesterday."

Robert James Tennent [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 24 September 1851

See Robert James Tennent's endorsement within Letter 154 (PRONI D1748/G/387/6): "24<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 51 send<sup>s</sup> 5."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mr Sinclair Mulholland [Belfast], 22 September 1851

See Letter 154 (PRONI D1748/G/387/6): "I have just been called away to receive 7/6 (a very handsome subscription) from M<sup>r</sup> Sinclair Mulholland to ↑ for ↓ whom I had left a note yesterday."

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 21 November 1851

See Letter 155 (TCD MS873/71): "I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of 21<sup>st</sup>."

## 1853

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset], 2 November 1853

See Letter 157 (TCD MS873/73): "I wrote to her on 2<sup>d</sup> of Nov."

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 26 November 1853

See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72): "I was indeed very much gratified yesterday at receiving your letter."

Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 30 November 1853

See Letter 157 (TCD MS873/73): "but did not receive an answer till 30<sup>th</sup>."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset], December 1853

See Letter 157 (TCD MS873/73): " I wrote again saying perhaps she would prefer getting her sister to write to me on the subject."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to John McAdam [Belfast], c. December 1853

See Letter 158 (TCD MS873/160): "I have to apologize for not sooner replying to your interesting note."

#### 1853/4

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], between 16 December 1853 (the date of Mary Ann McCracken's last letter to Madden) and 25 February 1854 (the date of Letter 159)

See Letter 159 (TCD MS873/75): "You must have considered me very negligent in not having long since answered your last which I delayed doing."

#### 1857

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 13 January 1857

See Letter 160 (TCD MS873/76): "I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter of 13<sup>th</sup> instant."

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. November 1857

See Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70): "I delayed acknowledging your letter until I should try to obtain some of the information you wished for."

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 11 December 1857

See Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86): "I received your letter yesterday."

#### 1858

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. August 1858

See Letter 164 (PRONI D1748/G/387/7): "I had a letter lately from Doctor Madden asking for information."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent [London], c. August or September 1858

See Letter 165 (TCD MS873/77): "I was told that Lady Tennent, wife of Sir Jas Emerson Tennent, would surely know, & when I had my letter ready, I found she was gone to Italy, but how she could be found there, I could not find out & am truly sorry I have been so unfortunate in the pursuit."

See Letter 166 (TCD MS873/88): "I began this several days ago but ere finishing learnt that Sir James Emerson Tennent had passed thro Belfast last week & had heard that his Lady could no doubt give the information you wished for respecting Oliver Bond's family. I got my letter despatched thro his attorney or rather directed by him & dropped into the Post office by my own messenger."

See Letter 167: "I assure you, dear Miss M'Cracken, it quite pleased me to see your familiar name in a letter to me."

See Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80): "I fear you have me quite unmindful of your kind letter & the request it contained."

## 1859

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], received 1 February 1859

See Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80): "I received your printed letter yesterday."

Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Madden [Dublin], 8 June 1859

See Letter 173 (TCD MS873/84): "Since I wrote on the 8th."

## 1860/1

Madden [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], c. 1860/1

See Letter 180 (RIA 24 O 10/48): "I would have answered your last letter long ere this."

### 3.5.2 Unspecified missing correspondence

General references to other missing correspondences can be found within the extant letters. For instance, in Letter 176, Mary Ann

McCracken informed Madden of her ongoing correspondence with Johnston Hamilton:

It was soon after the account of Hamilton's death, when I was trying to raise funds to enable Mrs Hamilton to join her daughter in America, a letter came from Johnston...I have been in regular correspondence with him ever since being the medium of communication between him & his sister M<sup>rs</sup> Teeinan...of course her brother's letters are her greatest comfort & I generally hear from him four times on each year & sometimes oftener.<sup>5</sup>

His first letter to Mary Ann must have arrived in 1825 as she states that it followed the death of his father, William Henry Hamilton. Letter 176 is dated 13 July 1859, therefore, given that he wrote to Mary Ann at least four times per year, over the course of thirty-four years, she must have received in the region of one hundred and thirty-six of his letters between these dates. Likewise, her side of the correspondence must have been similar in volume. Presumably, Mary Ann and Mrs Teeinan, who lived in America, also corresponded based upon the former's intermediary role between the siblings and on her intimate knowledge of Mrs Teeinan's personal affairs.<sup>6</sup>

Another Irish immigrant to America with whom Mary Ann McCracken corresponded was John Neilson, as evidenced in a letter from the executor of his will, Andrew Leitch. His reason for writing to her, he explained, was "to announce to you the death of a friend and correspondent of yours the late John Neilson of this place."<sup>7</sup> Having evaded banishment in 1798, the former United Irishman escaped to America where he established himself as an eminent architect, settling in Charlottesville, Virginia. In an account of his brother's execution, Mary Ann McCracken elaborated on the Neilson family, writing of John, "he was fond of reading & wrote a good letter, his style was quite poetic,"<sup>8</sup> thus confirming their Transatlantic correspondence.

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<sup>5</sup> See Letter 176 (TCD MS873/85).

<sup>6</sup> MAM had the following to say about Mrs Teeinan's life, "[her] husband is far from being what a husband ought to be, neither has she been very fortunate in her children, her youngest & most affectionate son has made a most unfortunate marriage & she herself is in ill health." Letter 176 (TCD MS873/85).

<sup>7</sup> See Letter 109 (UVA MSS 9200).

<sup>8</sup> Section 5.3.3.

During the 1850s, Mary Ann also wrote to her step-grandnephew, James McCleery in America. Having been “a cause of vexation to us at home,”<sup>9</sup> he had been sent to live with his uncle James McCleery in Louisville, Kentucky. She mentioned this correspondence in a letter of 13 November 1857, wherein she stated, “We had not heard for more than a year tho’ we had written to him in the interim several times & when I was last writing to him, I sent one of the girls to ask her father if he had any message to James.”<sup>10</sup> This would suggest that her letters were rarely met with a reply.

Reflecting upon Madden’s numerous commitments in a letter of 1847, Mary Ann concludes, “I must rest contented in future, in hearing of your health & welfare from your niece Miss Cogan with whom I have occasionally corresponded”<sup>11</sup> Miss Cogan was one of Madden’s sister’s four daughters; either Eliza, Catherine, Margaret or Lizzie. Presumably, having access to the particulars of Madden’s wellbeing, she lived in Dublin.

Turning from the content of the extant letters, an alternative source for missing correspondence can be found in McNeill’s biography. During her research, McNeill discovered “fragments” of letters between Mary Ann McCracken and Mary Balfour within Mrs. R. M. Beath’s private collection. McNeill highlights, “transactions regarding muslins,” and comments “that Mary Balfour had been quickly received into the circle of family friends.”<sup>12</sup> She goes on to quote the following sign-off, “Adieu my dear Miss McCracken, with love to your Mother, your sister and to Miss Templeton. Your most obliged Friend Mary Balfour.”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, no such remnants can be found within the Beath manuscripts now housed at the Linen Hall Library. However, that such a correspondence transpired is unsurprising, considering that Balfour was employed by Bunting to translate his collected Irish airs into English. As Bunting’s “secretary,” Mary Ann appears to have acted as an intermediary between them. For example, in Letter 99, Bunting admitted, “I really forget whether I answered

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<sup>9</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>10</sup> See Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>11</sup> See Letter 145 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)).

<sup>12</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 233.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

your last letter or not relative to Miss Balfour's Question,"<sup>14</sup> suggesting that Balfour was not in direct contact with Bunting, relying instead on McCracken to communicate with him on her behalf.

Finally, within his published histories, Madden claimed on several occasions that some of Mary Ann's letters were stolen. In reference to Henry Joy McCracken's Kilmainham letters, Madden regrets that "the greater part of those letters [...] were stolen from his sister, and from the few that were left in her possession of his and his brother William, or of others addressed to them, the following extracts are taken."<sup>15</sup> Most likely, Madden was referring to papers which McCracken had loaned to the historian McSkimin but which he failed to return. It is possible that some of these "stolen" letters are among those unearthed by way of intertextual references.

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<sup>14</sup> Letter 99.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Robert Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98: the lives of Henry Joy M'Cracken, James Hope, William Putnam M'Cabe, Rev. James Porter, Henry Munro* (Glasgow: Cameron, Ferguson & Co., undated), 18–19.

### 3.6 Letter Chronology

#### 1796

1. Missing manuscript. Source: McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/5. Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza McCracken (née McReynolds), dates from between 16 September 1796 and early October 1796
2. TCD MS873/114: Counsellor Henry Joy to Henry Joy McCracken, 7 November 1796
3. Missing manuscript. Sources: Young, *Ulster in '98*, 93 and McNeill, *Life*, 114–15. Ann McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 16 November 1796
4. TCD MS873/113: Henry Joy McCracken to John McCracken Junior, 13 December 1796
5. TCD MS873/115: Counsellor Henry Joy to Henry Joy McCracken, November / December 1796

#### 1797

6. TCD MS873/112: Henry Joy McCracken to Sisters, 10 January 1797
7. TCD MS873/153: Henry Joy McCracken to Sisters, 29 January 1797
8. TCD MS873/111: Henry Joy McCracken to Sisters, 15 March 1797
9. TCD MS873/151: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken 16 March 1797
10. TCD MS873/150: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 26 March 1797
11. TCD MS873/116: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 8 April 1797
12. TCD MS873/117: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 13 April 1797
13. TCD MS873/152: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 18 April 1797
14. TCD MS873/118: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 24 April 1797
15. TCD MS873/119: William McCracken to Sisters, 29 April 1797
16. TCD MS873/120: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 6 May 1797

17. TCD MS873/349: Henry Joy McCracken, Robert Neilson, John Burnside, John and Alexander Gordon to Friends and Relatives, 11 May 1797
18. TCD MS873/121: William McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 18 May 1797
19. TCD MS873/122: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 2 June 1797
20. TCD MS873/123: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 June 1797
21. TCD MS873/124: Henry Joy McCracken to McCracken Family Member, 9 June 1797
22. TCD MS873/125: William McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 10 June 1797
23. TCD MS873/329: Henry Joy McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 19 June 1797
24. TCD MS873/126: Henry Joy McCracken to Sisters, 27 June 1797
25. TCD MS873/127: William McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 10 July 1797
26. TCD MS873/128: William McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 12 July 1797
27. TCD MS873/129: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 22 July 1797
28. TCD MS873/130: John McCracken Junior to Henry Joy McCracken, 26 July 1797
29. TCD MS873/148: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 3 August 1797
30. TCD MS873/149: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 10 August 1797
31. TCD MS873/132: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 24 August 1797
32. TCD MS873/131: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 1 September 1797
33. TCD MS873/133: William McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 1 September 1797
34. TCD MS873/134: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 11 September 1797
35. TCD MS873/135: Rose Ann McCracken and Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 27 September 1797
36. TCD MS873/136: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, October 1797

37. TCD MS873/137: Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 3 November 1797
38. TCD MS873/138: William McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 November 1797
39. TCD MS873/139: Henry Joy McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 19 November 1797
40. TCD MS873/140: William and Rose McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 25 November 1797
41. TCD MS873/141: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 28 November 1797
42. TCD MS873/142: William McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 6 December 1797
43. TCD MS873/143: William McCracken to Parents, 9 December 1797

## 1798

44. TCD MS873/144: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 8 May 1798
45. TCD MS873/145: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 12 May 1798
46. TCD MS873/154: Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 18 June 1798
47. TCD MS873/146: Mary Ann McCracken to Margaret McCracken, 8 July 1798
48. NRA 620/16/3/8: Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Russell, 18 July 1798<sup>1</sup>
49. TCD MS873/147: Mary Ann McCracken to Francis McCracken, c. 18/19 July 1798
50. TCD MS873/92: Henry Joy Junior to Ann McCracken, 22 July 1798
51. TCD MS873/106: Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Hughes, 22 August 1798
52. TCD MS873/93: John McCracken Junior to Francis McCracken, 27 September 1798
53. TCD MS873/91: William Thompson to Mary Ann McCracken, early November 1798

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5.1.1 for a draft version of this letter and TCD MS873/157 for a copied extract.

54. TCD MS873/102: Grizzel Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 10 November 1798
55. TCD MS873/99: Grizzel Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 13 November 1798
56. TCD MS873/97: Mary Ann McCracken to Mary Ann Hamilton, c. 1798

### 1799

57. TCD MS873/98: Grizzel Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 19 January 1799
58. TCD MS873/100: Mary Ann McCracken to Grizzel Joy, 1799 [Draft reply to Letter 57]
59. TCD MS873/101: Mary Ann McCracken to Grizzel Joy, 1799 [Draft reply to Letter 57]

### 1801

60. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 274. Counsellor Henry Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 11 December 1801

### 1802

61. LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 3: Patrick Lynch to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 July 1802
62. LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 4: Patrick Lynch to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 July 1802

### 1803

63. Missing manuscript. Source: McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/3. Mary Ann McCracken to Bernard Coile, 8 July 1803
64. TCD MS873/339: Thomas Russell to Margaret Russell, 15 July 1803
65. TCD MS873/640: Thomas Russell to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 July 1803

66. Destroyed manuscript. Sources: TCD MS873/698 and TCD MS873/693. Thomas Russell to Mary Ann McCracken, dates between July and 9 September 1803
67. TCD MS873/684: James Orr to Margaret McCracken, 1 October 1803
68. TCD MS873/656: Ellen Rabb to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 October 1803
69. TCD MS873/683: James Orr to Margaret McCracken and Mary Ann McCracken, 13 October 1803
70. TCD MS873/108: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Templeton, 14 October 1803
71. TCD MS873/110: Eliza Templeton to Mary Ann McCracken, 14/15 October 1803
72. TCD MS873/688: Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Russell, 15 October 1803
73. TCD MS873/107: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Templeton, 16 October 1803 [Reply to Letter 71]
74. TCD MS873/697: Mary Ann McCracken to Counsellor Henry Joy, 16/17 October 1803
75. TCD MS873/696: James Ramsey to Mary Ann McCracken, 19 October 1803
76. TCD MS873/642: Thomas Russell to Mary Ann McCracken, 18/19 October 1803 [Reply to Letter 72]
77. TCD MS873/109: Counsellor Henry Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, October 1803 [Reply to Letter 74]
78. TCD MS873/644: Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Russell, 19 October 1803
79. TCD MS873/646: Mary Ann McCracken to Margaret Russell, post 21 October 1803
80. TCD MS873/679: Patrick Lynch to Mary Ann McCracken, dates between 22 and 28 October 1803
81. TCD MS873/682: Mary Ann McCracken to Rev. James Nelson, 22 November 1803
82. TCD MS873/647: Hamilton and James Orr to Margaret McCracken and Mary Ann McCracken, post 21 October 1803

## 1804

83. PRONI D2930/3/2/1: David Lyons to Mary Ann McCracken, 26 January 1804
84. TCD MS873/678: Grizzel Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 July 1804

## 1808

85. TCD MS873/691: James Orr to Margaret McCracken and Mary Ann McCracken, 17 August 1808
86. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 218–19. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 30 August 1808
87. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 221. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 1 September 1808
88. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 221–22. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 10 September 1808
89. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 211. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 14 September 1808
90. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 222. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 16 September 1808
91. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 222. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 18 September 1808
92. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 222–23. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 21 September 1808
93. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 223. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 29 September 1808
94. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 276. James Hope to Mary Ann McCracken, 28 November 1808

## 1809

95. LHL, Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 1: Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 8 March 1809
96. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 224. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 March 1809
97. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 224–25. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 12 April 1809

98. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 225. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 5 May 1809
99. Missing manuscript. Sources: Young, "Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the M'Cracken family," 176 and Fox, *Annals*, 225. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 24 May 1809
100. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 225. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 1 September 1809
101. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 225–26. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 October 1809
102. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 226. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 7 October 1809
103. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 226. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 24 November 1809

**c. 1815**

104. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 193. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 1815
105. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 193. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 1815

**1819**

106. PRONI D1748/C/1/125/1: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert Tennent, 23 January 1819

**1820**

107. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 65. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 29 December 1820

**1826**

108. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 191–92. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 1826

## 1827

109. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 7 July 1827
110. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 65–7. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 27 December 1827

## 1828

111. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 4 February 1828
112. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 11 July 1828
113. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 September 1828

## 1829

114. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 191: Mary Ann McCracken to Andrew Leitch, 1 December 1829

## 1830

115. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 20 April 1830

## 1831

116. PRONI D1748/C/1/125/2: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert Tennent, 21 May 1831
117. TCD MS873/534: Sophia McAdam to Mary Ann McCracken, 31 August 1831

## 1832

118. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 192: Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, May 1832

## 1835

119. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 192: Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 28 October 1835

## 1838

120. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 192: Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 1838

## 1839

121. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 6 January 1839

122. UVA MSS 9200: Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken, 19 March 1839

123. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 302–03. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 December 1839

## 1840

124. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 304. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 10 January 1840

125. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 303–04. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 25 March 1840

126. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 304. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 April 1840

127. Missing manuscript. Source: Fox, *Annals*, 304–05. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 May 1840

## 1841

128. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 197. Unknown to Mary Ann McCracken, 1841

## 1842

129. TCD MS873/159: Madden to Mary Ann McCracken, 13 May 1842

130. TCD MS873/692: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 19 May 1842

## 1843

131. TCD MS873/94: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 6 and 7 January 1843

132. TCD MS873/666: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 1 April 1843

133. TCD MS873/658: John Alexander Russell to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 April 1843

134. TCD MS873/662: John Alexander Russell to Mary Ann McCracken, 23 April 1843

135. TCD MS873/693: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, prior to and incl. 5 October 1843

136. TCD MS873/627: Ellen Rabb to Mary Ann McCracken, 18 November 1843

137. TCD MS873/626: James D. Rose Clelland to Mary Ann McCracken, 18–20 November 1843

## 1844

138. RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv): Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 29 February 1844

139. TCD MS873/155: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 2 July 1844

140. TCD MS873/156: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 15 October 1844

## 1845

- 141. James Orr to Mary Ann McCracken, 3 January 1845
- 142. RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii): Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 14 May 1845

## 1846

- 143. PRONI D1748/H/29/1: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Tennent, 30 March 1846
- 144. PRONI D1748/H/29/2: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Tennent, 14 May 1846

## 1847

- 145. RIA, 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii): Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 14 July 1847

## 1849

- 146. PRONI D1748/G/387/1: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 27 September 1849
- 147. PRONI D1748/H/29/3: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Tennent, 3 October 1849
- 148. PRONI D1748/G/387/2: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 30 November 1849
- 149. PRONI D1748/H/29/4: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Tennent, 6 December 1849
- 150. PRONI D1748/G/387/3: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 8 December 1849
- 151. PRONI D1748/H/29/5: Mary Ann McCracken to Eliza Tennent, 26 December 1849

## 1850

152. PRONI D1748/G/387/4: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 8 January 1850
153. PRONI D1748/G/387/5: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 5 February 1850

## 1851

154. PRONI D1748/G/387/6: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 23 September 1851
155. TCD MS873/71: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 26 November 1851

## 1853

156. TCD MS873/72: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 27 and 29 November 1853
157. TCD MS873/73: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 16 December 1853
158. TCD MS873/160: John McAdam to Mary Ann McCracken, 29 December 1853

## 1854

159. TCD MS873/75: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 25 February 1854

## 1857

160. TCD MS873/76: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 21 January 1857
161. TCD MS873/70: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 13 November 1857
162. TCD MS873/74: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, between 13 November and 12 December 1853

163. TCD MS873/86: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 12 December 1857

#### 1858

164. PRONI D1748/G/387/7: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 23 August 1858

165. TCD MS873/77: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 3 September 1858

166. TCD MS873/88: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 26–c. 28 October 1858

167. Missing manuscript. Source: Madden, *United Irishmen*, Fourth Series, Second Edition, 169–70 and Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81). Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent to Mary Ann McCracken, 26 October 1858

#### 1859

168. TCD MS873/80: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 2 February 1859

169. TCD MS873/81: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 13 February 1859

170. TCD MS873/82: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 22 February 1859

171. TCD MS873/89: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 21 June 1859

172. PRONI D1748/G/387/8: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 21 June 1859

173. TCD MS873/84 and TCD MS873/78 : Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 22 June 1859

174. TCD MS873/79: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 23 June 1859

175. PRONI D1748/G/387/9: Mary Ann McCracken to Robert James Tennent, 4 July 1859

176. TCD MS873/85: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 13 July 1859

177. TCD MS873/83: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 2 August 1859

178. TCD MS873/87: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 4 November 1859

179. TCD MS873/90: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, c. 1859

**1861**

180. RIA 24 O 10/48: Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, 23 February  
1861

**Indeterminable date**

181. Missing manuscript. Source: Young, *Old Belfast*, 190–91. Mary  
Ann McCracken to Madden, undated

**Total Letters: 181**

## 3.7 History of the Letters

### 3.7.1 Introduction

Mary Ann McCracken's letter collection extended well beyond those she herself received. Among her documents were letters sent to both her and her sister Margaret, letters between other family members and letters between friends and non-family members (for example, Letter 64 was written by Thomas Russell to his sister Margaret Russell). Many early letters written by Mary Ann were also preserved in draft form. The fate of this collection is outlined by her step-grandniece Anna McCleery thus, "It was supposed by many that Miss McCracken possessed many interesting documents connected with the Rebellion. This belief was not shared by those who had heard her lament the loss of some relics of that sad time. Still, it was disappointing to find, on examining her papers, an almost total absence of anything of the sort."<sup>1</sup> The exact year in which Anna McCleery wrote her short biography of Mary Ann McCracken's life is unknown, however, it was first published in 1896 in Robert Magill Young's *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*. This would suggest that when McCleery came to write her piece (some three decades after Mary Ann's death), she was shocked to find how few papers remained within the original collection, which she had obviously inherited.

What then became of this once extensive collection? McCleery states that, "any [papers] she had formerly had she had entrusted to people who proposed to write a history of the time, or given to relatives who she believed had a better right to them."<sup>2</sup> McCleery then points more specifically to the Irish historians Charles Hamilton Teeling, Samuel McSkimin and Madden.

### 3.7.2 Charles Hamilton Teeling

Mary Ann McCracken entrusted Charles Hamilton Teeling, then editor of *The Ulster Magazine*, with several letters written by Thomas Russell. These letters were passed on to James Morgan to assist with

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<sup>1</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 197.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

his article, "Sketch of Thomas Russell," which appeared in the January 1830 edition of the journal.<sup>3</sup> However, Morgan did not make use of any of the materials which McCracken provided and failed to return them to her. Mary Ann described to Madden how she had suffered much, "regret and self reproach at having lent Charles Teeling the papers committed to my care by Miss Russell."<sup>4</sup>

In 1837, these papers were sought after by Thomas Russell's nephew, Captain John Alexander Russell. After visiting Mary Ann who, he says, "was kind enough to hand over to me all the documents she held relating to my late uncle," he wrote a letter to Charles Hamilton Teeling requesting the outstanding materials.<sup>5</sup> Although there is no record of his reply, Charles Hamilton Teeling must have sent Letter 65 and 76 to John Alexander Russell, both of which are endorsed in the latter's hand.<sup>6</sup> In February 1843, John Alexander Russell wrote to Madden agreeing to send him any documents relating to his uncle that were then in his possession.<sup>7</sup> These letters were evidently included as both are currently held within the Madden Papers and are further endorsed by Madden.

There has been some confusion as to the original recipient of these letters. The first, dated 15 July 1803 and written by Thomas Russell, is endorsed in Madden's hand, "Copy of a letter of Thomas Russell to Frank McCracken."<sup>8</sup> However, John Alexander Russell's endorsement throws the recipient into doubt, "Copy of a letter from T.R. to ~~I think Francis McCracken~~ 15 July 1803 to ~~H.W. Hamilton~~." In *United Irishmen*, Madden later cites the recipient of this letter as Mary Ann McCracken: "Letter from T.R. brought to Miss McCracken by Mrs Rabb after his failure in Antrim," explaining that, "during this time he [Russell] wrote several notes to Miss McCracken," and that this particular letter was "brought to Miss McCracken by a young

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<sup>3</sup> See section 5.5.5.

<sup>4</sup> Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89).

<sup>5</sup> See section 5.1.3.

<sup>6</sup> This involved a study of the handwriting of both Charles Hamilton Teeling and John Alexander Russell.

<sup>7</sup> See section 5.1.4.

<sup>8</sup> Letter 65 (TCD MS873/640).

countrywoman, in the sole of her stocking.”<sup>9</sup> This is further confirmed by the notes taken by Madden while interviewing Mary Ann. He writes, “The above named note was brought to me McCracken by a young country woman in the sole of her stocking. That note was given to Teeling.”<sup>10</sup> Madden was obviously writing down what she was telling him word for word as he has struck through the word “me” and replaced it with “McCracken”. This would suggest that Mary Ann was the intended recipient of this letter and that Madden's endorsement is incorrect.

This mistake occurs again in the second letter, whereby Madden endorses it as having been sent from Thomas Russell to Francis McCracken.<sup>11</sup> This letter is in fact a reply to a letter from Mary Ann McCracken,<sup>12</sup> at the end of which, in a later hand, (evidently written as an explanation to Madden before sending it to him), she added, “To this T.R. replied that he did not wish us to visit him as it might injure us and could not serve him - that letter was given to C. Teeling.” This indeed concurs with the letter's contents. This letter is also referred to in an undated letter from Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, “His letter to myself [...] began thus, ‘To the more than friendship I owe to you and your sister.’ He concluded his letter to me with a blessing.”<sup>13</sup> Mary Ann's own confirmation that she was the intended recipient of the letter further undermines any notion that it was intended for her brother Francis.

McCracken did not let the case rest and in 1844 she appealed to Madden to make enquiries with Charles Hamilton Teeling about the outstanding materials:

In case Mr Russell[']s papers which Mr Teeling allowed Morgan to carry with him to Newry have not been destroyed, do you think it might possibly lead to a discovery of them, were you to notice the circumstance in your book, giving a few lines of some of them, such as can be remembered, for instance (should I fall and my country deem my services of any moment &c) I think I gave

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<sup>9</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 221–22.

<sup>10</sup> Section 5.4.1.

<sup>11</sup> See Letter 76 (TCD MS873/64).

<sup>12</sup> See Letter 72 (TCD MS873/688).

<sup>13</sup> Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693).

you what I remembered of that and some others [...] these papers were all contained in a red leather portfolio together with the pencilled profile taken the morning of his death by Tom Hughes.<sup>14</sup>

Presumably as a result of this appeal, Charles Hamilton Teeling sent Madden Letter 64 which the latter endorsed, "Thomas Russell's farewell letter to his sister at the time of his joining the insurrection of 1803, given to me by Charles Teeling."<sup>15</sup>

### 3.7.3 Samuel McSkimin

As discussed in Section 2.3.4, local historian Samuel McSkimin persuaded Mary Ann to lend him some materials relating to the rebellion, presumably some of which were letters. McCleery regretted the fact that these papers were not put to full use in his publications and denounced McSkimin's failure to return them, despite Mary Ann's repeated requests.

After his death on 17 February 1843, McSkimin's son split the manuscript collection between Rev. James Seaton Reid (Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Carrickfergus), Rev. Classon Porter of Larne and Madden. In Letter 139, dated 2 July 1844, Mary Ann tells Madden, "James [Hope] says you have seen them [the McSkimin manuscripts] and know what they contain, and that they are not worth much."<sup>16</sup> Madden would have been keen to discover McCracken's missing papers but it would seem that they no longer remained among McSkimin's manuscripts at the end of his life.

Indeed, in a letter to James Hope written in 1836, McSkimin described destroying an original letter merely as a result of it "being less important to me."<sup>17</sup> Therefore it is a possibility that Mary Ann's papers suffered a similar fate.

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<sup>14</sup> Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155).

<sup>15</sup> Letter 64 (TCD MS873/339).

<sup>16</sup> Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155).

<sup>17</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 140.

### 3.7.4 Richard Robert Madden

What letters remained in Mary Ann McCracken's possession, she later passed on to Madden to aid him with writing his history of the United Irishmen. In a chapter of Madden's memoirs entitled, "Selections from Correspondence," one particular letter sheds light on the manner in which Madden and McCracken came to meet. The letter, dated 8 October 1840, is a reply from Belfast's Dr McDonnell to a query posed by Madden either in person or in a previous letter. Presumably, Madden enquired with whom he should talk when next visiting Belfast, as Dr McDonnell advises him:

There are three or four people with whom you should converse - Robert Simms, Mary McCracken, the widow of Dr. Magee, Mr. Hughes of Holywood - the father of the latter employed Napper Tandy as his agent in Dublin; Sir Edward Newenham, Q. J. Bennet, Miliken, an old man named Hope, whom I never saw. If I knew when to expect you any evening I should endeavour to find some persons to meet you.<sup>18</sup>

From this extract, it would appear that Madden and McCracken were yet to cross paths and so the letters still remained in her possession. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when she handed over these manuscripts but it seems likely that the exchange was made early on in their friendship. Although the earliest extant letter between them is dated 13 May 1842, a letter from Francis McCracken Junior dated 24 April 1842, informs Robert James Tennent that, "I met Dr Madden at my uncle's getting all sorts of particulars from Miss Mary."<sup>19</sup> This would suggest Mary Ann and Madden had been in contact before this date, if only to arrange the meeting at which the exchange of materials may have taken place. Indeed, in his letter of 13 May, Madden thanked Mary Ann for "the kind letter you were good enough to address to me at Dublin."<sup>20</sup> Presumably, this missing letter was received sometime between the end of April and the start of May.

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<sup>18</sup> Madden, *The Memoirs (chiefly autobiographical) from 1798-1886*, 205-6.

<sup>19</sup> Francis McCracken Junior to Robert James Tennent, 24 April 1842, PRONI D1748/G/380/82. "My uncle's" refers to his uncle Francis McCracken's house.

<sup>20</sup> Letter 129 (TCD MS873/159).

In the preface to *Ireland in '98: Sketches of the Principle Men of the Time: Based upon the Published Volumes and some unpublished MSS of the late Dr Richard Robert Madden*,<sup>21</sup> John Bowles Daly, the volume's editor states that "much credit is due to Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., for their enterprise in purchasing the valuable manuscripts of the late Dr. Madden."<sup>22</sup> By 1900, Madden's manuscripts had been deposited in Trinity College Dublin as the library catalogue for that year lists "873: Dr. R. R. Madden's Collection of Papers relating to the history of the United Irishmen, in two portfolios."<sup>23</sup> The collection is currently housed at Trinity College Dublin's Manuscripts & Archives Research Library where it remains arranged in the order in which it was received, which is in no particular order. These papers include many contemporary documents and letters relating to the United Irishmen, which Mary Ann McCracken gave to Madden and numerous letters that she sent to him between 1842 and 1859.

Four additional letters from Mary Ann to Madden can be found within the Royal Irish Academy's "Richard Robert Madden Collection", one of which is the last extant letter written by Mary Ann McCracken, dated February 1861. This collection was donated to the Royal Irish Academy (of which Madden became a member in 1844), in June 1892 by his son Thomas More Madden.

### 3.7.5 Stolen Letters

On several occasions throughout his histories and notes, Madden claims that some of Mary Ann's letters were stolen. In reference to Henry Joy McCracken's Kilmainham letters, Madden regrets that "the greater part of those letters [...] were stolen from his sister, and from the few that were left in her possession of his and his brother William,

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Robert Madden, *Ireland in '98: Sketches of the Principle Men of the Time: Based upon the Published Volumes and some unpublished MSS off the late Dr Richard Robert Madden*, ed. J. Bowles Daly, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co., 1888).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, iii.

<sup>23</sup> *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin*, compiled by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co. and London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900), 152.

or of others addressed to them, the following extracts are taken."<sup>24</sup> It is possible that Madden is referring to the papers given to McSkimin that were never returned. However, it is compelling to know that Henry wrote many more letters to his sister during his incarceration, despite the fact these letters remain missing.

In reference to Mary Ann McCracken's letters written by Thomas Russell, Madden states, "they remained in her hands for many years; but many of them were stolen from her by a dishonest servant, some years ago."<sup>25</sup> Mary Ann corrects this information in a letter to Madden where she states, "Page 224: the papers which I lost were not stolen, I mean the papers entrusted to my care by Miss Russell, but no doubt I mentioned before that I had weakly and from pity contrary to my dear sisters advice, lent them to Charles Teeling."<sup>26</sup> In this instance, it is clear that Madden mistakenly blames a "dishonest servant" of theft. However, the former reference to letters having been stolen from her may have been Madden's interpretation of McSkimin's failure to return the papers.

### 3.7.6 Robert Magill Young's "McCracken MSS."

In Young's 1893 publication *Ulster in '98*, all quotations pertaining to the McCracken family are referenced as having been taken from original manuscripts in the possession of "Mr. C. Aitchison, J.P., Loanhead, N.B., a connection by marriage."<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, Young does not account for this marital link, which can be explained as follows: Christopher Aitchison was the husband of Mary McCracken McCleery, Anna McCleery's sister, who was therefore also the step-grandniece of Mary Ann McCracken. In 1854, Aitchison moved from his native Edinburgh to Belfast where he worked as a book seller,

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Robert Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98: the lives of Henry Joy M'Cracken, James Hope, William Putnam M'Cabe, Rev. James Porter, Henry Munro* (Glasgow: Cameron, Ferguson & Co., undated), 18–19.

<sup>25</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 224.

<sup>26</sup> See Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89).

<sup>27</sup> Young, *Ulster in '98*, 54.

stationer and publisher.<sup>28</sup> It is apparent that he had already ingratiated himself into the family before his marriage on 23 July 1862, as he is listed as co-executor of McCracken's will which was made on 3 June 1861.

In Young's next publication, *Old Belfast*, of 1896, he reveals that the McCracken manuscripts are now in his possession stating, "He [referring to himself as Editor] takes this occasion of returning his sincere thanks for the original MSS., &c., kindly presented to him by Christopher Aitchison, Esq., J.P."<sup>29</sup> Young later elaborates:

A number of interesting MSS. formerly in her [Mary Ann McCracken's] possession have been kindly given to the Editor by Christopher Aitchison, Esq, J.P., Elmswood, Loanhead, N.B., who also generously presented to the Belfast Museum part of the uniform and the sword worn by Henry Joy McCracken at the Battle of Antrim. Amongst the MSS. are several poems by Miss Balfour, many letters of Edward Bunting on Irish music, and letters written by Mary Ann McCracken to her brother Frank; also several from the Rev. Sinclair Kelburne, Henry and Francis Joy, &c.<sup>30</sup>

Two years later, in his article "Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the McCracken Family," Young once again refers to the manuscripts:

Through the kindness of Christopher Aitchison, J.P., Loanhead, N.B., a mass of literary material belonging to Miss Mary McCracken, the devoted sister of Henry Joy McCracken, has been given to the writer. In going through a number of Bunting's letters, addressed to herself and other members of the family, it was made evident that to the McCrackens, and their cousin Henry Joy, he was mainly indebted for the production of his second volume at any rate. This statement is corroborated not only by letters addressed to Mary McCracken and her brother Frank, but also by many poems translated from the Irish by her friend Miss Balfour at her request; and lastly, by the two letters subjoined to this article, which are written by Patrick Lynch, an agent sent by the

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<sup>28</sup> Kyle Hughes, *The Scots in Victorian and Edwardian Belfast: A Study in Elite Migration* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 193.

<sup>29</sup> Young, "Editor's Preface," *Old Belfast*, viii.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

McCrackens to collect native songs and tunes in the West of Ireland.<sup>31</sup>

In 1899, Young and his father, the Right Honourable Robert Young, lent several of these letters to the Dublin's Musical Loan Exhibition, as can be found in the catalogue's acknowledgments, "The Executive Committee desire to express their thanks to the following institutions and persons who have kindly lent the exhibits: [...] Robert and R. M. Young."<sup>32</sup> The following letters are then listed:

Holograph letters from Edward Bunting to Miss Mary McCracken, Belfast, relative to the collecting of unpublished Irish airs for his second volume.

Holograph letters, written from Westport, in July, 1802, to Miss Mary McCracken, Belfast, by Patrick Lynch, who had been sent by the McCracken family to the West of Ireland to collect native songs and airs for Bunting's second collection, which was delayed in the publication until 1809. Lynch was very attentive, very zealous, and very diligent in this business. By the time he wrote his second letter to Miss McCracken he had gathered together near 200 songs.

Holograph letters from Miss Mary Balfour, poetess, to Miss Mary McCracken, with translations of ancient Irish songs for Bunting's Second Collection.<sup>33</sup>

Some time after this exhibition, Robert Young loaned Bunting's letters to musician Charlotte Milligan Fox, whose interest in Bunting's work he had sparked.<sup>34</sup> These letters were transcribed by Fox and published in her 1911 monograph *Annals of the Irish Harpers*. Although Fox does not acknowledge Young as the source of these letters she

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<sup>31</sup> Young, "Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the McCracken Family," 175–76.

<sup>32</sup> *Feis Ceoil: Catalogue of the Musical Loan Exhibition: Held in Connection with the above Festival in the National Library and National Museum, Kildare-street (by kind permission of the Trustees) During the week May 15th-20th, 1899 Comprising Pictures, Engravings, Rare Collections of Irish Music, Relics of Irish Composers*. Compiled for the Executive Committee of the Feis Ceoil by D. J. O'Donoghue, (Dublin: Feis Ceoil, 1899), 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Indeed, as founder and Honorary Secretary of the Irish Folk-Song Society, Fox published Young's article on Bunting in the society's journal of 1905.

does explain, "that the MSS. of Bunting's own letters to Miss McCracken are not in our possession, but that the extracts we have quoted from them were made for publication from the originals."<sup>35</sup> This would suggest that Fox returned the manuscripts to Young after she had made use of them. Indeed, any Bunting materials in her possession were donated to Queen's University Belfast where they now reside in the Special Collections Library as the Bunting Collection (MS4). Needless to say, Bunting's letters to Mary Ann McCracken can not be found within these papers, nor do they appear within PRONI's "Records of the Young family" (D2930). However, an empty envelope addressed to Robert Young and labelled "McCracken letters re: Bunting" can be found within Appendix 2 of the Linen Hall Library's Beath Manuscripts. Presumably then, the letters were once part of this collection.

In her 1936 biography of Henry Joy McCracken, Edna Fitzhenry regrets that, "The 'McCracken MSS.' referred to in the notes have been dispersed and, with one or two exceptions, have not been traced."<sup>36</sup> However, drawing upon Young's publications, loan history and archives, I have been able to compile a list of some of the McCracken papers within his collection:

Item 1. Letter from Francis Joy, his father-in-law to Captain John McCracken, Treehoge, 26 May 1760<sup>37</sup>

Item 2. Letter from George Black to Captain McCracken, Belfast, 3 May 1763<sup>38</sup>

Current holding: PRONI, D2930/3/4

Item 3. Letter from Ann McCracken to Thomas McCabe, Belfast, 1 May 1780<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 226.

<sup>36</sup> Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 163.

<sup>37</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 269.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

Item 4. Copy of Affidavit (attached to Item 3)<sup>40</sup>

Item 5. Letter from Ann McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken, 16 Nov 1796 (Letter 3)<sup>41</sup>

Item 6. Letter from Rev. Sinclair Kelburn, Kilmainham Prison, to Captain John McCracken, Rosemary Lane, Belfast, 6 May 1797<sup>42</sup>

Item 7. Letter from Henry Joy to Mary Ann McCracken, 11 Dec 1801 (Letter 60)<sup>43</sup>

Item 8. Letter from Patrick Lynch to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 July 1802 (Letter 61)<sup>44</sup>  
Current holding: LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 3

Item 9. Letter from Patrick Lynch to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 July 1802 (Letter 62)<sup>45</sup>  
Current holding: LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 4

Item 10. Letter from David Lyons to Mary Ann McCracken, 26 January 1804 (Letter 83)  
Current holding: PRONI, D2930/3/2/1

Item 11. Letter from Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 30 August 1808 (Letter 85)<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Young, *Ulster in '98*, 93 and Young, *Old Belfast*, 183.

<sup>42</sup> Young, *Ulster in '98*, 95.

<sup>43</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 274.

<sup>44</sup> Young, "Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the M'Cracken Family," 278.

<sup>45</sup> *Feis Ceoil: Catalogue of the Musical Loan Exhibition: Held in Connection with the above Festival in the National Library and National Museum, Kildare-street (by kind permission of the Trustees) During the week May 15th – 20th, 1899 Comprising Pictures, Engravings, Rare Collections of Irish Music, Relics of Irish Composers.* Compiled for the Executive Committee of the Feis Ceoil by D. J. O'Donoghue, (Dublin: Feis Ceoil, 1899), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 218–9.

- Item 12. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 1 September 1808  
(Letter 87)<sup>47</sup>
- Item 13. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 10 September 1808  
(Letter 88)<sup>48</sup>
- Item 14. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 14 September 1808  
(Letter 88)<sup>49</sup>
- Item 15. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 16 September 1808  
(Letter 90)<sup>50</sup>
- Item 16. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 18 September 1808  
(Letter 91)<sup>51</sup>
- Item 17. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 21 September 1808  
(Letter 92)<sup>52</sup>
- Item 18. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 29 September 1808  
(Letter 93)<sup>53</sup>
- Item 19. Letter from Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 8  
March 1809 (Letter 95)<sup>54</sup>  
Current holding: LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 1

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 221–22.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 222–23.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>54</sup> Young, “Edward Bunting’s Irish Music and the M’Cracken Family,” 176.

- Item 20. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 March 1809  
(Letter 96)<sup>55</sup>
- Item 21. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 12 April 1809  
(Letter 97)<sup>56</sup>
- Item 22. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 5 May 1809 (Letter  
98)<sup>57</sup>
- Item 23. Letter from Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 24  
May 1809 (Letter 99)<sup>58</sup>
- Item 24. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 1 September 1809  
(Letter 100)<sup>59</sup>
- Item 25. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 2 October 1809  
(Letter 101)<sup>60</sup>
- Item 26. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 7 October 1809  
(Letter 102)<sup>61</sup>
- Item 27. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 24 November 1809  
(Letter 103)<sup>62</sup>
- Item 28. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 29 December 1820  
(Letter 107)<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 224.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 224–25.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>58</sup> Young, “Edward Bunting’s Irish Music and the M’Cracken Family,” 225.

<sup>59</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 225.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 225–26.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

- Item 29. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 27 December 1827  
(Letter 110)<sup>64</sup>
- Item 30. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 15 December 1839  
(Letter 123)<sup>65</sup>
- Item 31. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 10 January 1840  
(Letter 124)<sup>66</sup>
- Item 32. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 25 March 1840  
(Letter 125)<sup>67</sup>
- Item 33. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 April 1840  
(Letter 126)<sup>68</sup>
- Item 34. Edward Bunting to Mary Ann McCracken, 9 May 1840 (Letter  
127)<sup>69</sup>
- Item 35. Letter from Edward Bunting to Francis McCracken including  
costings for 1,000 copies of book (See section 5.1.2 below)<sup>70</sup>
- Item 36. Parchment deed relative to a pew in Rosemary Street  
Presbyterian Church, Third Congregation<sup>71</sup>
- Item 37. Two poems by James Hope<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 65–7.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 302–03.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 303–04.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 304–05.

<sup>70</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 278.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 275.

Item 38. Two poems by Miss Balfour<sup>73</sup>

Current holding: LHL, Beath MSS, Appendix 2, Item 2

Item 39. Poem by Miss Templeton<sup>74</sup>

Item 40. Letters from Mary Balfour to Mary Ann McCracken

As indicated, I have been able to unearth six of these manuscripts, two of which can be found within PRONI's "Historical documents collected by J.R. and R.M. Young."<sup>75</sup> Four other items can be found within the Linen Hall Library's Beath Collection. When I first approached the Linen Hall Library in regard to these manuscripts, the collection had not yet been catalogued. My attention had been drawn to the Beath Collection by McNeill, who referenced an extract from Item 20 (Letter 96) as belonging to "Mrs R.M. Beath's Collection."<sup>76</sup> "Mrs R.M. Beath" refers to Eleanor (Norah) Skelton Beath née Young (1888–1974), the wife of Dr Robert Maitland Beath and daughter Robert Magill Young. At the time McNeill was writing her biography of Mary Ann McCracken, Beath lived at 34 Bladon Drive, Belfast, a twenty minute walk from McNeill's home at 4 Mount Pleasant, Belfast. It is likely therefore, that McNeill visited Mrs Beath to consult her manuscripts during the course of her research.

McNeill also quotes from Item 5 (Letter 3), citing "Young, R.M. MSS Belfast Museum and Art Gallery" as her source. Despite extensive research of PRONI's Young Collection and also having contacted an archivist at the National Museums of Northern Ireland, I have been unable to locate this letter.

### 3.7.7 Anna McCleery's McCracken Papers

By a process of elimination, I have been able to determine which of the letters within Young's *Old Belfast* belonged within his McCracken

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Historical documents collected by J.R. and R.M. Young, Records of the Young family, Belfast, PRONI D2930/3.

<sup>76</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 319

MSS. (as listed above) and which were discovered by McCleery within the original collection when she came to write the biography of her step grand-aunt. These are as follows:

- Item 1. Letter from James Hope to Mary Ann McCracken, 28 Nov 1808<sup>77</sup> (Letter 94)
- Item 2. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, c. 1815<sup>78</sup> (Letter 104)
- Item 3. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, c. 1815<sup>79</sup> (Letter 105)
- Item 4. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, c. 1826<sup>80</sup> (Letter 108)
- Item 5. Mary Ann McCracken to Andrew Leitch, 1 Dec 1829<sup>81</sup> (Letter 114)
- Item 6. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, May 1832<sup>82</sup> (Letter 118)
- Item 7. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 28 Oct 1835<sup>83</sup> (Letter 119)
- Item 8. Mary Ann McCracken to Unknown, 1838<sup>84</sup> (Letter 120)
- Item 9. Unknown to Mary Ann McCracken, 1841<sup>85</sup> (Letter 128)
- Item 10. Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, undated<sup>86</sup> (Letter 182)

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<sup>77</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 276.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 191–92.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Young, *Old Belfast*, 194–95.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 190–91.

It is likely that there were several other McCracken letters within McCleery's possession, however, she obviously selected the ones she considered most relevant to the biography.

### 3.7.8 PRONI's Tennent Papers

Formerly held at Belfast Museum and Art Gallery (the Ulster Museum), the Tennent Papers now reside at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). The collection of approximately 3,000 letters and documents date from 1764 to 1893 and are stored under the reference code D1748. The collection belonged to Robert James Tennent (1803–1880), a Liberal politician who stood as Member of Parliament for Belfast from 1848 until 1852. In 1830, Robert James Tennent married Eliza McCracken (Mary Ann McCracken's niece), leading to "his involvement in the family's financial affairs after the death of his father-in-law [John McCracken] in 1834."<sup>87</sup> A total of sixteen letters written by Mary Ann can be found within this collection, five addressed to Eliza Tennent and eleven to Robert James Tennent. The former kept his letters well-organised with detailed endorsements, alongside which he often included a tick to indicate that the letter had been read and a tick with a strike through to indicate that a reply had been sent.

A letter written in 1796 from Mary Ann to Eliza McCracken (not Robert James Tennent's wife but to the wife of John McCracken Junior), which McNeill quotes in full and which she references as belonging to, "Tennent Papers. Belfast Museum and Art Gallery,"<sup>88</sup> either remains uncatalogued by PRONI or has been incorrectly referenced by McNeill. After consulting a NMNI<sup>89</sup> curator, I was informed that when the papers were being transferred from the Ulster Museum to PRONI during the late 1990s, poor documentation resulted in some of the papers remaining in their possession. Several boxes labelled "Tennent" are currently situated in a storeroom at the

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<sup>87</sup> "Tennent Papers, 1764–1893: Description," Search eCatalogue, PRONI, accessed 14 March 2017, [https://apps.proni.gov.uk/eCatNI\\_IE/ResultDetails.aspx](https://apps.proni.gov.uk/eCatNI_IE/ResultDetails.aspx).

<sup>88</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 316.

<sup>89</sup> National Museums of Northern Ireland, an umbrella body for three major Northern Irish museums, including Belfast's Ulster Museum.

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and so there is a possibility that this is where the letter is located.

### 3.7.9 The University of Virginia's Leitch Letters

Seven draft letters written by Captain Andrew Leitch to Mary Ann McCracken between 1827 and 1839 can be found within his letter-books at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library of the University of Virginia. Leitch corresponded with McCracken in relation to United Irishman John Neilson's last will and testament, for which Leitch acted as executor and McCracken as agent. The contents of Leitch's letters to Mary Ann reveal that she wrote him many replies but unfortunately, none of these original letters remain. However, an extract from one such letter can be found within Young's *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*.<sup>90</sup>

### 3.7.10 National Archives of Ireland

Lastly, a letter written by Mary Ann McCracken to Thomas Russell on 18 July 1798 (the day after her brother's execution), is held in Dublin's National Archives of Ireland.<sup>91</sup> This document belongs within the "Rebellion Papers" which were previously housed at the Chief Secretary's Office in Dublin Castle, otherwise known as the State Paper Office. In 1988, this facility and the Public Record Office of Ireland were merged to form the National Archives. A draft of this letter can be found within the Madden Papers.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> See Letter 114.

<sup>91</sup> See Letter 48 (NRA 620/16/3/8).

<sup>92</sup> See section 5.1.1.

## 3.8 Presenting the Letters

### 3.8.1 Archives

Gathering the extant McCracken letters was the first step in the selection process. In February 2014 I spent one week in Dublin consulting the Madden Papers at Trinity College Dublin's Manuscripts and Archives Research Library. Having selected relevant documents for digitisation, I then placed an order with the library's Digital Resources and Imaging Services. A further research trip to Dublin in May 2017 gave me the opportunity to record material aspects of the letters which could not be discerned from their digital form and to gather materials which had subsequently become relevant to the project. I also consulted the Royal Irish Academy's Richard Robert Madden Collection, within which I discovered four previously overlooked letters from Mary Ann McCracken to Madden, including her latest extant epistle, written in 1861. As a reader, I was permitted to take digital photographs of these documents. Finally, I became a member of the National Archives of Ireland in order to gain access to a microfilm version of a letter which I transcribed on site.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout my studies, I made numerous trips to the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland where I consulted and photographed eighteen letters (both to and from Mary Ann McCracken) as well as a variety of other significant documents. In October 2017 I discovered two extant letters among the Linen Hall Library's Beath manuscripts which I transcribed on site. Having discovered a reference to a letter from Andrew Leitch to McCracken in Edward K. Lay's *The Architecture of Jefferson Country: Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia*, I contacted the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia in September 2017. Their librarian was able to consult Leitch's letter-book on my behalf and provided me with nine digitised draft letters, eight of which were written to Mary Ann.

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 48 (NAI NRA 620/16/3/8).

### 3.8.2 Inclusion of Source Letters

In cases where the original manuscript cannot be located but its contents remain in a transcribed form within a historical text or archive, the scholar's transcription has been reproduced. These sources include Charlotte Milligan Fox's *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (1911), Madden's *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* (1860), McNeill's *The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken* (1960), PRONI's *McNeill Collection* (D3732), Young's "Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the M'Cracken Family" within *The Ulster Journal of Archeology* (1898), Young's *Historical Notices of Old Belfast* (1896) and Young's *Ulster in '98* (1893).

Although the editorial approaches differ from my own (for instance, line and page breaks are not recorded) and the extent to which liberties have been taken with the original text cannot be discerned, I have nevertheless chosen to include these "source" letters to mark that they once existed within an archive or collection of letters and were available to a previous scholar, who deemed them noteworthy enough to transcribe. Indeed, the contents of many of these source letters provide valuable insights into often overlooked aspects of Mary Ann's life, such as her involvement with Bunting's work and publications.

### 3.8.3 Absence of Replies

The majority of the McCracken letters are not complemented with replies, given that "frequently surviving letters pertain to only one party in the relationship and our understanding of issues is inevitably punctuated and one-sided."<sup>2</sup> Such is the case with TCD's Madden Papers, whereby Madden retained many of the letters he received from Mary Ann McCracken, yet only one of his own draft epistles from their correspondence survives.<sup>3</sup> Similarly unbalanced is Mary Ann McCracken's correspondence with Bunting, whereby only his contribution remains in source form. Although no letters of reply

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<sup>2</sup> Rosemary O'Day, "Tudor and Stuart Women: their Lives through their Letters," in ed., James Daybell, *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Hampshire: Palgrave Publishers Ltd., 2001), 128.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 129 (TCD MS873/159).

remain from Eliza and Robert James Tennent, the latter did endorse Mary Ann's letters after reading them, often granting an insight into their responses. In the case of Leitch's letterbook epistles, a single reply can be found within Young's *Old Belfast*.<sup>4</sup> Despite the absence of the other party's voice, important information can be gathered from the letter's content, not least, the identity of the recipient and the subject of their ongoing conversation. As has been shown in section 3.4, intertextual references can shed much light on the contents of a previous letter.

### 3.8.4 Chronological Sequencing

Owing to Mary Ann McCracken's longevity, the letters span six and a half decades. Therefore, in order to reflect their historical narrative, the letters are arranged chronologically. This also allows for the comparison of Mary Ann's script and letter writing practices across her lifetime. In the case of undated or partially dated letters, several methods of deduction have been employed. For instance, a close examination of Letter 54's content reveals its exact chronological positioning, as the writer's comment, "Mr Tone's trial came on today,"<sup>5</sup> refers to an event which is known to have occurred on 10 November 1798. Intertextual references provide another means of determination, as demonstrated in Letter 162. This undated fragment from McCracken to Madden states, "I find I have a lock of Oliver Bond's, if you would like to have it or know any person who would value it, I will send it to you."<sup>6</sup> In Letter 163, dated 12 December 1857, McCracken wrote to Madden, "When I last wrote to you I forgot to send you the enclosed lock of Oliver Bond's hair." This would indicate that the undated fragment formed part of her previous letter, dating it somewhere between her letter previous to that, dated 13 November 1857 (Letter 161) and 12 December 1857 (Letter 163).

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<sup>4</sup> See Letter 114.

<sup>5</sup> Letter 54 (TCD MS873/102).

<sup>6</sup> Letter 162 (TCD MS873/74).

This approach has resulted in four undated letters being assigned a date in full,<sup>7</sup> while three have been placed between a specific set of dates<sup>8</sup> and a further three situated in the immediate aftermath of specific dates (namely, Henry Joy McCracken's execution on 17 July 1798 and Thomas Russell's execution on 21 October 1803).<sup>9</sup> A month and year have been assigned to two undated letters<sup>10</sup> and a year to seven undated letters.<sup>11</sup> In the case of partially dated letters, attempts have been made to retrieve the outstanding information. For instance, where only the year is stipulated, I have been able to supply both the approximate day and month for one letter<sup>12</sup> and have deduced that Letter 5 was written between the months of late November and early December of 1796.<sup>13</sup> Where the month and year are provided, I have been able to determine the exact day of composition in two instances<sup>14</sup> and the approximate day in two.<sup>15</sup> In the absence of a year, I have been able to provide this information in one instance.<sup>16</sup> Letter 181 remains without a date and is placed after the final extant letter.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Letters 54 (TCD MS873/102), 57 (TCD MS873/98), 70 ( TCD MS873/108) and 135 (TCD MS873/693).

<sup>8</sup> Letters 1, 80 (TCD MS873/679) and 162 (TCD MS873/74).

<sup>9</sup> Letters 49 (TCD MS873/147), 79 (TCD MS873/646) and 82 (TCD MS873/647).

<sup>10</sup> Letters 53 (TCD MS873/91) and 77 (TCD MS873/109).

<sup>11</sup> Letters 56 (TCD MS873/97), 58 (TCD MS873/100), 59 (TCD MS873/101), 104, 105, 108 and 179 (TCD MS873/9).

<sup>12</sup> Letter 74 (TCD MS873/697).

<sup>13</sup> Letter 5 (TCD MS873/115).

<sup>14</sup> Letter 50 (TCD MS873/92) and 73 ( TCD MS873/107).

<sup>15</sup> Letters 71 (TCD MS873/110) and 76 (TCD MS873/642).

<sup>16</sup> Letter 2 (TCD MS873/114).

<sup>17</sup> Letter 181 broadly dates from between 1842 and 1866.

### 3.8.5 Letters penned neither by nor to McCracken

Sixteen letters within the collection are neither written by nor to Mary Ann McCracken but have been included for the following reasons; firstly (and perhaps most significantly) all of these letters passed into McCracken's possession to form part of her collection and were subsequently endorsed in her hand. Secondly, as all but one of these letters were received within the family circle, it is likely that Mary Ann was privy to their content. Evidence of this can be found in Letter 10, wherein Mary Ann wrote to Henry Joy McCracken, "the intelligence contained in your letter to John fills us with a variety of contradictory sensations."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Letter 22 reveals William's assumption that his letters were being read by family members other than the intended recipient as he commented to Margaret, "but as yet we continue in the same situation I have more than once described to one or other of the house, which you have read."<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, their content are of relevance to Mary Ann McCracken's story on both a contemporary and future basis (in the present of the letter and in regard to her later role as an historian).

Twelve of these letters form part of the Kilmainham correspondence and were sent between McCracken family members. Their inclusion gives a fuller insight into the historical sequence of events and familial relationships. Letters 2, 4 and 5 mention Henry Joy McCracken's "sisters" and "the girls," thus indirectly referencing Mary Ann and her sister Margaret. Given that Henry was a signatory of Letter 17 which was addressed to "the friends & relatives of the undersigned," it would undoubtedly have been read by the McCracken family, including Mary Ann. Although the superscription is obscured, it is likely that this letter was directed to the McCracken household as it formed part of Mary Ann McCracken's later collection, as is also the case with Letter 21. Letter 43 is addressed to Captain John and Ann McCracken, bringing the welcome news of their sons' release. Presumably, this information was quickly disseminated within the family. A further five letters addressed to Margaret McCracken from her incarcerated brothers would, most

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<sup>18</sup> Letter 10 (TCD MS873/150).

<sup>19</sup> Letter 22 (TCD MS873/125).

likely, have been shared with her sister.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Mary Ann is mentioned in Letters 23, 33 and 39. A letter written by John McCracken Junior to Henry Joy McCracken is also included as it gives an alarming account of the brutalities playing out in the country at the time.<sup>21</sup>

Within the 1798 correspondence, a letter written by Henry Joy Junior to his aunt, Ann McCracken, has been included as it was endorsed by Mary Ann thus, "This note we felt as an insult, in supposing that we would delight in the suffering of others." She further noted, "The above wreaked the greatest indignation in our family."<sup>22</sup> These comments suggest that all members of the McCracken household had read and been incensed by the letter. Letter 52 from John McCracken Junior to Francis McCracken contains the first mention of Henry Joy McCracken's daughter Maria and reveals one of the families most trusted letter bearers, John Hughes, to have been an informer. Letter 67 from James Orr to Margaret McCracken is included as it pertains to the sisters' business and as such would have been read by Mary Ann McCracken. It is important to note that any further letters from Orr to Margaret are addressed to Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> McCracken & Co. and open with "Ladies," thereby including Mary Ann as an addressee.

Only one letter has been included which falls outside the perimeters of the family correspondence. Letter 64 (written by Thomas Russell to his sister) was entrusted to Mary Ann McCracken by Margaret Russell. However, sometime around 1830, she lent this letter to Charles Hamilton Teeling to assist with an *Ulster Magazine* article. Although the letter was not returned to her, Madden's endorsement states that it was "given to me by Charles Teeling."<sup>23</sup> Thomas Russell's final letter to his sister, which was also passed from Mary Ann McCracken to Charles Hamilton Teeling, was never returned and much regretted by McCracken throughout her later correspondence with Madden.

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<sup>20</sup> Letters 22 (TCD MS873/125), 23 (TCD MS873/329), 25 (TCD MS873/127), 33 (TCD MS873/133) and 39 (TCD MS873/13).

<sup>21</sup> See Letter 28 (TCD MS873/130).

<sup>22</sup> Letter 50 (TCD MS873/92).

<sup>23</sup> Letter 64 (TCD MS873/339).

### 3.8.6 Appendices

One draft manuscript (the final version of which is included within the main body of the correspondence) and three letters between third parties are included within Appendix A, while seven attachments (or enclosures) within Appendix B take the form of letters.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See sections 5.1 and 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5 and 5.2.6.

## 3.9 Introduction to the Letters and their Themes

Chronological sequencing allows the letters to flow like a conversation (where possible), from which a loose series of themes emerge. In the following, these categories will be explored under general headings.

### 3.9.1 The Kilmainham Gaol Letters (1796–1797)

A warrant for Henry Joy McCracken's arrest was issued on 11 September 1796,<sup>1</sup> which he successfully evaded for some weeks. During this period the McCracken household was placed under surveillance.<sup>2</sup> In early October, Henry was finally arrested at an unknown location and taken to Dublin "in a post-chaise, escorted by a troop of light dragoons."<sup>3</sup> Following what Fred Heatley purports to have been "a twenty-six hour coach journey,"<sup>4</sup> Henry was lodged at Dublin's Newgate Prison and later sentenced by Judge Boyd on a charge of High Treason.<sup>5</sup> He was transferred to the newly established Kilmainham Gaol after several weeks and lodged in the West Wing with other members of the United Irishmen.<sup>6</sup>

Henry Joy McCracken's first visitor was his cousin Counsellor Henry Joy who lived and worked as a barrister in Dublin. Sometime during the second week of November, Mary Ann McCracken along with her siblings Margaret and John and their friend Edward Bunting

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<sup>1</sup> See TCD MS873/103. The catalogue for the Madden Papers incorrectly dates the warrant as "11th October 1796."

<sup>2</sup> Details of this surveillance can be found in a letter from the Town Sovereign Rev. Bristow to Lord Downshire, an extract from which is cited in both McNeill, *Life*, 111 and Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Belfast News Letter*, 7 October 1796, 3. The exact date of the arrest varies depending on the source. Madden fixed upon 10 October 1796, a date which has subsequently been widely reproduced. See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 404. However, this is not reflected in newspaper sources. For instance, the *Belfast News Letter* of 7 October 1796 states that HJM was "taken up" on "Saturday last," which would place the arrest on 1 October 1796.

<sup>4</sup> Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Killen, *Decade of the United Irishmen* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Ltd, 1998), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Kilmainham Gaol officially opened its gates for the first time in August 1796.

set out from Belfast to visit Henry at Kilmainham Gaol. This was Mary Ann's first trip to the city and although the exact dates of the excursion are unknown, Letter 3 reveals that Ann McCracken had written to Margaret in Dublin on 14 November. A further record of their visit can be found in a letter from William Drennan in Dublin, to his sister Martha McTier in Belfast, postmarked 17 November 1796. He comments that, "I called on the Miss McCrackens who came to visit their brother and I believe have had leave to see him."<sup>7</sup>

William McCracken was arrested on 18 April 1797 and imprisoned along with nineteen other Northerners in Kilmainham Gaol.<sup>8</sup> In Letter 16, dated 6 May 1797, Henry Joy McCracken reveals that he is no longer deemed a state prisoner but a common felon, resulting in the termination of his jail allowance. From this point onward, "his letters tell of an increasing hardship with this change in status."<sup>9</sup>

Letters 35 and 36 reveal that Mary Ann, Margaret and William's wife Rose Ann, visited the prisoners at Kilmainham Gaol in October 1797.<sup>10</sup> By 3 November 1797, Mary Ann and her sister had returned to Belfast, leaving Rose Ann with her husband at the jail where they stayed until both brothers were granted bail on 8 December 1797.<sup>11</sup>

The surviving Kilmainham Gaol letters date from 7 November 1796 until 9 December 1797 and can be found within Trinity College Dublin's Madden Papers, with two exceptions. The first, Letter 3, is not a Kilmainham Gaol letter in the strictest sense as it is not addressed to or from the Gaol. Nonetheless, it is placed within this category as it was sent by Ann McCracken on 16 November 1796 (just over a month after Henry's arrest) to her daughter Mary Ann, who was at that time in Dublin visiting her incarcerated brother. The current location of this letter is unknown, having been sourced from

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<sup>7</sup> William Drennan to Martha McTier, Dublin, 17 November 1796, in Jean Agnew and Maria Luddy, ed., *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, (3 vols, Dublin, Women's History Project in association with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1998–1999), 278.

<sup>8</sup> See Letter 13 (TCD MS873/152).

<sup>9</sup> Niamh O'Sullivan, *Every Dark Hour: A History of Kilmainham Gaol* (Dublin: Liberties Press, 2007), 32.

<sup>10</sup> It is likely however that MAM (and other family members) made additional trips to Dublin in the interim between November 1796 and October 1797.

<sup>11</sup> See Letter 37 (TCD MS873/137).

Young's *Ulster in '98* and McNeill's biography.<sup>12</sup> The latter cites the letter as belonging to "Young, R.M. MSS, Belfast Museum and Art Gallery." Despite extensive research of PRONI's Young Collection and also having contacted an archivist at the National Museums of Northern Ireland, the thesis's author has been unable to locate this letter.

The second, Letter 24, was originally included within the Madden Papers but has been on loan to Kilmainham Gaol Museum since 29 March 1966. This letter from Henry to his sisters, dated 27 June 1797, is currently on display as part of the museum's permanent exhibition.

The Kilmainham Gaol letters are by far the most quoted of all the McCracken correspondence, owing to "the scarcity of other similar records,"<sup>13</sup> giving so "full [an] account of the scenes of wretchedness and wickedness that were familiar to the inmates of the Dublin prisons of that period."<sup>14</sup> McNeill also highlighted the "the intimate picture they give of the various people concerned,"<sup>15</sup> as particularly appealing to the modern historian. Indeed, the familial familiarity between the siblings is reflected in the assured, uninhibited spontaneity of their writing styles. The use of nicknames such as Atty (Edward Bunting) and Peggy (Margaret) further convey their ease and Henry's sign off of "High Val Doe" in Letter 4 suggests a code name or a personal meaning shared between him and his younger brother. In an effort to convey their intimacy, Madden evokes Shakespeare's line, "stony limits cannot hold love out,"<sup>16</sup> the vehicle for this love being the letter.

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Ann McCracken  
Captain John McCracken  
Counsellor Henry Joy  
Henry Joy McCracken

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<sup>12</sup> Young, *Ulster in '98*, 93 and McNeill, *Life*, 114–15.

<sup>13</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 119.

<sup>14</sup> Madden, *Antrim and Down*, 18–19.

<sup>15</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 119.

<sup>16</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 1, 113.

John McCracken Junior  
Margaret McCracken  
Mary Ann McCracken  
Rose Ann McCracken  
William McCracken

### 3.9.2 The Rebellion Letters (1798)

For some months after his return to Belfast, Henry Joy McCracken was incapacitated with rheumatism and ill health, brought about by his confinement. By the end of February 1798 he had recovered sufficiently to be “sent on the business of the Society to Dublin.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Letters 44 and 45 situate Henry in Dublin in early May of 1798. During this period, Henry Joy McCracken visited his cousins, the Joys in Temple Street, Samuel Neilson in Kilmainham Gaol, Russell in Newgate Prison and dined with his former jailor, John Richardson. He also took the opportunity to conduct some business dealings on behalf of his mother and his sisters, whose enterprises were evidently taking up much of their energies. Mary Ann’s mastery of her trade is evident in Henry’s request that she “measure William’s wrist & make some allowance larger”<sup>18</sup> when constructing a garment for Thomas Russell. Although Henry comments on the situation in Dublin, such as the proclamation offering a reward for the capture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and on the reports from County Kildare, he is careful not to mention United Irish activities.

The events leading up to and including the outbreak of the rebellion do not unfold in sync with the extant correspondence. However, ten days after commanding the Battle of Antrim, Henry wrote to his sister from his place of concealment, briefly outlining the battle and the reasons for its failure. The subsequent extant letter was composed the day after Henry’s arrest and finds Mary Ann and their father visiting him at Carrickfergus Jail. Following Henry Joy McCracken’s trial and execution on 17 July 1798, Mary Ann wrote to both Thomas Russell and her brother Francis informing them of Henry’s death. Her memories of these events were recorded forty-four years later during an interview with Madden which he then published

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<sup>17</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 422. See section 5.4.3.

<sup>18</sup> Letter 44.

within his "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken."<sup>19</sup> The interview account fills in many of the gaps in events between the letters. John McCracken Junior's letter to his brother reveals that Francis had left Cove for Kingston, Jamaica on 22 August 1798, where the McCracken family had intended to follow. It further reveals that Henry Joy McCracken's daughter had come to live with the family. Mary Ann maintained contact with several United Irishmen who had been forced to flee in the wake of the rebellion's failure, namely Thomas Hughes and William Thompson. The latter wrote to Mary Ann thanking her for taking care of him after he received 200 lashes for refusing to inform on Henry Joy McCracken. Two letters from Mary Ann McCracken's cousin Grizzel Joy in Dublin indicate that the Joy siblings<sup>20</sup> visited the McCracken family in Belfast sometime between late October and 5 November 1798, most likely to pay their respects following Henry Joy McCracken's execution. In both letters, Grizzel Joy provides details of Tone's trial in Dublin. McCracken's charitable nature is demonstrated in her anonymous letter to Mary Ann Hamilton, the wife of United Irishman William Henry Hamilton, wherein she enclosed eighteen guineas.

#### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Ann McCracken  
Henry Joy McCracken  
Mary Ann McCracken  
Margaret McCracken  
William Thompson  
John McCracken Junior  
Francis McCracken  
Grizzel Joy  
Henry Joy Junior  
Mary Ann Hamilton  
Thomas Hughes  
Thomas Russell

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<sup>19</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99.

<sup>20</sup> Counsellor Henry Joy, Harriet and Grizzel.

### 3.9.3 The Union and Irish Airs (1799–1802)

In the wake of the Union, Grizzel Joy wrote to Mary Ann condemning Belfast's silence on the matter and enclosed a copy of her brother's address "To the Electors of Ulster," published in *The Anti-Union* newspaper of January 1799.<sup>21</sup> Two drafted replies to this letter capture Mary Ann's impatience with Dublin's sudden interest, given that the moment for action had, by that point, passed. She retaliated, "if any publication was to be issued here, written with such spirit & boldness, both writer & publisher would run a great risque of having their houses demolished, besides being committed to the military prison."<sup>22</sup> Which version Mary Ann sent to her cousin is unknown, however it is just as likely that the final letter contained elements of both. Counsellor Joy's belated political fervour is further reflected in a letter of late 1801 in which he asked for details on the battles of 1798, having found most accounts to be "imperfect."<sup>23</sup> It is notable that he wrote to Mary Ann on this matter and not her brother William, who had fought at the Battle of Antrim alongside Henry Joy McCracken. Counsellor Joy obviously perceived her as extremely well informed and privy to insider "secrets."<sup>24</sup>

In July 1802, Patrick Lynch (the Irish scholar hired by Edward Bunting to collect Irish airs from across Ireland) wrote two letters to Mary Ann McCracken seeking urgent financial relief, having had no reply from his benefactor John McCracken Junior. That Lynch turns to Mary Ann at this time of crisis reflects not only her standing within the family but also her sympathy with and interest in Bunting's cause.

#### Correspondents and Recipients:

Grizzel Joy  
Mary Ann McCracken  
Counsellor Henry Joy  
Patrick Lynch

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<sup>21</sup> Henry Joy, "To the Electors of Ulster," *The Anti-Union*, no. 11 (Saturday 19 January 1799): 41–3. See section 5.2.2.

<sup>22</sup> Letter 59 ( TCD MS873/101).

<sup>23</sup> Letter 60.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.9.4 Emmet's Uprising and Thomas Russell (1803)

In June 1802 Thomas Russell was released from Fort George in Inverness (having been transferred from Newgate Prison in March 1799) and banished to Hamburg. He soon joined Robert Emmet in Paris where a group of United Irishmen had assembled in the hopes of orchestrating a further uprising. In March 1803, Russell returned to Ireland to organise the North with the help of James Hope. In early July we find Mary Ann McCracken writing to Bernard Coile in Dublin, reporting on her efforts to raise a subscription for Russell's sister, Margaret Russell. This subscription was met with suspicion and resulted in Mr Skeffington (subsequently Lord Masserene) accusing her of raising money for arms. However, this did not deter her.<sup>25</sup> A week before the uprising, Russell wrote to both his sister and Mary Ann McCracken stating his purpose and leaving instructions in the event of his death. His next letter to Mary Ann, written in blue laundry starch, was sent from his place of hiding (the Rabb residence in Ballysallagh) following the uprising's failure. Although Mary Ann burnt this letter on Russell's bidding, she was able to reconstruct it from memory some four decades later.<sup>26</sup>

Having travelled to Dublin in a bid to rescue Emmet (who had been captured on 25 August 1803), Russell was arrested by Major Sirr on 9 September 1803 and lodged in Kilmainham Gaol.<sup>27</sup> Two letters remain from this period; firstly, a reply from James Orr (the McCracken sisters' mercantile agent in Dublin) to Margaret McCracken telling her that Thomas Russell's friends feared for the worst, while his sister believed that a sum of money (between £150 and £200) would be of assistance. Secondly, a letter from Ellen Rabb to Mary Ann McCracken requested her to write to Mr McCullough to further dissuade him from informing on Russell.

Mary Ann sent £100 to Thomas Russell via Orr, which was to be used as a bribe "for the purpose of effecting his escape,"<sup>28</sup> however Russell was unable to put the money to use as, on the morning of 12

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<sup>25</sup> See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Series 3, vol 2, 275–76.

<sup>26</sup> See Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693) and section 5.4.2.

<sup>27</sup> Letter 136 (TCD MS873/627) reveals that MAM paid for Thomas Russell's transport between Ellen Rabb's house and Dublin.

<sup>28</sup> Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80).

October, he was transferred without warning to Downpatrick Gaol.<sup>29</sup> He entrusted the money to a fellow prisoner, St John Mason, instructing him to pass it on to his sister the following morning. Instead however, Mason handed the money over to the turnkey's assistant, Patrick Smith. A letter of 13 October from Orr to the McCracken sisters confirms that Russell had received the money from Smith.<sup>30</sup>

Mary Ann's frustration at her mother's refusal to allow her to visit Russell in Downpatrick gaol is expressed through a correspondence with her close friend Eliza Templeton, who advised her to consult her cousin Counsellor Henry Joy on the matter. Joy's reply did not have the desired effect. Indeed, he admitted to harbouring the same fears as Ann McCracken but reassured Mary Ann he would try to come to "some arrangement" while in Downpatrick, where he was to act as one of Russell's lawyers. Mary Ann twice wrote to Russell at Downpatrick, however, he cast her second letter on the fire unopened, lest it would "disturb his mind."<sup>31</sup> He wrote what he correctly predicted would be his last letter to Mary Ann McCracken several days before his trial, thanking both her and her sister Margaret for their friendship and stating that he would prefer them not to attempt a visit which would inevitably endanger their lives. This epistle was enclosed within another from Thomas Russell's law agent, James Ramsey whose comment, "I hope Hughes will have no objection to perform what you mention,"<sup>32</sup> suggests that Mary Ann had concocted an escape plan. Indeed, on 16 October she confided in Templeton, "I have scarcely slept any last night contriving plans & schemes."<sup>33</sup> Ramsey further stated that despite Russell's objections, he had managed to persuade him to employ a defence. To this purpose Counsellors Joy and Bell were financed by Mary Ann McCracken at

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<sup>29</sup> See Letter 69 (TCD MS873/683).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. This is further confirmed by a "Copy of a Letter from Mr St. John Mason to the High Sheriff of the County Down," of 14 October, requesting the High Sheriff to "make application to Mr Russell," as to whether or not he received the money and to write back to him with the facts. The letter was returned to Mason with the following line written upon it in Thomas Russell's hand: "I got the note from Smith. Mr Ramsey will see to my affairs." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 245–46.

<sup>31</sup> MAM's endorsement, Letter 78 (TCD MS873/644).

<sup>32</sup> Letter 75 (TCD MS873/696).

<sup>33</sup> Letter 73 (TCD MS873/107).

£100 each.<sup>34</sup> Russell's trial before Baron George began on the morning of 20 October and lasted until 8pm. Having been found guilty of High Treason, he was hanged and beheaded the following day.

Soon after Russell's execution, Mary Ann wrote to his sister expressing her condolences, extending her friendship and putting her mind to rest in regard to practical matters. It was around this time that the incarcerated Lynch wrote to McCracken from Downpatrick Gaol, updating her on the situation of the prisoners. Having reluctantly given evidence against Russell during his trial, Lynch's note was not warmly received. In 1844 Mary Ann described him as an "unfortunate coward" for whom "the dread of death was too much for his virtue to withstand."<sup>35</sup> In November, the Reverent James Nelson of Downpatrick wrote to Mary Ann McCracken on behalf of those still imprisoned at the jail, requesting financial assistance.<sup>36</sup> Despite expressing her "extreme concern" at not being in a position to help, she evidently rallied to the cause, enclosing eighteen guineas within her letter of reply.<sup>37</sup> The McCracken sisters appear to have charged their Dublin agents Orr and Hamilton with watching over Margaret Russell, whom they reported as dwelling in "uncomfortable" circumstances and working as a teacher above a dram shop.<sup>38</sup>

In a later letter to Madden, McCracken revealed that it was not Russell's trial alone which cost her dearly. Speaking of her Dublin agent Orr, Mary Ann stated that he had "requested me to advance him £300 altho' I had no security from him but his name on paper, but he had muslins from me which were then in great demand, but I did not think I could refuse him & complied & every bill which I drew on him afterwards, he required me to renew until it ruined both my brother & my sister & [my]self."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Letters 81 (TCD MS873/682) and 168 (TCD MS873/80).

<sup>35</sup> Letter 138 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)).

<sup>36</sup> This letter is missing.

<sup>37</sup> Letter 81 (TCD MS873/682).

<sup>38</sup> Letter 82 (TCD MS873/647).

<sup>39</sup> Letter 168 (TCD MS873/80).

## Correspondents and Recipients:

Mary Ann McCracken  
Patrick Lynch  
James Orr  
James Orr and Hamilton  
James Ramsey  
Eliza Templeton  
Thomas Russell  
Counsellor Henry Joy  
Rev. James Nelson  
Ellen Rabb  
Margaret McCracken  
Bernard Coile  
Margaret Russell

### 3.9.5 Aftermath of Thomas Russell's Execution and Bunting Letters (1804–1809)

Although Letter 69 verifies that the £100 bribe money provided by Mary Ann McCracken was received by Russell after leaving Kilmainham Gaol, the government proceeded to claim that Smith had, on the contrary, taken the money to Dublin Castle. Madden reflected on how “this fact in Orr’s letters was doubted, nay, left more than disputed, utterly discredited, in consequence of the conduct pursued by government, and its agents, in this business.”<sup>40</sup> Letter 84, in which Grizzel Joy informs Mary Ann that the Attorney General would be willing to hand over the money to Margaret Russell if “it could be found out who the person was who got possession of the £100,”<sup>41</sup> and if this person subsequently refunded it. Evidently, Smith was set up as the government’s scapegoat. However, how the money ended up in Dublin Castle remains unclear. Madden places the blame on “the government agent Dr Trevor, by whose instructions the money was swindled out of the hands of the unfortunate prisoner Russell, by false

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<sup>40</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 247.

<sup>41</sup> Letter 84 (TCD MS873/678).

representations.”<sup>42</sup> This would suggest that Russell entrusted Trevor with the money, as it is known that he entrusted him with his manuscript and a letter for his sister. Tellingly, neither reached Margaret Russell.

The bulk of Bunting’s letters to Mary Ann McCracken date between 1808 and 1809, updating her on his labours throughout Ireland and England. While nothing remains of Mary Ann’s side of the correspondence, Bunting’s requests, acknowledgements and thanks reveal her secretarial role and more significantly, the extent to which she contributed to Bunting’s work. Indeed, Letter 95 suggests “that she had written part of the disquisition on musical instruments given in his volume published in 1809.”<sup>43</sup> Although Mary Ann received no mention within Bunting’s publications, it is clear from these letters that she played an integral part in their realisation.

A counter to Bunting’s accounts of academic toil appears in the form of James Hope’s letter of 28 November 1808, wherein he announces that he was compelled to leave John McCracken Junior’s employment “for want of wages.”<sup>44</sup> Having outlined his somewhat bleak employment prospects, he continued to reassure Mary Ann of his intention to pay her an outstanding debt, despite his acknowledgement that she did “not think of it.”<sup>45</sup> Although this is a lone example of their correspondence, Hope and his family feature throughout McCracken’s later letters to Madden.

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

David Lyons  
Grizzel Joy  
James Orr  
Margaret McCracken  
Mary Ann McCracken  
Edward Bunting  
James Hope

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<sup>42</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 249–50.

<sup>43</sup> Young, “Edward Bunting’s Irish Music and the M’Cracken Family,” 176.

<sup>44</sup> Letter 94.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.9.6 Business Closure (c. 1815)

Following the death of their mother, the McCracken sisters used what little they inherited to pay off their remaining business debts, so bringing their 25-year venture to a close.<sup>46</sup> During this period, Mary Ann McCracken wrote to an unidentified female apologising for her silence and explaining that much of her time had been occupied with wrapping up business affairs. In looking to the future she despaired that “the sphere of a woman's industry is so confined, and so few roads lie open to her, and those so thorny, it is difficult to fix on any.”<sup>47</sup> However, it was not long before her energies were being channelled into “out-of-door avocations,”<sup>48</sup> namely, charitable work.

#### Correspondents and Recipients:

Mary Ann McCracken  
Unknown recipients

### 3.9.7 Miscellaneous Letters from McCracken's “Middle Age” (1819–1841)

Although extant letters written by Mary Ann McCracken during this period are sparse, those that have survived provide a rare insight into her middle years. Unsurprisingly, several examples of philanthropy feature. These include her efforts to raise money for the support of Margaret Russell,<sup>49</sup> her role within the Poor House<sup>50</sup> and her dedication to the Lancasterian School.<sup>51</sup> In 1826, Mary Ann defended the publication *Tone's Life* in the wake of negative press, commenting that his words had not been “intended for the world, but for his wife

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<sup>46</sup> See Letter 104.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Letter 105.

<sup>49</sup> See Letter 106 (PRONI D1748/C/1/125/1).

<sup>50</sup> See Letter 116 (PRONI D1748/C/1/125/2).

<sup>51</sup> See Letter 120.

and children.”<sup>52</sup> A letter reflecting on the Reform Bill of 1832, reveals her continued interest in current affairs, while her political views are expressed in Letters 119 and 120. That Mary Ann McCracken was considered a person of much influence is evident in both Sophia McAdam’s letter (in which she sought Mary Ann’s approval before sending her own epistle to Dr Macnevin) and in Mary Ann’s reply to an unknown minister, who had appealed to her for help with disseminating his sermon.<sup>53</sup> Given that Mary Ann McCracken lived to her ninety sixth year, it is somewhat prophetic that she referred to herself as “middle-aged” at the age of seventy.<sup>54</sup>

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Mary Ann McCracken  
Robert James Tennent  
Sophia McAdam  
Unknown correspondents

### **3.9.8 Leitch Letters (1827–1839)**

Captain Andrew Leitch (an Irish immigrant residing in Charlottesville, Virginia) first wrote to Mary Ann McCracken on 7 July 1827 informing her of the death of her “friend and correspondent,”<sup>55</sup> John Neilson (originally from Ballycarry). In the wake of the rebellion, the United Irishman had fled to America where he became an eminent architect, working on the properties of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. A necessary correspondence ensued between Leitch, as the executor of Neilson’s will and McCracken, as its agent in Ireland. The contents of Leitch’s letters to McCracken reveal that she wrote him many replies over the course of a decade, yet Letter 114 is the sole remaining example. Owing to the large number of legatees (coupled with the Irish Land Question) Mary Ann’s role as an

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<sup>52</sup> Letter 108.

<sup>53</sup> Letters 117 (TCD MS873/534) and 120 respectively.

<sup>54</sup> Letter 128.

<sup>55</sup> See Letter 109 (UVA MSS 9200).

intermediary was evidently challenging and appears to have resulted in a number of misunderstandings.

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Andrew Leitch  
Mary Ann McCracken

### **3.9.9 Further Bunting Letters (1820–1840)**

There is an eleven-year gap in the extant correspondence between Mary Ann McCracken and Bunting, for the bulk of which Bunting lived with the McCracken family in Belfast. He undertook a tour of Europe between 1815 and 1817, but despite the high probability that Bunting communicated with Mary Ann during his travels in Paris, Belgium and Holland, no letters remain from this period. Instead, their extant correspondence resumes in 1820, following Bunting's marriage and removal to Dublin. Upon the birth of his first child Bunting wrote to Mary Ann renouncing his former lack of propriety (something which she evidently disapproved of, as evidenced in Letter 95)<sup>56</sup> and informed her of his "altered behaviour."<sup>57</sup> Bunting continued to keep Mary Ann abreast of his work and family life in Dublin, often reflecting on the kindness that was shown to him by the McCrackens and Joys. In early 1840, upon the completion of *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, Bunting remarked, "my discovery of the structure of Irish music, etc., in your house stamps the work with no common interest, which discovery makes the book invaluable."<sup>58</sup> The work's most significant findings were therefore, in part, indebted to the McCracken's accommodating nature. Bunting also acknowledged the role his wife played in bringing the book to fruition, a point which Mary Ann would later highlight when attempting to secure a pension for Mrs Bunting. In his later letters, Bunting "unburdened the

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<sup>56</sup> "I can assure you dear Mary that I have not the least intention of jilting my time with nonsense in London." Letter 95.

<sup>57</sup> Letter 107.

<sup>58</sup> Letter 127.

weariness of his heart to his life-long friend,"<sup>59</sup> poignantly reflecting, "how many we have lost within the last twenty years."<sup>60</sup> Clearly, their relationship was akin to that of siblings. Indeed, two years after Bunting's death, James Orr wrote to Mary Ann McCracken acknowledging the impact his death must have had on her.

### Correspondents and Recipients:

Edward Bunting  
Mary Ann McCracken

### 3.9.10 Tennent Letters (1846–1859)

Mary Ann McCracken was not afraid to take advantage of her connections to people in high places, as the letters to her niece's husband, Robert James Tennent reveal. Throughout his time as MP for Belfast, Mary Ann repeatedly appealed to Tennent for his advice and assistance on behalf of several unfortunate individuals, which he willingly obliged. In the case of Mrs Bunting, Tennent signed and gathered further signatures for a memorial which was presented to the Queen, requesting that Mrs Bunting be placed on the list of her Majesty's pensioners.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, these requests were usually followed up, some days later, by a letter to her niece explaining the individual's plight and inciting her to "use your persuasive influence with M<sup>r</sup> Tennent" to further prompt him into action.<sup>62</sup> However, Mary Ann also corresponded with her niece in London on other matters, such as the Queen's visit to Belfast in 1849, of which she wrote, "I trust the Queen's gracious visit is the harbinger of much improvement to the whole country, & that a better spirit will shortly prevail betwixt the two countries, & among all classes of Irishmen."<sup>63</sup> She often conveyed family news to her niece and enquired as to the wellbeing of

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<sup>59</sup> Fox, *Annals*, 305.

<sup>60</sup> Letter 124.

<sup>61</sup> See Letter 148 (PRONI D1748/G/387/2).

<sup>62</sup> Letter 147 (PRONI D1748/H/29/3).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

her children. In 1846, Eliza sent her aunt the second volume of “Spirit of the Nation”<sup>64</sup> which she gratefully received. Despite her niece’s death in 1850, Mary Ann McCracken continued to correspond with Tennent, notably seeking his advice on how to go about acquiring “the fee simple” on her Shankhill property in 1859.<sup>65</sup>

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Mary Ann McCracken  
Robert James Tennent  
Eliza Tennent

### **3.9.11 The Madden Correspondence (1842–1861)**

While there are thirty-two extant letters addressed from Mary Ann McCracken to the historian, only one draft epistle of Madden’s side of their correspondence remains, exhibiting much of the flattery to which Mary Ann objects in her later letters.<sup>66</sup> Unsurprisingly, the main topic of her correspondence with Madden is the history of the United Irishmen. At Madden’s behest (when working on his “Memoir of Thomas Russell”), Mary Ann wrote copiously about Thomas Russell, his role in Emmet’s rising of 1803, his imprisonment, trial and subsequent execution.<sup>67</sup> Not only was she Madden’s informant, she was also his assistant, editor and champion.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Letter 142 reveals that it was she who was responsible for advertising Madden’s work within the Belfast newspapers. She even co-ordinated his frequent research trips to the city, writing of one forthcoming visit, “I still look forward to the pleasure of seeing you both in Belfast, when

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<sup>64</sup> James Duffy, ed., *The Spirit of the Nation, By the writers of the Nation Newspaper*, Second ed., 2 vols. (Dublin: James Duffy, 1844).

<sup>65</sup> See Letter 172 (PRONI D1748/G/387/8) and Letter 175 (PRONI D1748/G/387/9).

<sup>66</sup> Instances can be found in Letter 163; “may I beg you will not thus put me to the blush in future,” and Letter 171; “I was quite ashamed of the high praise you bestowed on many of my actions.”

<sup>67</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 137–284.

<sup>68</sup> For examples of MAM’s editorial work see Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94), Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89), Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83) and Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

Maria will be happy to accompany you & M<sup>rs</sup> Madden to the Cavehill & old Jemmy will take us all to the Bowhill & Slemish.”<sup>69</sup> McCracken often updated Madden on the lives of surviving United Irishmen and their families, as well as conveying the news of their deaths. Upon the demise of their friend James Hope, Madden was tasked with formulating the tombstone’s epitaph, while McCracken planned its design and dimensions.<sup>70</sup>

That Mary Ann McCracken considered Madden a most “valued friend”<sup>71</sup> is apparent from the ease with which she confided in him on a variety of subjects. Discussions of contemporary political issues were often framed in relation to the United Irishmen and their aims, yet in 1844 Mary Ann adopted a measured tone when reflecting upon the conversion of some former United Irishmen to Unionism, stating, “there is a variety of opinions on the subject of politics in the town of Belfast, and many sincere and ardent liberals who were violently opposed to the Union, before it took place, are now as much opposed to Repeal, and certainly it is a difficult question, on which much may be said on both sides, and hard to decide on.”<sup>72</sup> Further political deliberations included her views on the connection between church and state, O’Connell, the Repeal movement and the Maynooth Grant controversy.<sup>73</sup> Evidently, Madden had written to McCracken on the latter subject as she stated, “What I differ from you in, is the grant to Maynooth,” which she considered to be “a small instalment of justice.”<sup>74</sup> The uninhibited manner in which she expressed such differences of opinion suggests a relationship of respectful equality, and not one in which she felt intimidated into merely echoing the opinions of her distinguished correspondent. Indeed, despite Mary Ann’s many modest protestations (and frequently-expressed apologies for trespassing on the historian’s time), her communications with Madden were often frank and at times even gently corrective.

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<sup>69</sup> Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156).

<sup>70</sup> See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>71</sup> Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94).

<sup>72</sup> Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156).

<sup>73</sup> See Letter 140 (TCD MS873/156), Letter 155 (TCD MS873/71) and Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)).

<sup>74</sup> Letter 142 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)).

Nor did their correspondence suffer during Madden's stints abroad, as demonstrated by four letters addressed to the historian's Lisbon residence and one which he received during his time in Paris.<sup>75</sup> Mary Ann signed off the latter epistle, "Farewell my dear Dr & be assured that in whatever part of the world you may be placed, I will ever feel myself your attached friend."<sup>76</sup>

As dedicated abolitionists, they were united in the cause against slavery. It was to Madden that McCracken voiced her exasperation at the hypocrisy of American slaveowners calling themselves Christians, her despair at the decline in support for the movement in Belfast, and her hopes for its future success.<sup>77</sup> In turn, Madden kept McCracken abreast of news in abolitionist circles, such as the death of Joseph Sturge, even calling upon her to approach a prominent Belfast Quaker with a view to obtaining an address of condolence to Sturge's widow.<sup>78</sup> On occasion, Mary Ann mentioned her other philanthropic causes, most notably stating at ninety years of age, "tho' my sight & hearing are greatly impaired & I stoop much & lean to the one side but am still able to go out on a fine day to collect for four public charities & sometimes for cases of private distress, all which gives an unspeakable charm to life, & now I have the brilliant hope of the approaching abolition of American slavery."<sup>79</sup> During the Great Famine meanwhile, she informed Madden that:

the exertions of Belfast to relieve the general destitution, have been considered by many as having been highly injurious to our own poor, by causing such an influx of strangers from the inducements of the Night Asylum, & Day Asylum, to which such numbers flocked, that nought out of five taken daily to the Fever Hospitals

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<sup>75</sup> Letters 138, 139, 140 and 142 are addressed to Madden at his Lisbon residence, while (in the absence of a subscription) Letter 145 was presumably sent to his Paris address, where he was residing at the time of the letter's composition.

<sup>76</sup> Letter 145 (RIA, 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)).

<sup>77</sup> See Letter 155 (TCD MS873/71), Letter 160 (TCD MS873/76), Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70), Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86), Letter 176 (TCD MS873/85) and Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83).

<sup>78</sup> Letter 176 (TCD MS873/85).

<sup>79</sup> Letter 180 (RIA 24 O 10/ 48).

belonged to Belfast & fever patients were known to have been frequently brought by the Railway Train & laid down in the street.<sup>80</sup>

As a champion of Belfast's poor, this situation must have caused Mary Ann much distress. Yet twelve years later she painted a very different picture of the city. In response to Madden's enquiry "about the revivals" she explained that "many public houses have been shut up, many who had been in the habit of cursing & swearing have given this evil habit up [and] the night Constables say they have little to do now."<sup>81</sup>

Intimate details of Mary Ann McCracken's later family life appear throughout her letters and Madden's own familial particulars must have been conveyed in return, as McCracken often enquired as to the wellbeing of Mrs Madden and their son. In Letter 131, Mary Ann delivered a blow-by-blow account of Francis McCracken's final days and eventual death on 22 December 1842. In praising Maria's "long attendance" to her uncle, Mary Ann's love for her niece radiates off the page.<sup>82</sup> Five years later, McCracken announced "a change in Maria's situation," whereby she had married the widower William McCleery and "become responsible for the duties of a mother."<sup>83</sup> Although the aunt did not venture to advise her niece on the matter, she reflected, "in Maria's peculiar circumstance I think it was judicious, she had no near female relative but myself, & the law did not acknowledge her as having any, which she felt bitterly."<sup>84</sup> All this Mary Ann confided in Madden, whom she looked upon "as a friend who felt interested in our welfare."<sup>85</sup> As the marriage progressed, William McCleery's health declined both physically (as a result of liver disease) and mentally. McCracken reported on his bouts of depression, and in late 1857 cryptically commented, "his delusion in

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<sup>80</sup> Letter 145 (24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)).

<sup>81</sup> Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83).

<sup>82</sup> Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94).

<sup>83</sup> Letter 145 (24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

regard to Maria continues."<sup>86</sup> Despite this, Mary Ann took great comfort in Maria's four stepchildren.<sup>87</sup>

Throughout these letters, Mary Ann McCracken expressed much thankfulness for her own good health in spite of her advancing years. She successfully executed her belief that it was "preferable to wear out than to rust out,"<sup>88</sup> walking upward of three miles each day<sup>89</sup> as part of her "out of door avocations."<sup>90</sup> Indeed, when illness did strike in early 1854 (as a result of overexertion) she expressed much indignation at being told she must "take perfect rest for some time & even refrain from writing."<sup>91</sup> As a result of this measure, her letter had been delayed by several months, for which she apologised, considering such a silence in their correspondence "very negligent."<sup>92</sup>

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Madden  
Mary Ann McCracken

### **3.9.12 Replies to McCracken's requests for information on behalf of Madden**

Madden's work benefited greatly from Mary Ann McCracken's assistance in tracking down and contacting further informants, many of whom she had prior connections with. These included Thomas Russell's nephew, Captain John Alexander Russell, Ellen Rabb, James D. Rose Clelland (a jury member at Russell's trial), John McAdam and Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent. McCracken then forwarded their replies to the historian who, in some cases, struck up a

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<sup>86</sup> Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Letter 160 (TCD MS873/76).

<sup>89</sup> Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>90</sup> Letter 159 (TCD MS873/75).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

correspondence with the new informant.<sup>93</sup> Unfortunately, none of Mary Ann's letters to these contacts remain, but the information she had requested is often obvious from the recipient's response.

Lady Tennent's letter is particularly noteworthy for the praise she lavishes on Mary Ann, stating, "I assure you, dear Miss M'Cracken, it quite pleased me to see your familiar name in a letter to me, for though we have not met since the old, old days, when your name was as a household word in my family, still I have very often thought of you, and inquired for you, and have talked about you to my children, telling them of your beautiful daily life and your Christian character."<sup>94</sup> Evidently, Mary Ann was held in high regard within the Tennent family, with whom she had a long-lasting connection.

### **Correspondents and Recipients:**

Mary Ann McCracken  
Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent  
John Alexander Russell  
Ellen Rabb  
James D. Rose Clelland  
John McAdam

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<sup>93</sup> For instance, John Alexander Russell began a correspondence with Madden, as illustrated in section 5.1.4.

<sup>94</sup> Letter 167.

## 3.10 Textual Principles

### 3.10.1 Introductory Metadata

Each letter is numbered according to its chronological position within the collection. The numeral is followed by a title which states the names of the sender and the recipient along with their respective addresses, where known. For example, “155. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin].” Unidentified senders or recipients are given as “Unknown.”<sup>1</sup> A list of metadata describing the item’s most significant particulars follows:

“**Date**” sets out the day/s, month and year of composition. If the numeral has not been stipulated, the month and year is supplied or merely the year if the month is unknown. In the absence of any of these markers, several methods of deduction have been employed. For a more thorough investigation of these aspects, see section 3.8.4.

“**Archive**” pertains to the particular archive or library currently housing the document. Those located in Dublin include, Trinity College Dublin’s Manuscripts and Archives Research Library (TCD), the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) and the Royal Irish Academy (RIA). While those found in Belfast include, the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), the Linen Hall Library (LHL) and Queen’s University Belfast, McClay Library, Special Collections & Archives (QUBSC). Outside of the island of Ireland, one archive, the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia (UVA), is located in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA.

“**Source**” is employed when the original manuscript no longer exists or cannot be located within an archive but its contents remains in a transcribed form (usually within a text or an archive). In such cases, the transcriber’s editorial apparatus is retained, while their notes and insertions are reproduced in italics. It must be noted that line and page breaks have not been replicated by any of the transcribers and so these letters are presented as continuous text. My own contributions are given in the footnotes. Where several sources exist for one letter, both are supplied.

“**Reference Code**” supplies the archive or library’s catalogue number.

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<sup>1</sup> I have been able to identify the recipients of Letters 112, 114, 117 and 181 whose identities were previously unknown.

**“Letter form”** is necessary to determine the manuscript’s stage of completion and originality. A final, sent version is described as “Original manuscript.” An unsent letter is categorised as a “Draft manuscript.” These were often used as a template from which to compose the final version of a letter. Although it would be preferable to have the final form of these letters, drafts can be just as informative, sometimes revealing strong emotions that may have been dropped for the final version. “Copy” is employed where the original manuscript has been duplicated, either by the original author or in another hand.

**“Delivery Status”** reveals whether or not the letter was delivered and, where apparent, the method of conveyance. Postal delivery is identified by the presence of postal marks such as stamps and charges. Conveyance by way of a bearer is usually indicated within the letter’s contents. Where the method is indeterminable, it is simply marked “Delivered.” Undelivered letters include drafts and copies.

**“Material Features”** refers to the physical make up of the letter. For instance, the total number of folios, missing pages, watermarks, tears, burns, ink blots, binding, postal or archival stamps, seals, fasteners, imprints, sketches, letterlocking or the presence of an envelope. For a more thorough investigation of these aspects, see section 3.2.

**“Attachment/s”** are items that were originally enclosed or attached to a letter such as other letters or newspaper articles.

### 3.10.2 Editorial Key

#### **Abbreviations:**

Abbreviated words or names are retained. Some examples are listed here:

acct: account  
amt: amount  
call’d: called  
Col: Colonel  
est: estate  
int: interest  
Jan: January  
Sat: Saturday  
St: street

tho/ tho': though  
thro/ thro': through  
unappall'd: unappalled  
viz.: videlicet (namely)

Within the footnotes, the following names are abbreviated:

MAM	Mary Ann McCracken
HJM	Henry Joy McCracken
RJT	Robert James Tennent
CHT	Charles Hamilton Teeling
JAR	John Alexander Russell
TR	Thomas Russell

**Abrupt ending:** [End]

**Blank page:** [Fol. 2b, blank]

**Cross-writing:** [Fol. 1a, crossed]

**Dashes:** —

These are often used in place of full stops

**Double hyphen:** =

**Editorial capitals:** [C]apital

This applies to the start of a new sentence e.g. "...forgiveness. [H]e..."

**Editorial punctuation:** ['] [.] [.] [?] [-]

**Embossed Designs:** Where present, stationers' imprints are recorded in section 3.2.3

**Endorsements:** [Endorsement, "Author's name" hand]

The bracketed information is followed by a footnote containing the endorsement text. This also applies to third party notations. Line breaks within endorsements are indicated: /

**Envelope, front:** [Envelope Fol. 1]

**Envelope, reverse:** [Envelope Fol. 2]

**Illegible text:** [...]

**Illegible strike through:** [---]

**Interlineations:** ^word/s^

This applies to text inserted above a strike through and also to insertions between two words, usually written in the small space above. These are sometimes signalled by way of a carat (^). Where words have been inserted in a different hand to that of the letter's author (or the author's later hand), this is recorded in the footnotes

**Lacunae:** [...obscuring factor...]

Lacunae occur when words or characters are obscured or missing. Physical obstructions such as tearing, ink blots, burns or binding<sup>2</sup> may result in such gaps and are indicated as follows: [...tear...], [...ink blot...], [...burn...], [...binding...], [...seal...], [...mould...] These are also discussed within "Material Features"

Partly discernible words are, in obvious cases, completed for clarity. For example, [esp]ecially. The nature of the obstruction is given in the footnotes. Where entire words are obscured but there is a probable candidate, this is supplied in the footnotes. For example, in a letter from Mary Ann McCracken to Madden which signs off, "Best wishes to Mrs [...tear...]," the missing word is highly likely to be "Madden"

**Letterlocking:** The manner in which a letter was secured. Such methods are listed in section 3.2.4

**Logograms:** &, &c, √, £, \$,

Ampersands, the obsolete "&c" or "&cc" in place of "etcetera," ticks and pound and dollar signs are retained as their intention should be clear to the reader

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<sup>2</sup> In the present context, this refers to the binding technique often employed by Madden to secure a delicate letter's pages together. Unfortunately, Madden's method was rather slapdash, involving strips of thick blue or white paper being pasted along the left hand side of the front page and over the right hand side of the back page, resulting in the first word/s of each new line being obscured on the front page and the last word/s of each line being obscured on the final page.

**Long s ( f): s**

Long “s” is shortened

**Marginalia:** <word /s> or <[sketch]>

Marginalia is often linked to a specific part of the text by way of a symbol e.g. an X-mark

**Misspelling:** [character/s]

Missing characters are inserted in square brackets e.g. “rasberries” becomes “ras[p]berries”

**Misspelling:** word [sic]

Misspelled words, the meaning of which can be discerned from their context, e.g. bleams [sic]. This also applied to erroneous words, such as unintentional repetitions e.g. “I have just received the the [sic] enclosed from Lady Tennent”

**Numerical calculations:** [Numerical calculations]

These figures are not reproduced as they appear disordered and it is often unclear what they refer to

### **Obsolete and Alternative Spellings**

Words which are consistently spelt in an obsolete or alternative manner are retained and are not followed by [sic], provided the meaning is apparent to the reader. Examples include:

apologize: apologise  
sircumstances: circumstance  
surprized: surprised  
realize: realise  
recognizance: recognisance  
shew: show  
shewn: shown  
shown: showed  
chuse: choose  
lye: lie  
stopt: stopped  
cloaths: clothes  
tryal: trial  
writting: writing

untill: until  
family: family  
copp: copy  
comming: coming  
remmembered: remembered  
trifle: trifle  
triffling: trifling  
almost: almost  
appology: apology  
gratefull: grateful  
wellfare: welfare  
usefull: useful  
fellons: felons  
painfull: painful  
appartments: apartments  
risque: risk  
cambrick: cambric  
Killmainham: Kilmainham  
Lower case days of the week: sunday

**Page break:** [Fol. 1a/b] aligned to the right

**Postal marks:** [stamp, ink colour]

For example, [circular date stamp, red] followed by the numerals or text in italics. This is also listed within “Material Features”

**Postal charges:** [postal charge]

The bracketed information is followed by the numerals in italics. This is also listed within “Material Features”

**Strike through (or cancellations):** ~~word/s~~

Madden’s strike throughs are recorded in the footnotes

**Superscript:**

Abbreviated words or names written in superscript are retained. Some examples are listed here:

M<sup>rs</sup>: Mrs  
D<sup>r</sup>: Doctor  
M<sup>r</sup>: Mister

w<sup>d</sup>: would  
s<sup>d</sup>: said  
W<sup>m</sup>: William  
bro<sup>t</sup>: brought  
leg<sup>s</sup>: legacies

Where the meaning of the abbreviation is not be immediately apparent, it will be expanded upon in a footnote.

**Superscription:** [Superscription]

Typically, the name and address of the intended recipient

**Underlining:** word/s

**Unintentionally omitted words:** [word/s]

Words which have been left out of a sentence by mistake e.g. "but if there [is] any thing more I can do for you please let me know." Again, this method is only employed when the missing word/s are apparent

**Watermarks:** The presence of watermarks is recorded in section 3.2.1

**X-Mark:** A symbol used to signal linked marginalia

## 4. The Collected Letters (1796–1861)

### 1. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza McCracken, née McReynolds [Moneymore]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** A typed transcription (within Miscellaneous notes, transcripts and other papers connected with research for Mary Ann McCracken, Newspaper cutting, notes and correspondence relating to research on Joy and McCracken families, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/5)<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** McNeill does not supply a date, however, she does claim this to be Mary Ann's earliest surviving letter. The letter dates between 16 September and early October 1796 as the letter mentions Mr Teeling's arrest (Charles Hamilton Teeling was arrested on 16 September 1796)<sup>2</sup> and that so far, their family was unaffected, suggesting that the letter was written before Henry Joy McCracken's arrest in early October<sup>3</sup>

**Delivery status:** Unknown

**Material features:** Tear

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<sup>1</sup> An edited version can also be found within Mary McNeill, *The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken 1770–1866: A Belfast Panorama* (Dublin: Allen Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1960), 109–10. McNeill references this transcription, "Tennent Papers. Belfast Museum and Art Gallery." However, this letter cannot be found within the Tennent Papers which have since been transferred to PRONI.

<sup>2</sup> "At an early hour on Friday morning last, (September 16 1796) a King's Messenger arrived in town, and under a warrant from a Judge of the King's Bench, the following persons were apprehended on a charge of High Treason: - Mr Samuel Neilson, Mr Henry Haslett, Mr Samuel Kennedy, Mr Rowley Osborne, Mr Thomas Russel, Mr Daniel Shanaghan, and Mr John Young. On the same day, and under the same warrant, were apprehended on a similar charge Mr James Barclay, of Ballymacarret (or Craigavad) Mr Charles Teeing and Mr Samuel Musgrave of Lisburn." Henry Joy, *Historical Collections relating to the Town of Belfast: from the earliest period to the union with Great Britain* (Belfast: G. Berwick, 1817), 442–3. Cited from the *Belfast News Letter*.

<sup>3</sup> The exact date of the arrest varies depending on the source. Madden fixed upon 10 October 1796, a date which has subsequently been widely reproduced. See Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, Second Series, vol. 2 (London: J. Madden & Co., 1843), 404. However, this is not reflected in newspaper sources. For instance, the *Belfast News Letter* of 7 October 1796 states that HJM was "taken up" on "Saturday last," which would place the arrest on 1 October 1796.

My Dear Mrs. John<sup>4</sup>

I rec<sup>d</sup> yours last night<sup>5</sup> & am very sorry to hear of the illness of your head & eyes but beg you will wave all ceremony with me & never write to me when it is attended with the slightest pain or injury to yourself, as yet we have met with no misfortune, tho numbers of people have been taken up here this family has escaped & as you may always allow a great deal for exaggeration you should not suffer yourself to be alarmed by every idle rumour, you will be sorry to hear that your favourite Mr. Teeling<sup>6</sup> is among the prisoners confined in the Donegall Arms,<sup>7</sup> but I believe there is nothing against him - Your daughter Ann still continues improving & increasing in everybodys esteem and affection—<sup>8</sup> I am glad to observe what energy appears to be the predominant feature in her character which I think is the firmest foundation to build on, and she has got a double tooth seemingly without either pain or sickness & will soon get another, you forget to say anything about your son.<sup>9</sup> I hope he is thriving well & that he may be as fine a child as Ann. John thinks he will be handsomer and has a

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<sup>4</sup> Eliza J. McCracken, née McReynolds (1778–3 July 1825), MAM's sister-in-law who married John McCracken Junior on 27 July 1795.

<sup>5</sup> Missing letter, Eliza McCracken [Money more] to MAM [Belfast], c. September 1796.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Hamilton Teeling "CHT" (1778–14 August 1848), United Irishman, linen merchant, journalist and author. Founder of *The Ulster Magazine*, *The Newry Examiner* and *The Northern Herald*. His memoirs, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* (1828) and its sequel, published in 1832, attest to his involvement with the United Irishmen.

<sup>7</sup> The Donegall Arms, an inn located at Castle Place, Belfast.

<sup>8</sup> Ann McCracken (179620–June 1833), the eldest child of Eliza and John McCracken Junior. In August 1830, Ann married the Scotsman Dr Ninian Hill. They had one son, Ninian Hill Junior (b. 1830/1).

<sup>9</sup> Eliza and John McCracken Junior's infant son, who was presumably born in 1796. According to McNeill's "Genealogy of the Joy and McCracken Families," four of their sons were born after 1801, while no date of birth is recorded for their son William. Therefore, it is possible that this son was William or perhaps a child that died in infancy. See McNeill, *Life*, fold-out genealogical chart.

better mouth, however beauty is but a trifle, but at the same time a very agreeable trifle<sup>10</sup>

Wm<sup>11</sup> & Mrs. McCracken<sup>12</sup> went [to] Ball[y]walter from Dunover [sic] where they had been for this fortnight past so I cant tell when she may want her little articles but think it probable alarming times may cause her to want them sooner than she should do tho we had a letter from Wm today in which he says she still continues very well – My Father seems to be recovering ST<sup>13</sup> very slowly, the rest of the family are well & in tolerable spirits, they all join in affectionate regards with yours sincerely

M.A.McC.

*Address torn away except for*

Moneymore  
by Newry

*this letter from the Tennent Collection*

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<sup>10</sup> John McCracken Junior (6 October 1772–1 April 1834), MAM's younger brother, owner of a cotton spinning business and a shipping company, spirit merchant, freemason, painter, art collector and yachtsman.

<sup>11</sup> William McCracken (9 December 1765–7 June 1814), MAM's elder brother, cotton manufacturer, freemason, member of the 1st Company of the Belfast Volunteers and United Irishman.

<sup>12</sup> Rose Ann McCracken, née McGlathery (1770–1833), haberdasher who married William McCracken in 1791. Of their three children, only one survived infancy; John William McCracken (22 July 1801–28 October 1878). Sometime around 1816, Rose Ann remarried William Cairncross (b. 1785), a Belfast accountant.

<sup>13</sup> McNeill's shorthand to indicate a strikethrough.

**2. Henry Joy<sup>1</sup> [Dublin] to Henry Joy McCracken<sup>2</sup> [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 7 November 1796

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/114

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by the sender Henry Joy. The recipient, Henry Joy McCracken, added a reply in pencil which was redelivered to Henry Joy

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, fold letterlocking

Dear Henry

[Fol. 1a]

I arrived here late last night from Belfast where I left all your family well - [Y]our sisters intend coming up in the course of this week to see you - Is there any ^thing^ you wish for that I can supply you with[?] Let me know if there is - Inform me how you are, that I may be able to assure your friends that you are tolerably recovered from your indisposition -  
yours H: Joy

Dublin Monday

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<sup>1</sup> Counsellor Henry Joy (7 January 1766–6 June 1838), of Temple Street, Dublin, cousin of HJM and siblings. Barrister and later, judge.

<sup>2</sup> Henry “Harry” Joy McCracken (31 August 1767–17 July 1798), of Belfast, member of the Belfast Company of Volunteers, United Irishman, Freemason and elder brother of MAM. He was arrested in early October 1796 on charges of High Treason and initially imprisoned in Dublin’s Newgate Prison. Some some weeks later he was moved to Kilmainham Gaol where he remained until he and his brother, William McCracken, were granted bail on 8 December 1797. He lead the rebels at the unsuccessful Battle of Antrim on 7 June 1798, after which he and some of his men went into hiding. HJM was arrested and taken to Carrickfergus Gaol on 7 July 1798. Nine days later he was transferred to the Ann Street Artillery Barrack. His trial, court martial and execution were all carried out on 17 July 1798. He left behind an infant daughter named Maria whom the family took into their care.

7 Nov.

[HJM's reply, pencil]

Dr Harry

I am at present in  
excellent health but most  
closely & indeed rigorously

confined, denied the use of  
pen[,] ink or paper<sup>3</sup> or the  
conversation of any living  
creature, the Keeper &  
turn keys excepted, who  
find me every thing I  
wish for. I much fear  
the girls will be denied  
admittance -<sup>4</sup> Yours truly  
H<sup>y</sup> J. M<sup>c</sup>C

[Fol. 1b]

2 O[']Clock monday<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription, Henry Joy's hand]  
M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Superscription, HJM's hand, pencil]  
M<sup>r</sup> H: Joy

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<sup>3</sup> In Madden's transcriptions he adds "(though obtained by stealth)" in reference to the pencil with which HJM had written his reply. See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 410–11 and Richard Robert Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98* (Glasgow: Cameron, Ferguson & Co., undated), 19.

<sup>4</sup> HJM's sisters, MAM and Margaret McCracken.

<sup>5</sup> That the day was Monday confirms that this letter was written on 7 November 1796.

<sup>6</sup> "H Joy Dublin/ 7 Nov with/ H.J.M<sup>c</sup>C[']s reply."

### 3. Ann McCracken<sup>1</sup> [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Dublin]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source 1:** Robert Magill Young ed., *Ulster in '98: Episodes and Anecdotes* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co., Limited, 1893), 93<sup>2</sup>

**Source 2:** McNeill, *Life*, 114–115. This transcription is referenced, “Young, R.M. MSS Belfast Museum and Art Gallery”<sup>3</sup>

**Date:** 16 November 1796

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** Unknown

#### Source 1: Young’s transcription

BELFAST, Nov. 16th, 1796.

DEAR MARY, –

I wrote your sister the 14th;<sup>4</sup> but as I got a frank,<sup>5</sup> I thought you would be glad to hear from us as often as possible. I was sorry to find by John’s<sup>6</sup> letter to his wife that you don’t like Dublin, tho’ I was sure it would be the case; but I hop’d your seeing Harry and that perhaps you might get some of your muslins sold, would partly reconcile you to it. There was five taken up yesterday and sent to Carrick on a bad

---

<sup>1</sup> Ann McCracken née Joy (1730–25 May 1814), of Belfast, daughter of Margaret Joy née Martin and Francis Joy, founder of the *Belfast News Letter*. Ann ran a milliner shop on Belfast’s High Street before marrying Captain John McCracken. Ann was mother to seven children including MAM.

<sup>2</sup> A short extract from this letter can also be found within Anna McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken, Sister of Henry Joy McCracken,” in *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*, ed. Robert Magill Young (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co. Limited, 1896), 183.

<sup>3</sup> The R.M. Young Collection is currently housed within PRONI, however, this letter no longer remains amongst these documents as an extensive search of the collection revealed.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, Mrs Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Margaret McCracken [Dublin], 14 November 1796.

<sup>5</sup> Ann must have acquired a free postal frank which, at the time, were intended for official business only but the high cost of postage led to widespread abuse.

<sup>6</sup> John McCracken Junior who, along with Edward Bunting, accompanied his sisters on their trip to Dublin.

woman's oath<sup>7</sup> – Joseph Cuthbert,<sup>8</sup> Tom Storey,<sup>9</sup> poor C. O'Donnell,<sup>10</sup> Clarke to Tom Stewart,<sup>11</sup> and a sadler.<sup>12</sup> This day there was a poor man in faver (*sic*) stole out of his House, and went throw this street calling out a Republick for Ireland, and he was a Republican. He had a hank<sup>f</sup> tyed about his head, and as pale as Death. In a few minutes he had after him a great multitude of soldiers after him. When I look out our window I saw a little officer put his hand to his sword and dam him to hold his tongue. They carried him to the guard house, where, to their great mortification, they found the man deranged...Tho' times are not so pleasant as we could wish them, I hope they will mend; and I have found what I thought to be distressing turn out for good, and we should always trust in Providence that can bring good out of evil.

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<sup>7</sup> Ann McCracken's reference to the five men who were arrested was reported in the *Belfast News Letter* as followed: "ASSASSINATION, November – John Kingsbury, a butcher was assassinated near Drumbridge. A few days afterwards, Joseph Cuthbert, Thomas Potts, Thomas Storey, Charles O'Donnell and John Gordon, all of Belfast were committed to Carrickfergus gaol, charged on oath with entering into a conspiracy to murder." Joy, *Historical Collections relating to the Town of Belfast*, 449. Cited from the *Belfast News Letter*.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Cuthbert (born c.1762), of Belfast, Presbyterian tailor and a leader of the Defenders.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Storey (d.1827), a Belfast printer in business with his brother John Storey (d. 29 June 1798). Both were United Irishmen yet their involvement in the rebellion of 1798 had very different outcomes. Thomas was imprisoned in Belfast but escaped and fled to America where he lived for many years, before returning to Belfast. John was not so lucky. After being found guilty of being a rebel leader at the Battle of Antrim, he was hung and his decapitated head was placed upon a spike above Belfast Market House.

<sup>10</sup> Charles O'Donnell, clerk to Thomas Ludford Stewart.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Ludford Stewart, attorney of Dublin and Belfast.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Redfern, Belfast saddler and United Irishman imprisoned at Kilmainham Gaol from 1 May 1797 until 22 April 1801.

All the family joins me in affe<sup>te</sup> compliments to our friends in  
Kilmainham, and to you, and John, and Peggy,<sup>13</sup> and Mr. Bunting.<sup>14</sup>

And I am, Dear Mary,  
Your affe<sup>te</sup> mother,  
ANN M'CRACKEN.

*(From original MS. in possession of Mr. C. Aitchison, J.P.)*

## Source 2: McNeill's transcription

Dear Mary [*she wrote on November 16th, 1796*]

I wrote your sister the 14th but as I got a Frank I thought you would be glad to hear from us as often as possible. I was sorry to find by John's letter to his wife that you don't like Dublin tho' I was sure it would be the case, but I hoped your seeing Harry and that perhaps you might get some of your Muslins sold would partly reconcile you to it - there was five taken up yesterday and sent to Carrick on a bad woman's Oath - Joseph Cuthbert, Tom Storry...and O'Donnell Clarke and Tom Stewart and a sadler. This day there was a poor man in fever stole out of his house and went through this street calling out for a Republick for Ireland and he was a Republican, he had a hankt tied about his head and as pale as Death. In a few minutes he had after him a great multitude of soldiers - when I looked out our window I saw a little Officer put his hand to his sword and [*order*] him to hold his tongue. They carried him to the Guard house when to their great mortification they found the man deranged of a fever. John does not mention anything about Mr. Bunting, indeed his letters are so short they are not satisfactory. Our friends here are all very attentive to me

---

<sup>13</sup> Margaret "Peggy" McCracken (17 July 1760–11 December 1829), MAM's elder sister with whom she ran a muslin business between 1790 and c. 1815. In later life she kept house for her brother Francis McCracken.

<sup>14</sup> Edward "Atty" Bunting (February 1773–21 December 1843), born in Armagh, musician, collector and publisher of ancient Irish folk music and a founding member of both the Belfast Harp Society (1808–13) and the Irish Harp Society (1819–39). In 1784, at the age of twelve (see Letter 110), he moved to Belfast to become an apprentice to William Ware, the organist of St Anne's Church. There he lived with the McCracken family until 1819 when he married Marianne Chapman and moved to Dublin. The couple had two daughters, Sarah Elizabeth MacRory née Bunting and Mary Ann Wright née Bunting.

and I could do pretty well about your business if I had money to give the weavers and indeed they behave very well. I hope you will try to see as many places as you can while you are in Dublin, and tho' the times are not so pleasant as we could wish them I hope they will mend and I have found, what I thought to be distressing, turn out for good and we should always trust in Providence that can bring good out of evil. I saw Miss Templeton to-day, they are all much the way you left them.<sup>15</sup> The Miss Tombs drank tea with us tonight.<sup>16</sup> Poor Ellen Holmes is very ill they think its the measles.<sup>17</sup> Pray let us hear from you, I thought when you left this I was to hear from you very often – All the family joins me in affectionate complements to our friends at Kilmainham and to you and John and Peggy and Mr. Bunting and am

Dear Mary your affectionate mother Ann McCracken

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<sup>15</sup> Eliza Templeton (1772–24 January 1839), of Orange Grove (later Cranmore House), Belfast. Sister of botanist John Templeton and MAM's closest friend. See Letters 70, 71 and 73 (TCD MS873/108, 110 and 107). Eliza relocated to Bangor following her sister's marriage to Mr McGee of that town. It is possible that she lived with them at their residence. Her death and burial at Bangor is noted in James Black's diary entry of 7 February 1839. See James Black, personal diary, November 1837–October 1844, McKisack deposited genealogical papers, PRONI, D1725/18.

<sup>16</sup> MAM's second cousins, Barbara "Babs" (who married William Hamilton Drummond on 28 February 1801), Mary and Isabella Tomb.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen Holmes, most likely a daughter of MAM's cousin, Mary Holmes (b. 22 November 1755).

**4. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to John McCracken Junior [Belfast]**

**Date:** 13 December 1796

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/113

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, circular date stamp, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

December 13<sup>th</sup> 1796

[Fol. 1a]

Dr John

On Sunday<sup>1</sup> T. Stewart said that he had been with Carhampton<sup>2</sup> about getting Potts<sup>3</sup> out of Jail on bail, & that he had applied for John Gordon<sup>4</sup> which will be complied with if proper application is made, as the only thing that ^may^ prevent it, is whet[h]er or no he wants a fore tooth. [I]f he wants one he will not be liberated - [C]onsult with Frank about who should be got to bail him[;] loose [sic] no time in setting about it[.]<sup>5</sup> Carhampton has sworn neither Storey nor Cuthbert will get out — ^nor need any application be made for them^

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<sup>1</sup> Sunday 11 December 1796.

<sup>2</sup> General Henry Lawes Luttrell (7 August 1737–25 April 1821), 2nd Earl of Carhampton who was Commander-in-Chief to Ireland between 1796 and 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Potts, one of those who had been arrested on suspicion of assassination the previous month and imprisoned in Carrickfergus Gaol. See Letter 3.

<sup>4</sup> John Gordon, Belfast woollen draper, nephew of Samuel Neilson and a United Irishman. Also one of those who had been arrested on suspicion of assassination the previous month and imprisoned in Carrickfergus Gaol. See Letter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Francis “Frank” McCracken (4 June 1762–22 December 1842), MAM’s elder brother, member of the Belfast Company of Volunteers, United Irishman and Belfast-based rope walk and sail cloth factory manager. On 22 August 1798 Francis set sail from Cobh and fled to Jamaica. See Letter 52 (MS873/93) He returned sometime in October 1800.

Yours truly  
High Vol Doe  
Low<sup>r6</sup>

Miss Haslitt died this morn<sup>s</sup> about 12 o[']clock.<sup>7</sup>  
W<sup>m</sup> Martin was taken up this day - [R]emember the  
girls to get the Box of Ointment they promised from  
D<sup>r</sup> Hull for M<sup>rs</sup> N's eyes & send it the first opportunity[.]<sup>8</sup>  
All are well[.]

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Numerical calculations]

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

M<sup>r</sup> John McCracken Jun<sup>r</sup>  
Belfast

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<sup>6</sup> Possibly a code name or nick name. The meaning may have been personal between the siblings.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Haslett (c.1773–13 December 1796), sister of Henry Haslett, HJM's fellow prisoner. Miss Haslett had been in Dublin to visit her brother when she died at the age of twenty-three.

<sup>8</sup> Presumably Mrs Neilson, the wife of United Irishman and editor of *The Northern Star* newspaper, Samuel Neilson (1761–1893), who was also incarcerated at Kilmainham Gaol at this time. MAM supplied Madden with the following description of her character, "Mrs. Neilson was a very superior woman, a most exemplary wife and mother, for whom I had the highest esteem, and continued on terms of intimacy and friendship from 1795, when I first became acquainted with her, until her death. I never saw a family so well regulated, such order and neatness, on such a limited income; and such well trained children, most amiable and affectionate to each other, and so respectful to their mother, and all so happy together, it was quite a treat to spend an evening with them. This excellent woman, esteemed and respected by all who knew here, even by those to whom her husband's political principles were most obnoxious, struggled for her family during her husband's imprisonment and exile and subsequently to his death, altogether for upwards of twelve years, and died in November, 1811, in her forty-eighth year. Her remains were interred at Newtown, Breda. The inscription on her tomb truly describes her to have been, 'A woman, who was an ornament to her sex; who fulfilled, in the most exemplary manner, the duties of a daughter, wife, and mother.'" Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 1, 340.

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>9</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "DE/ 15/ 96."

<sup>10</sup> "13 Decr 96/ H J McCracken."

**5. Henry Joy [Dublin] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** between late November and early December 1796

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/115

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by the sender Henry Joy. The recipient, Henry Joy McCracken, added a reply in pencil which was redelivered to Henry Joy

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Dear Henry

[Fol. 1a]

I had a letter yesterday from Belfast -<sup>1</sup> Your friends are all well. The girls got down safe -<sup>2</sup> They will no doubt be anxious to hear how you are, especially as they mentioned that you were beginning to complain of a rheumatism - I hope I shall be able to tell them that disagreeable complaint has left you - Write with your pencil on this how you are - Mention at the same time if there is any particular accommodation that you would wish for & if it be consistent with the established rules of the prison, I may possibly be able to obtain it for you - At least no exertion of mine shall be wanting - If Books are not at present

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, member of the McCracken family [Belfast] to Henry Joy [Dublin], November or December 1796.

<sup>2</sup> This would suggest that MAM and Margaret McCracken arrived safely back in Belfast after their journey from Dublin. As their brother John McCracken Junior and Bunting are not mentioned, it must be assumed that they travelled unaccompanied. The date of their return can be placed somewhere between late November and early December as HJM wrote to his brother John in Belfast on 13 December asking him to "remember the girls to get the Box of Ointment they promised & send it the first opportunity." Letter 4 (TCD MS873/113). Therefore the letter must have been composed in the interim.

allowed you[,] I think I could obtain that  
indulgence, & will send you any you desire.

Yours H. Joy

Tuesday mor<sup>g</sup>

[HJM's reply, pencil]

[Fol. 1b]

D<sup>r</sup> Henry

I am much  
oblidged [sic] to ^you^ for your kind  
attention to me - [A]t present  
I am in tolerable health  
except the rheumatism  
in my arm but as I  
have every medical assis  
=tance I could wish. I expect  
shortly to be quite clear of  
it - Through the indulgence  
of the Jailer I am allowed  
to be a Sub<sup>r</sup> to a Circulating  
Library - [G]ive my best  
compliments to your sisters[.]

[Superscription, HJM's hand, pencil]  
Counsellor Joy

[Fol. 2a]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription, Henry Joy's hand]  
M<sup>r</sup> McCracken

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>4</sup>

[Faded text, pencil]

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<sup>3</sup> "from/ Counsellor Joy/ '96."

<sup>4</sup> "H.J.M<sup>c</sup>C/ from Counsellor Joy/ 1796[,] 97 &/ 1803."

**6. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann and Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 10 January 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/112

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Mrs Neilson

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, lined paper, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand, pencil]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Killmainham 10 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1797

D<sup>r</sup> Sisters

I take the opportunity of writting you by our very good friend M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson, who can tell you our situation better than it is possible for me to describe, indeed[,] there can be very little variety of incident in a Jail[,] one day must be an almost perfect picture of an age where we are shut out from the World. The only variety that may arise here must be in our own ideas, & that of each other, or our visitors, however[,] we contrive to pass the time as pleasantly as you can imagine considering that we think as little of the North as possible, for the comparison is nothing in favour of the Capitol, except M<sup>r</sup> Dixon<sup>2</sup> & family (who will always, & in every place be remmembered with veneration by us), they are a set of Gasconaders,<sup>3</sup> & in every respect unlike Northerners. The other day I wrote Frank by Ja<sup>s</sup> Haffey<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Letter from H.J.M<sup>c</sup>C."

<sup>2</sup> James Dixon (d. c.1824), of Kilmainham, a Catholic tanning merchant and United Irishman who lived near the jail. He hosted many of the prisoner's visitors such as the wives of Samuel Neilson and Henry Haslett.

<sup>3</sup> Boastful talkers.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, HJM [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Francis McCracken [Belfast], January 1797. This was hand delivered by James Haffey, a Belfast tailor.

telling him of a note I rec<sup>d</sup> from H<sup>y</sup> Joy with which I got also [Fol. 1b]  
a pot of Ras[p]berries,<sup>5</sup> the person who call'd on him was Bell  
Martin<sup>6</sup> that has sworn against those who were committed  
to Carrickfergus - Since that[,] I have been informed that  
the two men who swore against T. Richardson<sup>7</sup> & I have  
been sent on board a Tender. I suppose, or rather  
I was confidential[ly] informed, that Gov.<sup>nt</sup> dispaired [sic] of their  
evidence being worth anything as they had already perjured  
themselves by deserting & no county Antrim Jury would  
listen to them - [W]hen I wrote Frank I was just wakened  
out a good sleep to write as Haffey was just setting off & had  
hardly time to open may [sic] eyes untill he must go, so  
I suppose very little sense could be made of it, as I  
can scarcely recollect one word of it - I still continue  
to follow the directions D<sup>r</sup> Stokes left for me, which

I think are of a good deal of use.<sup>8</sup> [A]t the time he was [Fol. 2a]  
ordered not to get visiting, Sec<sup>y</sup> Cooke<sup>9</sup> understood that  
I was so ill that I could not put on my own Cloathes [sic]  
but I should have first told you that he was denied  
admittance, altho in a day or two after he was appointed  
a Cap<sup>t</sup> of Yeomen - Being very bad at putting com=  
=pliments into words or making use of terms of affection, tho  
not quite destitute of regard for both friends & acqu[ain]tances[,]<sup>10</sup>  
I request you will supply my neglect, therefore [...tear...]<sup>11</sup>  
not mention any name lest an omission might argue  
a disrespect -

D<sup>r</sup> Sisters I remain the same

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<sup>5</sup> Missing letter, Henry Joy [Dublin] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin], January 1797.

<sup>6</sup> Belle Martin of Portaferry, a barmaid at the Benjamin Franklin Tavern in Belfast's Sugar House Entry. A notorious government spy and informer.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Richardson, Tyrone magistrate and United Irishman.

<sup>8</sup> Whitely Stokes (1763–13 April 1845), physician, fellow of TCD and United Irishman.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Cooke (1755–15 March 1820), English administrator, politician, pamphleteer and Under-Secretary of State in Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>11</sup> Most likely, "I do."

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

N.B. my father & mother must not be understood  
in the above, because it should always be understood  
that they are ~~they are~~ certainly the first in my affection  
& I have not even heard [if] they are well[.]

[Fol. 2b]

My fellow prisoners[,] knowing that I am writting you[,] desire ↵  
to be remmembered, that is Sam![,] Cha<sup>s</sup> & Ja<sup>s</sup>12 -

[Numerical calculations]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>13</sup>

[Superscription]

Mesd.<sup>mes</sup> Marg<sup>t</sup> & Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast

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<sup>12</sup> Presumably, Samuel Neilson, Charles Teeling and James Bartley.

<sup>13</sup> "Jan 10 97 Kilmainham/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**7. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann and Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 29 January 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/153

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by unknown bearer

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a which is covered with a white paper patch on Fol. 2b, creasing tear covered with a white paper patch on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 29<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 97

[Fol. 1a]

D<sup>r</sup> Sisters

I take this opportunity (as I know it is perfectly safe) of letting you know that we are all very well here, M<sup>r</sup> Dixon & family desire to [be] remember'd to you; this minute I have left off playing ball with him to write you - [I]n <sup>1</sup>Mary[']s last letter<sup>2</sup> she seemed surprised that M<sup>r</sup> Teeling<sup>3</sup> got leave to visit Charles[.]<sup>4</sup> There is nothing surprising in that, as I believe just now that Gov<sup>t</sup> would wish to conciliate if they could get the Catholicks [sic] to come forward for emancipation, but that won't do as they are only Irishmen —<sup>5</sup> The fatigue of Ball playing

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<sup>1</sup> ^[^ [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin].

<sup>3</sup> Luke Teeling (c.1740–28 October 1822), born in County Louth, Catholic linen merchant based in Lisburn between 1770 and 1798, before his mill was demolished by Orangemen. An active advocate of Catholic rights, he was arrested on 16 June 1798 and imprisoned at various locations until his release in 1802. He married Mary Taaffe on 6 April 1771 and they had nine children, including Bartholomew and CHT.

<sup>4</sup> ^X X X X X X ^ [Unknown ed., ink]. Six X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

<sup>5</sup> ^[^ [Unknown ed., ink].

has

made me incapable of writting you very correctly.

[Fol. 1b]

However[,] I have nothing to say only to give

my wishes of wellfare to all friends, Sam<sup>l</sup>

Cha<sup>s</sup> & James send their love to you - I

shall be more attentive in writting you next

opportunity - I remain yours aff<sup>y</sup>

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Marg<sup>t</sup> & Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Belfast

**8. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary and Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 15 March 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/111

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by John McCracken Junior

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red and black wafer seal on Fol. 2b,<sup>1</sup> watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 15 Mar: six months of [Fol. 1a]  
captivity

Dear Sisters &<sup>cc</sup>

I should have written often to you all this some time past but was not every in spirits when an opportunity offered, not that confinement is the least uneasy to me but from a severe fit of the Rh[e]umatism, which is now entirely gone & I am in better health than I have known this very long time[,] altho I am not yet as well I expect for I find myself getting stranger every day[.] John can tell you particulars. I am very glad to see the yeows<sup>2</sup> ^with you^ are beginning to feel their degraded state, & that they are obliged to advertise themselves as about to become honest, here they are quite a different sort of people, many of them professing the most liberal sentiments & acting up to their professions - We are likely to get a new Jailor in place of Mr Ware,<sup>3</sup> on account of an escape made from this by three prisoners - When you

---

<sup>1</sup> The positioning of the black wafer seal over the red one suggests that either this letter was sealed twice on the same occasion by HJM or that it was originally sealed with a red wafer by HJM and resealed with a black wafer by MAM when sending it to Madden.

<sup>2</sup> Yeomen.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Ware, the jailor, whom Madden refers to as "Mr. Weir." See Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98*, 15.

see Miss Templeton[,] give my warmest thanks to her for [Fol. 1a]  
the interest she takes in our concerns, tell her how  
lazy I am in writting - I[,] at present[,] cannot write  
as John is here & going so soon away that a thousand<sup>4</sup>  
come in my head at once & quite confuse me, that  
I can hardly even remember to give you all my  
love - May god bless you all -

Hy J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Fol. 2b, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> & Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
& C<sup>o</sup>

Belfast

[Endorsement, Madden's hand, pencil]<sup>5</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Missing word. Possibly, "thoughts," or "things."

<sup>5</sup> "H. J. M<sup>c</sup> / Cracken's / letters."

<sup>6</sup> "15 March 97 / H J MC."

**9. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 16 March 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/151

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums, lined paper, white paper strip binding pages, double stitched black thread binding, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 4b which is covered with a white paper patch, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>2</sup>

March 16<sup>th</sup> 97

Dear Harry,

Since I wrote last I could find but ~~one~~ ^another^ opportunity, and not liking the mode of conveyance[,] did not take advantage of it, you are not there[-] fore to suppose that the silence of your friends is oweing [sic] either to indifference or neglect but mere[-] ly to want of opportunities. We were very uneasy ~~on your account~~ ^about you^ for some time, but are happy to find by the accounts that you are getting better. John is just arrived and delights us all by the agreeable intelligence he brings us of your

---

<sup>1</sup> "from Miss Mary McCracken to her brother Henry."

<sup>2</sup> "(Extracts proving progressive change of opinions/ probably owing to the peoples['] apparent Union & strength)."

On the basis of this comment, I have deemed the forthcoming square brackets to have been inserted in MAM's later hand as a way of highlighting these "extracts."

mended health –<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>There cannot be more extraordinary  
Revolutions in politics than what have taken place  
^of late^ in the minds of many people here - A Ci Devant<sup>5</sup>  
Major of the Belfast Volunteers, and a Cousin of our own<sup>6</sup>  
told Frank last night that a friend had shewed him  
the United Irishmen[']s test,<sup>7</sup> that he approved high[ly]<sup>8</sup>  
of it, and would not have the least objection to take it  
as he had done more violent things often before[.]

~~but~~ [W]hether this is the effect of fear or conviction I shall [Fol. 1b]  
not pretend to determine, but it is very evident that  
since the people have appeared to be the strongest  
party their cause has gained many friends[,] ~~ma-~~  
~~ny~~ ^some^ of them I suppose from principle - Our female  
relations,<sup>9</sup> whom you may remember came from Eng-  
land in summer so brimful of loyalty, are so  
much changed in their Politics as to quarrel  
with their Aunts every time they meet, and their

---

<sup>3</sup> John McCracken Junior had just returned to Belfast from visiting his brother at Kilmainham Gaol. A reference to his visit can be found within Letter 8 (TCD MS873/111).

<sup>4</sup> ^[^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>5</sup> Former.

<sup>6</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X Mr Jas Joy[,] Brother to Counsellor Joy>

James Joy (12 June 1763–1812), who at that time held a commission in the Yeomanry.

<sup>7</sup> The United Irishmen's test ran as follows: "In the awful presence of God, I, [name], do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland. I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards or punishments shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs, done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation." Josef L. Altholz, *Selected Documents in Irish History* (New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 70.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by an ink blot.

<sup>9</sup> Referring to their cousin Elinor Tomb (b. 8 November 1749), and her daughters Barbara, Mary and Isabella.

Father<sup>10</sup> is in principle almost up,<sup>11</sup> and all the children belonging to that family are as good republickans [sic] as ever, and poor Geo<sup>12</sup> is so much disliked by the Linen hall St<sup>13</sup> boys for being a Croppey<sup>14</sup> and a united Irishman that they won[']t play with him - A certain article<sup>15</sup> which was the only cause of uneasiness to you at the time you were taken up, was concealed in the house till the late strict search, which has been made about town, and not daring to keep it any longer, we gave it in charge to a man in whom we had confidence, who buried it in the Country, so that its being found can't injure any person[.]

The black men<sup>16</sup> have been visiting some houses in town [Fol. 2a] last night and taking<sup>17</sup> arms out of them, and it is generally thought that<sup>18</sup> ere long we will be out ^of^ the King's peace, the General here says that he will put us under martial law directly. There were six prisoners bro<sup>t</sup> ~~in~~ to Town this evening for<sup>19</sup> refusing to swear allegiance

---

<sup>10</sup> David Tomb (d. 1799), husband of Elinor Tomb. A Belfast merchant and property owner.

<sup>11</sup> To be 'up' implied holding United Irish principles.

<sup>12</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X George Tomb>

George Tomb (d. 17 March 1812), son of David and Elinor Tomb.

<sup>13</sup> Linen Hall Street, Belfast.

<sup>14</sup>A nickname given to rebels, derived from the style in which they wore their hair. The United Irishmen borrowed this hairstyle from French Revolutionaries who cut their hair short in order to distinguish themselves from powdered wigged aristocrats.

<sup>15</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X a gun>

<sup>16</sup> Irish historian Edna Fitzhenry explains that "the 'black men' were parties of United men who, with blackened faces, carried out raids for arms." Edna Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1936), 80.

<sup>17</sup> "and, taking" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>18</sup> "thought, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>19</sup> "evening, for" [comma omitted (ed.)].

and came in undismay'd singing Erin go Brath[.]<sup>20</sup>  
It would equally please and surprize Mr Russel[1]<sup>21</sup> to  
hear that a certain Botanical friend of ours whose<sup>22</sup>  
whose steady and inflexible mind is invulnerable to  
any other weapon but reason, & only to be moved by convic[-]  
tion[,] has at last turned his attention from the vegetable  
to ^the^ human species and after pondering the matter for  
some months, is at last determined to become what  
he ought to have been long ago.<sup>23</sup> Frank proposed him at the  
last meeting of the society, and I hope his sisters  
will ^soon^ follow so good an example.<sup>24</sup> I am glad John is come

---

<sup>20</sup> "Erin go Brath" (Ireland Forever), an Irish folk song.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Russell (21 November 1767–21 October 1803), born in Drommahane, County Cork. Anglican army officer who served in India from the age of fifteen with the 52nd Regiment and later with the 64th foot Regiment in Belfast. A devoutly religious man, he studied to become a clergyman but failed to be ordained, despite travelling to the Isle of Man for this purpose. He strongly advocated the abolition of slavery and was an amateur geologist. In 1790 he befriended Theobald Wolfe Tone, the McCrackens and various other Belfast radicals. He was a founding member of the Society of United Irishmen in both Belfast and Dublin. In 1794 he became Librarian of the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge. As well as writing for the *Northern Star*, he penning "A Letter to the People of Ireland" in 1796 and was arrested in September of that year. He was incarcerated in both Dublin's Newgate Prison and Fort George, Inverness. Upon his release in 1802, he travelled to Paris, then returned to Ireland to assist with Robert Emmet's rising of 1803. Following its failure, he was captured and imprisoned at Downpatrick where he was convicted fo High Treason and executed. See James Quinn, "Thomas Russell," in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, vol. 8, 662–64.

<sup>22</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X the late John Templeton>

<sup>23</sup> John Templeton (1766–15 December 1825), of Orange Grove (later, Cranmore House), Belfast. United Irishman, naturalist, member of the Belfast Natural History Society, the Belfast Literary Society, the Belfast Historical Society, the Belfast Society for the Promotion of Knowledge and associate of the Linnean Society. He was a founder of the Belfast Academical Institution and a subscriber to the Belfast Harp Society. From childhood, Templeton was a close friend of the McCrackens and it is alleged that MAM was bridesmaid at his wedding to Katherine Johnston on 21 December 1799. See Patricia M. Byrne, "Templeton, John," in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, ed. James McGuire and James Quinn, vol. 9 (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 303. Sixteen of Templeton's journals are housed within the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's Library and Documents Archive, (BELUM.S56).

<sup>24</sup> ^ [MAM later ed., ink].

home for more reasons than one. John Gordon<sup>25</sup> did not behave as well as possible while he was away[,] endeavouring to frighten Mrs McCracken<sup>26</sup> by telling her that he would make John suffer when the revolu[-]tion

would commence and always praising McIlveen<sup>27</sup> at John[']s expense, but what was still worse, he beat the servant maid one night when Mrs McCracken was in our house, and hurt her so much that she had to be bled and was very ill for several days. I mention this as I understand he is high in confidence -  
<sup>28</sup>I have a great curiosity to visit some female societies in this Town (though I should like them better were they promiscuous as there can be no other reason for ~~keeping~~ ^having^ them separate but keeping the women in the dark, and certainly it is equally ungenerous and uncandid to make tools of [them] without confiding in them.) I wish to know ~~whether~~ ^if^ they have any rational ideas of liberty and equality for themselves or whe[-]ther they are contented with their present abject & dependent situation, degraded by custom and education beneath the rank in society in which they were originally placed; for if we suppose woman was created ~~for~~ a companion for man, she must of course be his equal in understanding, as without equality of ^mind^ there can be no friendship and without

[Fol. 2b]

friendship there can be no happiness in society[.] [I]f indeed we were to reason from analogy[,] we would rather be inclined to suppose that women were destined for superior understandings, as

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>25</sup> John Gordon of Belfast, Protestant woollen draper, United Irishman and nephew of Samuel Neilson. His brother Alexander worked in partnership with him and was also a United Irishman.

<sup>26</sup> Presumably, Eliza McCracken, John McCracken Junior's wife.

<sup>27</sup> Gilbert McIlveen (d. 1833), linen merchant and founding member of Belfast's Society of United Irishmen.

<sup>28</sup> ^[^ [MAM later ed., ink].

their bodies being more delicately framed and less  
 fit for labour than that of man[.] [D]oes it not na-  
 turally follow that they were more peculiarly  
 intended for study and retirement, as to any  
 necessary connection between strength of mind &  
 strength of body, a little examination will soon over-  
 turn that idea.<sup>29</sup> I have only to place the M<sup>c</sup>Combs,  
 Val Joice and our worthy Sovereign<sup>30</sup> opposite to M<sup>r</sup>  
 O'Connor[,]<sup>31</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Tone<sup>32</sup> and our dear departed Friend  
 D<sup>r</sup> Bell (three little men possessing much genius)  
 to shew the futility of such an argument, but to return[,]  
 is it not almost time for the clouds of error and pre-  
 judice to disperse and that ~~the other half of the human~~ ^the female  
 part of the Creation^  
~~species~~ ^as well as the male^ should throw off[f] the fetters with which  
 they have been so long  
 mentally bound and conscious of the dignity  
 and importance of their nature[,]  
 rise to the situation for which  
 they were designed, as great events at least display  
 if they do not create great abilities. I hope the present

Era will produce some women of sufficient talents to inspire [Fol. 3b]  
 the rest with a genuine love of Liberty and just sense of her  
 value, without which their efforts will be impotent and un-  
 availing, their enthusiasm momentary as a glittering

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<sup>29</sup> ^] ^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>30</sup> George William Frederick or George III (4 June 1738–29 January 1820), King of Great Britain and King of Ireland until the union of 1801 when his title changed to King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur O'Connor (4 July 1763–25 April 1852), of County Cork, United Irishman, a member of Parliament in the Irish House of Commons from 1790 until 1795 and High Sheriff of Cork. He was imprisoned at Fort George and exiled to France upon his release in 1802. Subsequently, he became a general in Napoleon's army and mayor of Le Bignon-Mirabeau. See Jane Hayter Hames, *Arthur O'Connor, United Irishman* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone (20 June 1763–19 November 1798), barrister, founding member of the Society of the United Irishmen and secretary of the Catholic Committee. Tone went into exile in America in 1795, proceeding to France as an undercover diplomat the following year. There, he succeeded in persuading the Directory (the French system of government then in place), to support the rebellion in Ireland. See Marianne Elliott, *Wolfe Tone* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

bubble which bursts, while it rises, and as every discarded affection leaves a damp and melancholy void in the mind where it has been ^once^ entertained, so those who are flaming for liberty to day without understanding it (for where it is understood it must be desired as without Liberty we can neither possess virtue or happiness) may perhaps tomorrow endeavour to damp the ardour and cool the courage of others when they begin to reflect on the danger which the[y] incur and the little advantage which they derive from it. I do not hold out the motive of interest [---] as an inducement for man to be just, as I think the reign of prejudice is nearly at an end, and that the truth and justice of our cause alone is suffici[-] ent to support it, as there can be no argument produced in favour of the slavery of woman that has ^not^ been used in favour of general slavery and which have been successfully combatted by many

able writers. I therefore hope it is reserved for the Irish nation to strike out something new and ^to^ shew an example of candour generosi[-] ty and justice superior to any that have gone before them - [A]s it is about two o[']clock in the morning I have only time to bid you good night - [B]elieve me to ^be^ yours affection[ately]<sup>33</sup>

[Fol. 4a]

Mary

Do not forget to remember us affecty [...tear...]<sup>34</sup>

Neilson[,] Bartly and Teeling -

As so much of what I have written would appear to be mere bombast or fanciful speculations to those who are under the influence of common prejudices[,] it is not to such I write, but to one whom I suppose to be capable of forming an opinion from his own experience without consulting the stupid multi=tude of common thinkers -

Do not neglect the use of your french dictionary and grammar - John Templeton keeps ^his^ always either in his

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<sup>33</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>34</sup> Most likely, "to."

hand or his pocket[.]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 4b]

M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Kilmainham

Dublin

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>35</sup>

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "1897 - for D<sup>r</sup> Madden." The date is incorrect, most likely owing to the fact that MAM was writing this endorsement in the 1840s. The correct date is 1797.

<sup>36</sup> "Russell."

**10. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 26 March 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/150

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, lined paper, blue partial folio attached to Fol. 1a by Madden, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a, partial attachment]<sup>2</sup>

26 March 1797

Dear Harry,

<sup>3</sup>The intelligence contained in your letter to [Fol. 1a] John fills us with a variety of contradictory sensations, hope and fear, pleasure and anxiety alternatively take possession of our minds and render us most restlessly impatient,<sup>4</sup> not that we would feel the slightest degree of uneasiness if [...] [...] Law and Justice were [...] synonymous terms or if even our present laws[,] bad as they are, were to be administered with candour and impartiality, but our oppressors are so atrociously wicked that there is no enormity of which they do not seem capable, and may perhaps have recourse

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<sup>1</sup> "From Miss Mary McCracken of Belfast to her brother/ Henry McCracken confined in Kilmainham Jail dated/ March 26<sup>th</sup> 1797/ 26 March 1797."

<sup>2</sup> The upper part of Fol. 1a has been pasted over and a blue piece of paper attached by Madden. Upon this he has written his endorsement and also the first two lines of the letter which the blue paper is obscuring.

<sup>3</sup> ^[^ [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, HJM [Kilmainham Gaol] to John McCracken Junior [Belfast], c. March 1797.

MAM and the rest of the household were aware of the contents of HJM's letter to his brother, suggesting that his letters were read by other, or perhaps all, family members.

to private if public means should fail, however[,] they can go no farther than they are permitted and who can tell how short their Reign may be, as all things are under the direction of a Being infinitely wise & powerful, who can bring good out of evil and who orders all things for the best (however they may appear to our finite comprehension)[.] [L]et us not be terrified [sic] or dismayed, but repose ^with^ unlimited confidence where we can never be deceived. [I]f the compleat [sic] Union<sup>5</sup>

of Ireland should demand the blood of some of her best Patriots to cement it, they will not shrink from their duty, but meet their fate equally unappall'd whether it be on the scaffold or in the field, convinced that in the end the cause of Union and of Truth must prevail and that happiness flowing from Liberty and Peace will ultimately bless [...] the united efforts of their Country - [E]very act of coercion on the part of government[,] like the effect of pressure on the arch[,] serves but to bind the ^people^ more firmly together and render them an example of [...] ^wisdom^ and moderation worthy [of] the imitation of all future generations[.] [D]o you think we may look for the same degree of patience and forbearance from them in prosperity which they ^have^ shewn in adversity. I fear not, the unexampled inhumanity and repeated irritations they have experienced will I ~~doubt~~ ^fear^ instigate them to revenge and render it difficult to restrain them from [...] returning with interest the evils they have so far endured -<sup>6</sup> Your friends here think you ought to employ Counsellor Joy, both on account of his relationship and his attention to you (I am sorry John was so very diffident as never to

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<sup>5</sup> When quoting from this letter, McNeill clarifies that the word 'Union' "is frequently used before 1800 to denote the union of all Irishmen in Ireland." McNeill, *Life*, 138.

<sup>6</sup> ^]^[Unknown ed., ink].

[Note, John McCracken Junior's hand]<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

call on him when last in Dublin) things are now come to such a crisis that it cannot injure the Counl<sup>r</sup> to undertake your cause, but would rather be of use to him which is an additional reason why you should [... ] ^retain^ him - [T]he Bundle of bed cloaths that were sent you conta[in]<sup>8</sup> a new pair of blankets[,] an old under one[,] a [...tear...] quilt lined with diaper[,] two pillow cases[,] one bolster case[,] one pair pantalo[on]s & a pair of red slippers - [Y]ou would do well to have your bed and other furniture packed up and sent to some friend to be forwarded down as you will require ^to get^ every accommodation of that sort in Carrick - [D]o not forget the french Dictionary[,] syntax and grammar all [of] which are very necessary at present as almost every body in Belfast are learning French. Remember us as usual and believe me to be yours affectly

Mary.

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>9</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>10</sup>

[Superscription]

M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

---

<sup>7</sup> <I spoke to Pollock about M<sup>r</sup> Kennedy – he/ thinks him very good & was present as his/ entrée,/ Yrs Jack> The men referred to are John Pollock (d. 1825), attorney and crown solicitor and Samuel Kennedy, a printer at the *Northern Star*.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>9</sup> "Belfast 26 Mar 97/ M. A McCracken/ to H J. McCracken/ in Kilmainham/ in expectation of his/ being sent to/ Carrickfergus/ & full of mor-/alising & praise of the Irish men/ perhaps then/ deserved."

<sup>10</sup> "it was then/ expected Henry/ should be/ sent to Car-/rick to be tri-/ed."

**11. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 8 April 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/116

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by James Haffey on 12 April as stated in Letters 12 and 13 (TCD MS873/117 and 152) despite the fact that Henry Joy McCracken states within this letter that it will be delivered by John Hughes

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

K. Basti[<sup>1</sup>]le<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Ap<sup>l</sup> 97. or 1<sup>st</sup> day of 7<sup>[th]</sup> mo[nth] of captivity [Fol. 1a]  
D<sup>r</sup> Mary

[A]ltho we are far more secluded from the world than we formerly were, yet we live every whit as well if not better, nor are we now afraid of being seen together[.] [A]ll the improper behaviour of our present keeper we impute to Archer,<sup>2</sup> who it is thought wishes to go snacks[.]<sup>3</sup> [A]ll your ^letters^ I rec<sup>d</sup>[,] as we can still find ways & means to get as much communication as is usefull[.] [N]ot having had much time to write, as I did not know of this conveyance [sic] untill this minute & only two or<sup>4</sup> three to write[.]<sup>5</sup> I must refer

---

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the Bastille Saint-Antoine fortress in Paris which was used as a prison by the monarchy until it was stormed during the French Revolution in 1789. It is perhaps from this period that the jail's alternative name "The Bastille of Ireland" derives.

<sup>2</sup> William Henry Archer, a sheriff of Dublin city in 1797.

<sup>3</sup> "To go snacks," meaning to share or divide equally. See Jack Lynch, "A Guide to Eighteenth-Century English Vocabulary," accessed 15 December 2016, <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/C18Guide.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> "two, or" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> ^For all information ^ [Madden ed., pencil].

you to J<sup>6</sup> Hug[h]es who will leave this tomorrow, & has been with us every day since he came here[.]<sup>7</sup> H Joy called on me last sunday, to enquire if I had any commands.<sup>8</sup> Mr Stubbs<sup>9</sup> was here & I applied to him

to get him<sup>10</sup> in, which he would have complied with, but [Fol. 1b]  
the Jailor took care to send [him] away in the mean time, as he bleams [sic] my washwoman for carrying a note to the Evens post<sup>11</sup> respecting our treatment, & has also denied her admittance[.] [T]his turned out to our advantage as we complained to the High Sheriff & he ordered the Jailor to find us in washing, for which we do not pay - [T]here is still a strong probability of our going to the North, but not for tryal, only for show, & to be arraigned as they could hardly [---] arraign & try us at one assizes, as we must have a copy of our inditement four clear days before our tryal which can't be given untill the bills are found[.] [G]ive my love to all the family, [the] Miss Templetons & to Atty<sup>12</sup> - [M]ay god bless you all  
Henry —

---

<sup>6</sup> ^ohn^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>7</sup> John Hughes, Belfast bookseller, United Irishman and informer. In reference to this letter, Fred Heatley comments, "It is obvious that Hughes was still trusted by the prisoners and was evidently trying to gain more information from them under the guise of "friendship." Fred Heatley, *Henry Joy McCracken and his Times* (Belfast: Belfast Wolfe Tone Society, 1967), 26.

<sup>8</sup> ^for you^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>9</sup> Mr Stubbs, the sheriff.

<sup>10</sup> Counsellor Henry Joy.

<sup>11</sup> *The Dublin Evening Post* (10 June 1732–21 August 1875), newspaper founded by John Magee.

<sup>12</sup> Atty, the nickname given to Edward Bunting by the McCracken family. Fox argues, rather convincingly, that this "pet name" may have been the result of the more common nickname "Eddy," being "pronounced with a broad Belfast accent." Charlotte Miligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), 232.

There is a very great change taken place in the  
minds of here for the better, as well as with you. [A]nother  
mutiny takes place this day to express their disap[p]roba=  
=tion of the present ministers.

[Fol. 2a]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary McCracken

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Ap 8-97-/ HJ M<sup>c</sup>C/ Henry to Mary."

**12. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken, c/o Mr Dixon [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 13 April 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/117

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered, care of Mr Dixon

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tears caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

April 13<sup>th</sup> 1797

Dear Harry

~~^difference of opinion between the [...] & the [...]~~<sup>^</sup>

I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of the 8<sup>th</sup> by J. Haffy yesterday<sup>2</sup> but have still to regret your being so much pressed in point of time, that your letters are never as long or particular as we could desire, however you are not more deficient in that respect than some of your fellow prisoners are, who might as well as you understand economy better than to send a sheet of paper with a doz<sup>n</sup> only ^of^ lines written, when you must have time enough to

spare - Col Barber<sup>3</sup> has been very busy all day searching for the can<sup>n</sup>^ons at the flour mills[,] Armstrongs and Cotton Valley and I am sorry to tell you he [...] has had much success as to find

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<sup>1</sup> "various didact[ic]s entrusting at the time."

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Letter 11 (TCD MS873/116).

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Lucius Barber of the Royal Irish Artillery who commanded the artillery at the Battle of Ballynahinch. He was later promoted to the rank of General.

the sponges,<sup>4</sup> carriages<sup>5</sup> and boxes. Lamont the Miller is also taken prisoner, and threatened with being sent on board the Tender<sup>6</sup> if he does not discover where the can<sup>n</sup>^<sup>o</sup>n<sup>s</sup> are[.] ~~and~~ [A] strong guard <sup>^</sup>is<sup>^</sup> placed on the flour mills (where the sponges &c were found) and another at Armstrongs[.] [I]t is supposed that information had been given by one Wilson (apprentice to Spotswood the baker) as they went directly to the place - It is not a trifling degree of pleasure you will feel on hearing that all <sup>^</sup>the<sup>^</sup> prisoners at

Armagh of the right sort have been acquitted[,] that the [Fol. 1b] Judges are behaving extremely well and have taken up the High Sheriff and Obins,<sup>7</sup> a Magistrate who snapped a pistol at a man for refusing to take a national note.<sup>8</sup> Sparrow,<sup>9</sup> another Magistrate who behaved equally well [---] [---] you may remember at the wake of the man who was butchered at Market Hill[,] I am happy to find is also lodged securely in a house that is not his own - [A] gentleman who has just come through the County Monaghan says that he literally travelled through fire, as the whole country seemed in a blaze with the bonfires on account of the universal acquittals for sedition &c. Skeffington<sup>10</sup> received an anonymous letter

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<sup>4</sup> Sponges were used to clean out cannons and to extinguish any remaining sparks after firing.

<sup>5</sup> Carriages were used to support the barrel of a gun or cannon. These were likely to have been block trail carriages which came into use in Britain during the final decade of the the eighteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> The *Postlethwaite* prison ship moored in Belfast Lough.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Obins, magistrate and Orangeman.

<sup>8</sup> A bank note.

<sup>9</sup> Brigadier-General Robert Bernard Sparrow (15 February 1773–1805), of Tanderagee Castle, County Antrim and Brampton Park, Huntingdonshire, England, magistrate and Orangeman.

<sup>10</sup> Chichester Skeffington (c.1746–25 February 1816), 4th Earl of Masserene, member of Parliament for Antrim between 1768 and 1797, High Sheriff of County Antrim in 1797 and Town Collector for Belfast. He was responsible for the jury selection at William Orr's trial and oversaw his execution.

to day which has alarmed him a good deal. I am told that it was elegantly written and that it informed him if he attempted to pack a jury his own <sup>^life^</sup> should pay the forfeit of the blood that would be shed[.] [W]hat effect this may <sup>^have^</sup> will soon be known[.] [I]t was generally thought that none of the Belfast people would be called on the juries as an hundred and fifty of Lord Hertford[']s<sup>11</sup> tenants were summoned, and only a few good people

from this town by way of a cloak - James Joy has really [Fol. 2a] resigned his commission in <sup>^the^</sup> Yeomen in consequence of their having refused to obey him as their officer[.] [O]ne of them came to parade with a piece of orange ribbon in his breast for which our friend turned him out of the ranks, having forbid it before[.] [O]n this[,] about twenty of them turned out and declared if he was not allowed to fall into the rank neither would they[.] [T]hey surrounded James and damned him if he had any cropy blood in his veins, what business had he among them, and one declared if he thought there was one drop of cropy blood in his <sup>^own^</sup> arm he would cut it off - [T]here has certainly [been] a most astonishing change taken place among our relations, within a short time past they are all grown quite moderate, and it is but a few days ago that the girls<sup>12</sup> were praising Mr Erskine[']s<sup>13</sup> pamphlet and said that it was the first thing which began to convince them, but their brother is come down and he is convinced also <sup>^that^</sup> the present administration are deserving of the utmost contempt, and that a reform must and will be had[.] [I]s not that a change for you[?] I am sorry to hear

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<sup>11</sup> Francis Ingram-Seymour-Conway (12 February 1743–17 June 1822), 2nd Marquess of Hertford.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>^X^</sup> [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X the Miss Joys>

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Erskine (10 January 1750–17 November 1823), 1st Baron Erskine, Scottish lawyer, Lord Chancellor from 1806 until 1807 and author of the 1797 pamphlet, "A View of the Causes and Consequences of the present War with France."

[Fol. 2b]←

from your letter to John by J. Hughes, whom we have not yet seen[,]<sup>14</sup>  
that you are still kept such close prisoners[,] especially as there  
is no prospect of your being brought trial, however all is for the  
best and repining is useless - I suppose you have heard that  
the nine men who were so long in the Artillery Barrack  
are at last sent on board the Tender[.] It would be well if the whole  
fleet were manned with such as them[,] it would stand us in  
stead - [T]he handcuffs were not taken off until they were just  
going into the boat, and they are now quite glad of the change[,]  
their situation is so much better than it was -  
[R]emember me to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Neilson[,] Teeling and Bartley and  
believe me to be — yours affect<sup>ly</sup>

Mary

[Superscription]<sup>15</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy McCracken

Care of M<sup>r</sup> Dixon

Kilmainham

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<sup>14</sup> Missing letter, HJM [Kilmainham Gaol] to John McCracken Junior [Belfast], c. April 1797.

<sup>15</sup> Flanked by numerical calculations.

**13. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 18 April 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/152

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered, care of Mr Dixon

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, lined paper, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast Apr 18

Dear Harry

I rec<sup>d</sup> yours by J. Haffey,<sup>2</sup> and have still to regret your being so much hurried that your letters are neither so long nor [...] particular as we could desire. <sup>3</sup>On friday night last<sup>4</sup> there was a search made in John Alexander[']s by Col Barber[,] the high Constable &c,<sup>5</sup> and a society of United Irish consisting of twenty one members who were in the house at the time[,] taken up. James Burnside<sup>6</sup> and another

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<sup>1</sup> "Newell[']s visit to John[']s with a guard to search for/ concealed arms and W<sup>ms</sup> arrest/ 1797."

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Letter 11 (TCD MS873/116), despite the fact that MAM had already acknowledged its receipt in Letter 12 (TCD MS873/117).

<sup>3</sup> ^[^ [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> 14 April 1797.

<sup>5</sup> This incident is recorded by Viscount Castlereagh in his *Report from the Committee of Secrecy*, which states, "Upon information being given of certain societies or committees being appointed to assemble at the house of John Alexander in the town of Belfast at the hour of eight o'clock on Friday the 14th of April last, Colonel Barber, with a detachment of the army, went to the said house, where two societies were then actually sitting." Lord Viscount Castlereagh, *Report from the Committee of Secrecy, of the House of Commons in Ireland* (London: J. Debrett and J. Wright, 1798), 33.

<sup>6</sup> James Burnside, a weaver employed by the McCracken family and a United Irishman.

weaver of John[']s and one of ours ^were^ among them, and they are all confined in the Artillery Barrack[.]<sup>7</sup> [F]ortunately for Alexander and his son[,] they were not at home at the time and have kept out of the way since. Two boxes were broke open[,] one of which belonged to M<sup>r</sup> McCabe<sup>8</sup> and it is said there were some letters from M<sup>r</sup> Russell to him in it, ~~and the other had five guineas~~ and in the other there were five guineas which they also carried off with ~~the~~ them[.] [I]t is supposed Newell<sup>9</sup> the painter was the informer and that the idea seems to be confirmed by what happened last night. [---] John's family were knocked up about twelve o[']clock, and

[Fol. 1b]

^as soon^ as the door was opened the whole party rushed up stairs ↵ to J Gordon[']s room (who has left John some time ago) they were conducted by a little man dressed as a horse ^cavalry^ officer with a handkerchief tied across his mouth, who every one of the family instantly recognised to be Newell having seen him there frequently with J Gordon[.] [H]e went directly to a hole in the floor under the bed which Gordon had shewed him before, but fortunately there ^was^ nothing in it but a little hay. John invited them to search the rest of the house which they refused, and would only examine the yard. [T]hey looked above the cowhouse where had formerly been some guns, but found nothing. Jackson who was tried along with Hart, and J Haffey are both taken up, also Butcher another of Cuthbert[']s

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<sup>7</sup> Located on Ann Street, Belfast.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas McCabe (1734–5 March 1820), of Lurgan, Belfast watchmaker and cotton manufacturer. A member of Belfast's First Presbyterian Church and a freemason. He was a founding member of both the Belfast Charitable Society and of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen.

<sup>9</sup> Edward John Newell (29 June 1771–1798), of Downpatrick, resident of Belfast from 1796, sailor, artist, Defender, United Irishman and informer. In early 1798 he published a pamphlet entitled, *The Apostasy of Newell*. A few months later, he disappeared giving rise to the suspicion that he had been murdered. See Edward John Newell, *The Apostasy of Newell* (London: printed for the Author, 1798) and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 1, 345–425.

foremen, and Kane<sup>10</sup> and Templeton<sup>11</sup> of the Star Office,<sup>12</sup> together with many more whose names I don[']t know. Your old friend Owen Burn who had sworn against B. Coile,<sup>13</sup> was the man that was hanged at Armagh ten hours after he had committed a robbery. It is supposed that the prisoners here will be taken to Carrick to morrow to be tried and I am happy to hear that all the United Irishmen

in Derry have been acquitted - [R]emember us as usual and believe me to be yours affectionately<sup>14</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

Mary Ann McCracken

<sup>15</sup>A person called on Frank a few minutes ago to tell him that W<sup>m</sup> was just taken up, he was in a tavern with two others when that same little villain Newell came in disguised as he was last night and pointed him out, familiarised as we now [...seal...]<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> William Kean, clerk for the *Northern Star* newspaper and United Irishman. He was released from Kilmainham Gaol in 1797 but imprisoned again the following year for his part in both the Battle of Antrim and Ballynahinch. Kean managed to escape from the jail and fled to America "where he became a wealthy and respected citizen." "Willie Kane of the 'Northern Star,'" *Shan van Vocht* 1, no. 2 (7 February 1896): 27.

<sup>11</sup> William Templeton, a clerk at the *Northern Star*.

<sup>12</sup> *Northern Star* (1 January 1792–May 1797), newspaper of the United Irishmen, edited by Samuel Neilson. According to McCleery, "the Northern Star was attentively perused," by MAM who "once exclaimed, on recovering from a fever — "Oh, I have missed so many of the Stars." McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 181.

<sup>13</sup> Bernard "Barney" Coile (14 May 1771–1 March 1829), born near Magherafelt, County Londonderry, Catholic Defender, Lurgan based linen merchant and an associate of HJM. He was arrested on a charge of conspiracy on 3 January 1796 but was released in July due to lack of evidence. The extent of his involvement in the events of 1798 remains unknown, however, shortly after the rebellion he moved to Dublin where he continued his business. Coile was imprisoned again between August 1803 and 1805. Upon his release, he continued to fight for Catholic rights.

<sup>14</sup> ^]^[Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>15</sup> ^^[Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>16</sup> Most likely, "are."

to such incidents, it would scarcely affect us [...seal...]<sup>17</sup>  
it not for the present situation of his wife, she  
does not yet know it, and I do not know how she  
may bear it –<sup>18</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>19</sup>

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Care of M<sup>r</sup> Dixon  
Kilmainham

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Most likely, "were."

<sup>18</sup> ^] ^ [Unknown ed., ink]. "The present situation of his wife," would suggest Rose Ann was pregnant.

<sup>19</sup> "1797."

<sup>20</sup> "Belfast 18 Ap 1797/ from M A M<sup>c</sup>C to/ H Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken in[-]/ forming him of his/ brother W<sup>m</sup>[']s/ arrest &/ various other things."

**14. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 24 April 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/118

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Dr Mary<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

[O]n Saturday arrived here 19 prisoners from the North all in very good health & spirits. [W]hen they arrived we were all locked up in our separate rooms, whilst I was looking out into the condemned yard[,] Ja<sup>s</sup> Burnside with several others step[p]ed into the yard & told me who were the prisoners, presently my door was opened by the Jailor who brought in M<sup>r</sup> Kilbourne<sup>2</sup> & D<sup>r</sup> Crawford[.]<sup>3</sup> [A]t their backs stood a very long[,] ugly officer & two great gentlemen. The Jailor ordered me out as those two prisoners were to have that room, where they have remained ever since[,] having everything very comfortable, but very closely kept[.] [H]owever[,] we send them under the door paper &cc & get in sometimes to chat a little with them[.] [T]he other prisoners were divided into two Lot, one Lot has got possession of the

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<sup>1</sup> ^K. Bastil[1]e 24 April 1797^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Sinclair Kilbourne/ Kelburn/ Kilburn (1754 – 1802), of Dublin, dissenting minister of Belfast's Third Presbyterian Church and United Irishman.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Alexander Crawford (d. 1820), a physician of Lisburn.

ward where the Stag was (as he has gone to Down)[.]<sup>4</sup> W<sup>m</sup><sup>5</sup>[,] H. Speers[.]<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Nixon<sup>7</sup>, J. Greer<sup>8</sup>, W. Kane, W. Templeton, A. Clarke<sup>9</sup>, J. Haffey & J. Kennedy<sup>10</sup>

are of that lot with whom we have a constant communication as they are not locked up. [T]hey are very merry altho as yet they

have very bad beds[.] I expect in a day or two that W.<sup>m</sup> Speer [Fol. 1b] & Nixon will be put over to us. J. Burnside, H. McManus[.]<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Stag" implies an informer. Madden provided the following illuminating account, "From the year 1796 to 1800, a set of miscreants, steeped in crime, sunk in debauchery, prone to violence and reckless of character, constituted what was called "The Major's People." A number of these wretches were domiciled within the gates of the Castle, where there were regular places of entertainment allotted for them, contiguous to the viceroy's palace; for another company of them, a house was allotted opposite Kilmainham gaol, familiarly known to the people by the name of the "Stag House;" and for one batch of them who could not be trusted with liberty, there was one of the yards of that prison and the surrounding cells assigned to them: which is still called the "Stag Yard." These persons were considered under the immediate protection of Majors Sirr, Swan, and Sandys, and to interfere with them in the course of their duties as spies or witnesses, was to incur the vengeance of their redoubtable patrons." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Series 1, vol. 2, 379. Additional evidence can be found in Joseph Holt's memoirs, where he relates the popular song "Jem Stag" which was based on the informer Jemmy O'Bryan. He also notes that "a stag is a king's evidence, one not true to the gang." Joseph Holt, *Memoirs of Joseph Holt: General of the Irish rebels in 1798*, ed. Thomas Crofton Croker, (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1838), 309–10.

<sup>5</sup> William McCracken.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Speers, Belfast woollen draper, See *Statutes Passed in the Parliaments Held in Ireland*, vol. 11 (Dublin: George Grierson, 1799), 1131.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Nixon, Belfast surgeon. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 576.

<sup>8</sup> James Greer. See Joy, *Historical Collections*, 466.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Clark, Belfast clock maker. See Joy, *Historical collections*, 466 and 487.

<sup>10</sup> John Kennedy, Belfast cutler. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 633.

<sup>11</sup> Henry McManus. See Joy, *Historical Collections*, 466.

R. Neilson[,]<sup>12</sup> D. Toolan[,]<sup>13</sup>, H. Kirkwood[,]<sup>14</sup> J Harrison,<sup>15</sup> J. Barrett<sup>16</sup>  
and

T. Jackson[,]<sup>17</sup> alias Dry, compose the other Lot and are confined  
in that part of the Jail that you have to go through the Kitchen  
to. Burnside behaves remarkably well, so does Toolan, they  
keep up their spirits very well, indeed they are capital  
fellows except Kirkwood who has been crying all<sup>18</sup> morn<sup>g</sup>[.]  
I have fixed a string out of D Shanaghan's<sup>19</sup> room ^ (where I now  
stay)^ to their  
ward, by which I<sup>20</sup> send wine &<sup>cc</sup> & whatever they want across  
to them, J. Burnside being their agent - Hardly were they  
arrived when T. Richardson came here from Newgate, as he  
is namesake to our vagabond he was instantly sent among us.<sup>21</sup>  
I have been interrupted for<sup>22</sup> to let M<sup>r</sup> K. and D<sup>r</sup> C have  
our room untill theirs should be cleaned. I have had  
a good deal of chat with M<sup>r</sup> K, he has been very poorly this  
morn<sup>g</sup> but is now a great deal better [---] & got into good  
spirits[.] [L]et all the friends of the lads know their situation[,]  
it is as comfortable as can be expected in everything except

beds which will be better every day as both the Sheriff & [Fol. 2a]

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Neilson, Belfast painter. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 1131.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Toolan/ Toland, Belfast muslin spinner. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 632.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh Kirkwood. See Joy, *Historical Collections*, 466.

<sup>15</sup> John Harrison, Belfast nailer. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 632.

<sup>16</sup> Presumably, Rev John Barrett (1753–November 15, 1821) born at Ballyroan, County Laois, educated at TCD where he became Professor of Oriental Languages. See *Statutes*, vol. 11, 1130.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Jackson. See Joy, *Historical Collections*, 466.

<sup>18</sup> ^the^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Shanaghan. See Joy, *Historical Collections*, 442–43.

<sup>20</sup> “which, I” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>21</sup> as he/ is namesake to our vagabond he was instantly sent among us. [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>22</sup> ~~for~~ [Madden ed., pencil].

Inspector<sup>23</sup> are Gentle<sup>n</sup> & men of humanity - They have began the system [...] of terror here, this day came in here<sup>24</sup> a Taylor charged with being an United Irishman, he is now in the same ward with Burnside[.] [T]hey have extended as far as Bantry Bay where they are taking people up, in short every part of the Country is equally alike ill-affected.<sup>25</sup> [R]emember me affectionately to all friends - so much of my time has been eng[aged]<sup>26</sup> [...tear...]<sup>27</sup> our new admitted fellons that it has prev[ented]<sup>28</sup> me from writing as long a letter as ^I^ would wish or being as particular as you would like - We are just informed that J. Cuthbert, Storey & the Gordons are coming here[,] if so we will have a great garrison - [W]hen you write let me know how R's children are —<sup>29</sup>

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

K. Bastil[1]e 24. Ap.<sup>1</sup>'97

Richardson desires to be affectionately remb<sup>ed</sup> to all the family[.]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> ^^(Archer)^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>24</sup> here [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>25</sup> Bantry Bay, County Cork.

<sup>26</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>27</sup> Most likely, "by."

<sup>28</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>29</sup> Presumably, Thomas Richardson.

<sup>30</sup> "24 Ap 97 / H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**15. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann and Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 29 April 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/119

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 29 April 97

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Sisters

I wrote Rose Ann since I came here desiring her to take as much exercise as the weather would permit.<sup>1</sup> I now beg of you to urge her to it as I fear she may neglect it and I am fully persuaded it is necessary for her from being accustomed to long walks with me. Only two or three days before I was pris'd I heard Eliza Templeton ask if she w<sup>d</sup> be able to walk to Orange Grove[.] [A]s I know it is quite within her ability, take her there and oblige me. I forgot when writing to Frank<sup>2</sup> that I wish'd him to buy a bale of Surat cotton<sup>3</sup> for

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Rose Ann McCracken [Belfast], April 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Francis McCracken [Belfast], April 1797.

<sup>3</sup> Surat cotton, produced in India. It yielded less crops and was more difficult to work with, yet it was not a product of slave labour. A.T. Stewart sceptically associated the fibre with, "a race of self constituted philosophers, who, while indulging in projects about getting supplies of cotton outside the plantations of the Far West, propounded idealisms wild and fantastic as the dreamiest follies of that respectable class of unbelievers who, some years ago, plagued the Churches with their absurdities on the Bible-wine question." A.T. Stewart, *The Cotton Famine of 1862-63* (Belfast and London: William Mullan & Son, 1881), 8-9.

the out Spinners to be carded on the small machine[,] keeping her in good order by taking cards off the others as she may want them. John will take the wool so made and will have a saving of 3<sup>d</sup>/p lb.<sup>4</sup> from the price he pays Boomer<sup>5</sup> & will leave me

a trifling profit which[,] however <sup>small</sup>[,] will help to pay the rent. There are three pieces [of] fustian ready for finishing, desire Joe to get them done & Ol<sup>r</sup> Reed will give the price[.] [H]e is getting the same quality for the Am<sup>t</sup>. ~~with~~ with the ball<sup>ce6</sup> to be got from Sedgewick [and] will pay any workers demands & leave something for Rose Ann which I think she will want. We grow daily better acquainted with the goal and can bear the confinement with greater ease, indeed we are getting now & then a little more of the necessaries. The day before yesterday we got an additional stool to sit on which[,] with the one we had before[,] will allow six out of nine sitting at once[,] before we could only allow three to sit at a time & yesterday we got a very great comfort[,] a wooden bowl to wash in. My watch makes an exce[ll]ent substitute for a looking glass to shave myself at. We can now get striping ourselves when we go to bed and I rea[ll]y think one is more refreshed than when obliged to lay down with their cloths on, tho the sleep should continue equal in length of time, however there is still one thing that takes from this comfort[,] that when the light of the morning comes we find we have more company

[Fol. 1b]

than we either bargain or wish for but this I suppose is inseparable from the beds and bedding of gaols and yet I believe we have been worse treated than any other prisoners on the same charge[.]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> 3 pence (or thruppence) per pound.

<sup>5</sup> James Boomer (d. 1820), cotton spinner and manufacturer of 18 Mill Street, Belfast.

<sup>6</sup> "balance."

[T]he prisoners of the other yard blame us for not complaining enough, but they forget the great difference there is in situations[.] [T]hey can make themselves be heard at any time by the house and we are in so retired a place that we only ^see^ the girl twice a day (at breakfast & Dinner) & perhaps the jailor or assistant once in two days, but as poor Richard says it[']s nothing when one's used to it. I never thought I could bear close confinement so well as I do. [I]ndeed[,] I never felt any thing for myself except the first time you came to see me in [the] Art<sup>y</sup> Barrack when[,] I must confess[,] I was a good deal agitated. I don[']t believe even that should be placed to my own account for I only felt so when you were present & some short time afterwards. If you had hapnied [sic] to call the next day when Coalston<sup>7</sup> was out[,] you might have been as long as you pleas'd with me[.] [P]oor MacKenzie =<sup>8</sup>  
I am Dear Sisters:

your most aff<sup>y</sup>  
W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken.

[G]ive my sincere love to all the family.

[Superscription]  
Miss M<sup>c</sup>Crackens  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Major General Foster Coulson (d. 14 February 1842), of the Royal Irish Artillery.

<sup>8</sup> <=brought every one in that ask'd for me, but when Coalston came/ it altered the case entirely[,] he is quite the puppy.> Here, the double hyphen functions as an asterisk by which to link to the marginalia. The epithet "puppy" was intended as an insult upon Coulson's masculinity and personal integrity. The slur was known to lead to duel fights between members of the aristocracy.

<sup>9</sup> "29 Ap 97/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C."

**16. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 6 May 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/120

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 6 May 1797

[Fol. 1a]

D<sup>r</sup> Mary

I have rec<sup>d</sup> your letter that came by post dated 2<sup>d</sup> May<sup>1</sup> without its being opened, also yours by private hand of [the] same date[,]<sup>2</sup> both of ^which^ gave me a good deal of uneasiness to think you ^had^ no account from this place since Will<sup>m</sup> came but I now understand that ^all^ the letters from this place for the North remained in O. Bond[']s until thursday night<sup>3</sup> when the[y] went by H Bell[.]<sup>4</sup> I am convinced you would receive them this morning & that ^you are^ satisfied ~~that~~ we are all as well [as] you could wish. Speer told me this morn<sup>g</sup> that W<sup>m</sup> has been in excellent spirits ever since he rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from Rose Ann -<sup>5</sup> [Y]ou ^know^ the situation of their apartments with respect to ours & that ^we^ have to confine our conversations, however

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], 2 May 1797, postal delivery.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], 2 May 1797, hand delivered by a private bearer.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver Bond (c.1760–1798), Dublin based woollen draper and United Irishman. He lived on Dublin's Bridge Street, presumably where the letters were stowed until the night of Thursday 3 May 1797.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Bell of Dublin, a merchant in Charter-House Square, London.

<sup>5</sup> Missing letter, Rose Ann McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], April or May 1797.

^we have^ a little chat through the separation door once ^or^ twice a day[.]

Mr. Kilburn is in most excellent spirits, he has written a letter to my father this day which ^he^ showed me -<sup>6</sup> I can't ^tell^ how it is but I never found myself so

absent as since I sat down to write this letter, when if [Fol. 1b] circumstances would make an alteration in the mind, I ought to ^be^ more collect[ed] than usual, as every thing respecting my situation

here is not only perfectly agreeable but gratifying - [Y]ou know already from William that I am no longer a State prisoner but detained as a common fellow, this will naturally produce a change in the part of the Jail I will be confined in. Mr. Stubbs has taken such an interest in whatever concerns any of us that he has ordered the men[']s Infirmary (which you have been in) to be fitted up for us. [T]he apartment is superior to any other in the Jail[,] the floor excepted. [W]hen there[,] no friend will be refused admittance, & as I can communicate with all the Jail it will ^be^ a more open & free intercourse with the World for the rest, than any they have enjoyed since the appointment of our present Keeper, who's wife this day told me every convenience her house could afford was at

my service – Those that are to ^be^ confined with me are [Fol. 2a] Alex<sup>r</sup> & John Gordon, Ja<sup>s</sup> Burnside, Tho<sup>s</sup> Jackson, alias Dry, & Rob<sup>t</sup> Neilson[.] [I]t seems this alteration is in consequence of the proceedings of the secret Coun<sup>l</sup> who have

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<sup>6</sup> For a transcription of Rev. Sinclair Kilburn's letter to Captain John McCracken, dated 6 May 1797, see Young, *Ulster in '98*, 95.

Captain John McCracken (c. 1721–20 December 1803), father to MAM and her siblings, Presbyterian, sailor and businessman. In 1758 he established Belfast's largest rope walk and later its first sail cloth and canvas factory. In 1784, he entered into the partnership, "Joy, McCabe and McCracken," which set up the first water operated cotton mill in Ireland on Belfast's Francis Street. He also founded the Marine Charitable Society.

examined Newell & ^young^ Murdoch[.]<sup>7</sup> [F]or my part I never had any conversation with either of them -

Mr Richardson wishes much to have Matilda taught musick [sic][,] consult Bunting about the propriety of it, and what the expense of an Instrument -<sup>8</sup> He & Charles desire to be remembered to you & Marg<sup>t</sup>[.] [L]et me know how you all are[.] [T]ell Rose Ann I rejoice in her recovery - [I]s Frank out of the way? I have heard so & it has vexed me a good deal but perhaps it is best so[.] I may be difecient [sic] in ^not^ particularly desiring to be remembered to all, but it is not from want of affection but from habit - your aff<sup>nt</sup> Brother  
Hy J. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2b]

[G]et some person to deliver the letters enclosed, & any that are left for the people here[, ] cover them to me as it will be the safest way[.]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Newell had testified before a secret committee of the Irish House of Commons three day earlier. Robert (Bob) Murdoch was the son of George Murdoch, an exciseman or hearth tax collector. The Murdoch family lived on Belfast's Mill Street. Some time around 1796, Newell came to live with them. In his memoirs, Newell claims that "these blood-thirsty cannibals" seduced him into becoming an informer.

In April 1797, Bob Murdoch accompanied Newell to Dublin Castle to pass on information about the northern societies to Mr Edward Cooke, the then under-secretary to the government's civil department. Murdoch and Newell then proceeded to Newry to meet General Lake, Murdoch having been provided a letter of introduction by Mr Cooke. This letter, dated 16 April 1797 states, "The bearer of this, Mr. Murdoch, is a firm friend of government, and accompanies a Mr Newell, who has given us the most valuable information concerning the United Irishmen of the north; you will please to allow him any money or number of men he may demand; they are to obey his orders, and you are to take his advice in all affairs relative to this business." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 1, 373-74.

<sup>8</sup> Matilda was presumably Thomas Richardson's daughter.

<sup>9</sup> "May 6 - 97 Kilmainham/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**17. Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, Robert Neilson, John Burnside, John and Alexander Gordon [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to “their friends and relatives” [Belfast]**

**Date:** 11 May 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/349

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio which has been pasted, presumably by Madden, onto the reverse of Henry Joy McCracken’s certificate of membership of the United Irishmen (MS873/344), thus obscuring Fol. 1b

To all whom it may concern, these come greeting[,] [Fol. 1a]  
informing the friends & relatives of the undersigned[,] that  
they are ^in^ good health & high spirits, altho reduced in  
their finances much, being now closely confined under  
a new charge & allowed only Jail allowance[.] [F]or further  
particulars we refer you to our good friend the Doctor[,]  
who has kindly taken charge of this, & delivering our com=  
=pliments to all our friends - [W]e are in a dungeon & have  
3d worth of ~~æ~~ milk per day - Killmainham Upper Story  
May 11<sup>th</sup> 1797

H<sup>y</sup> J.M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rob<sup>t</sup> Neilson —  
James Burnside  
John Gordon  
Alexander Gordon

[Fol. 1b, obscured]

**18. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 18 May 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/121

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by John McCracken Junior

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham, 18 May 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

I know you much better than to think you capable of deceiving any person but ^also^ know your tenderness of heart to be such that possibly you might not [be] putting the worst down for hurting me too much, or rather that you could not see with my eyes[.] I am greatly obliged to the Templetons[,] it is just acting in character for them to do acts of kindness. I am indeed sorry their Aunt should continue so long in the state she is. My dear Mary will think not it unfeeling to say I wish she was in heaven[.] I rather doubt you are displeased with this expression, but truth must be the order of the day[.]

[P]ray[,] what puts it into your head [that] a physician is absolutely necessary[?] [H]ave I not Mr. Kelburne that I can consult every day and Nixon every minuit [sic] & I can tell you I would rather have Mr Kelburne than most of phy[si]cians to be had if any thing ailed but I thank god I am extremely well. John can tell you more of Harry this time than I can, & I suppose he writes

[Fol. 1b]

himself this oppy[.]<sup>1</sup> [N]ever you fear but we have  
admission of air sufficient & it is odd that  
my head keeps perfectly free from the mor=  
=roders<sup>2</sup> [sic] I fear'd much. I do not doubt but  
Father & any of the family might get to see  
me as John done yesterday, but every thing  
about this place would appear to them  
so disagreeable that I would rather they  
should not unless we get removed to  
some other part of the jail that might

appear more comfortable [sic] yet tho' the app<sup>ce</sup>  
would not be favourable[,] yet we can now make  
ourselves very snug. I mean this day to remove  
my bed to another cell where there is more  
room, we have choice of them as there is seven  
in this ward. [W]e have ourselves divided into  
three to a cell so that we just  
occupy three at night and  
keep another, the largest[,] as a  
common hall[.] [T]his [...] I suppose  
you know, it was inhabited by the Stag Men  
when you were here. [G]ive my love to all the  
family and to all friends[,] tell them it[']s only  
the separation from them that makes this place  
feelingly disagreeable.

[Fol. 2a]

I am Dear Mary  
yours affecty  
W<sup>m</sup> McCracken

I doubt I will loose [sic] the morn<sup>s</sup> music I<sup>3</sup> mentioned in  
my letter to Rose Ann, this I w<sup>d</sup> not willingly give up

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<sup>1</sup> William McCracken is suggesting that HJM is probably also writing a letter to MAM, as they have the opportunity to send letters home with John McCracken Junior.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly derived from the word "morose."

<sup>3</sup> "music, I" [comma omitted (ed.)].

but we were so warm last night that it must be done[.]<sup>4</sup> [W]e  
are litteraly [sic] strong as three in a bed[.]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Rosemary lane

Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to Rose Ann McCracken [Belfast], May 1797.

<sup>5</sup> "18 May 97/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C."

**19. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 2 June 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/122

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by George Joy

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, large tear from Fol. 2, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 2 June 1797

Dear Harry,

Your almost continual neglect  
o[f]<sup>2</sup> availing yourself of any opportunity that occurs  
of writing to your friends in Belfast is enough to make  
us suppose you have[,] by this time[,] entirely forgot them[,]  
or that if you do think of them sometimes[,] it must be  
with indifference. [T]hree letters came to hand today  
from W<sup>m</sup> by R.S. and not a line from you.<sup>3</sup> I am  
glad to hear you are so well and in such good spirits  
which I hope will endeavour to continue as I fear  
your enlargement is not so near at hand as we hoped  
some time ago. There appears to be a general (tho not  
universal) depression of ~~spirits~~ the public spirit and  
what is still worse[,] Belfast has greatly lost the confi-  
dence of the Country from<sup>4</sup> being prudent & cautious  
on a matter of great importance which some violent &

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<sup>1</sup> "difference between the cautious/ & the ardent."

<sup>2</sup> Partially obstructed by an ink blot.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably, these were Letter 18 (TCD MS873/121), the letter from William to Rose Ann mentioned in Letter 18's postscript and a further outstanding letter from William to a member or members of the McCracken family. These were hand delivered by "R.S." on 2 June 1797.

<sup>4</sup> "Country, from" [comma omitted (ed.)].

impatient men have been induced to consider a desertion of their cause, ~~but~~ some however think this a mere pretence to excuse their own visible timidity

or that it is owing to the diabolical suggestions of some Traitor, but be it from what cause it may[,] it is certainly very vexatious[.] [H]owever[,] Frank thinks it will be but temporary and that a little time will show them their error[.] [T]hose who endeavour to serve the public ought always to have some better motive than love of fame (the only incentive of ancient hero's) which is so precarious that the same man the public would exalt to the skies today, they would perhaps tomorrow trample in the dust – Though not in the least inclined to super<sup>^</sup>s<sup>^</sup>tition[,] yet <sup>^</sup>the<sup>^</sup> lingering situation of affairs frequent[-]ly reminds me of an old prophecy which Dr McD.<sup>5</sup> ~~was telling us~~ told us of in winter, <sup>^</sup>which said<sup>^</sup> that the disturbances in this country were to begin between the scythe and the sickle, the hay harvest is already begun here - ~~In~~ [I]t is a great pity the people did not always keep in mind that they should never do evil that good may come of it and that what is morally wrong can not be politica[lly]<sup>6</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

right[.] [H]ave you not observed that since the assassinations began, the cause of the people (which had before been so rapidly gaining ground[]) has gradually declined and that after the general swearing it has been still worse, and tho this does not appear to be the direct cause[,] yet perhaps it may <sup>^</sup>be<sup>^</sup> in part ascribed to it [...tear...]<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> Dr James McDonnell (14 April 1763–5 April 1845), born in Cushendall, County Antrim and educated at David Mason's school in Belfast. He and his brothers were trained as harpists by Art O'Neill. After studying medicine at Edinburgh University, McDonnell returned to Belfast as a physician. He was an organiser of the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival and of the Irish Harp Society in 1808. He was also a founder of the Belfast Academical Institution, The Belfast Fever Hospital and Dispensary and the Belfast Medical Society.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>7</sup> Most likely, "for."

[...] when we once deviate from the straig[ht]<sup>8</sup> [...tear...]<sup>9</sup>  
of rectitude it is difficult to return and [...tear...]  
virtue is the only sure support of public [...tear...]  
Frank has some notion of going to Dublin [...tear...]<sup>10</sup>  
few days but is not yet quite determined [...tear...]<sup>11</sup>  
^does not^ depend altogether on himself. John is [...tear...]<sup>12</sup>  
Moneymore with his family, he has [...tear...]<sup>13</sup>  
only a fortnight in Belfast since he w[as]<sup>14</sup> [...tear...]<sup>15</sup>  
Dublin. [T]his goes by Geo Joy who is going from  
home partly[,] I believe[,] from a desire of changing  
the scene for the recovery of his spirits after his

daughter's death.<sup>16</sup> [H]e is to be accompanied by his  
brother James and little Robert Holmes.<sup>17</sup> Your old  
friend Geo Dunbar is returned from London and  
gives a great acc<sup>t</sup> of English loyalty.<sup>18</sup> A packet of let-  
ters was dropped yesterday by a gentleman on his  
road to Dublin which unfortunately came into  
Whinnery[']s hand, however there were none from any of this

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by the tear.

<sup>9</sup> Most likely, "path."

<sup>10</sup> Possibly, "in a."

<sup>11</sup> Possibly, "as it."

<sup>12</sup> Most likely, "at."

<sup>13</sup> Most likely, "been."

<sup>14</sup> Partially obstructed by the tear.

<sup>15</sup> Most likely, "in."

<sup>16</sup> George Joy (23 February 1760–1811), MAM's cousin and son of Henry Joy.

<sup>17</sup> James Joy and Robert Holmes. The latter was the son of Mary Holmes, née Joy and so MAM's second cousin. He was the nephew of George and James Joy with whom he was travelling.

<sup>18</sup> George Dunbar, Tory MP for Belfast and Belfast's first mayor elected on 1 November 1842. See Ian Budge and Cornelius O'Leary, *Belfast: Approach to Crisis: A Study of Belfast Politics 1613–1970* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 1973), 68.

family in it[.]<sup>19</sup>

[Superscription]

Mr Henry Joy McCracken

Kilmainham

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>20</sup>

We wrote several times to you last week which I suppose you have by this time rec<sup>d</sup>.<sup>21</sup> Eliza Templeton wrote a few lines in one of them, but as she did ^not^ put her name in full perhaps you would not know who it came from. Yours aff<sup>y</sup> Mary

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Whinnery (c. 1759–28 February 1830), Presbyterian postmaster for Belfast and government spy.

<sup>20</sup> "2<sup>d</sup> June 97 from/ M A McC to/ H J McCracken."

<sup>21</sup> Missing letters, MAM and other McCracken family members [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], between 20 May and 26 May 1797.

20. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 9 June 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/123

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking, circular date stamp, postal charge

Kilmainham 9 June 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

I feel that I very justly deserve your reproaches for not paying the attention that I ought in writting often to you, but believe me it is not that I am careless about my friends, rather impute it to the reverse, as every day we hear such reports from the North that often I have supposed it would <sup>^be^</sup> useless writting as the next post I expected would bring an account of your being burned out, this with the certainty of all letters for you, or from you[,] being opened by that Scoundrel Whinnery has made it unpleasant, however[,] I shall in future let you know how all here are[.] [T]he news of Belfast is always very gratefull to us, as we very seldom see a News Letter <sup>-1</sup> [Y]ou wish to know how we are situated; six of us, A Gordon, J Gordon[,] J Burnside, T Dry,<sup>2</sup> R Neilson & I are confined in one of the Infirmarys [sic] (the women's) without being permitted the use of a yard & receive no other support than Jail allowance, except what we furnish ourselves[.] [T]his the Jailor strives all he can to make worse but it is out of his power, & we contrive to live very comfortably, cooking day about, some of us are

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<sup>1</sup> *The Belfast News Letter*, founded in 1737 by MAM's grandfather, Francis Joy.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Dry, alias of Thomas Jackson.

very good at it & others very middling[.] [A]s the day before  
yesterday[.] we

saw from our windows two militia conducted to the Park by all the  
[Fol. 1b]←

military in this neighbourhood [sic], & there shot for being United  
Irishmen[.]

[L]ast night the Jail was locked up by Antrim men who were very  
much

vexed at it, we know them so[.] they were the last recruits that came  
from Belfast - Ja<sup>s</sup> Burnside keeps in excellent spirits[.] [E]nquire for  
Tho<sup>s</sup>

Dry[']s wife[;] let her know that he is very well, I am afraid that she  
is ^in^ great distress - Dan<sup>l</sup> Tolan requests to be remmembered to my  
father[.] [L]et

^his wife^ know he is well, in short[.] all the prisoners here are well[.]  
[S]ince

I came to this part of the house[.] Will<sup>m</sup> got permission to come to see  
me for a very few minutes[;] never in his life did he look better -

I have always when I sit down to write a seriousness about me  
that prevents me from writting half as much as I intended at first[.]

[W]e have had a long conference with M<sup>r</sup> Stubbs about our situation[.]  
it will be altered for the better tomorrow -

I am much afraid my Father & Mother are neither of them in  
good spirits[.] [T]he news you will hear before you receive this will  
perhaps raise them up[.] [T]he day is not far distant when these  
oppressions will have an end[.] [U]ntill then believe me to be  
always the same[.]

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Postal charge]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast

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<sup>3</sup> "5."

[Numerical calculations]<sup>4</sup>

[Circular date stamp]<sup>5</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "April 20 10lb [...] yarn No 27 - 11<sup>s</sup>-11<sup>d</sup>-5-9-4."

<sup>5</sup> "JUN/ 9/ 97."

<sup>6</sup> "9 Jun 97 Kilmainham/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**21. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to McCracken family member [Belfast]**

**Date:** 1797 (the letter describes an event that occurred on 9 June 1797)

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/124

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Material features:** 2 folios, due to severe tearing Fol. 1 has been pasted onto Fol. 2 in order to prevent further damage, as a result, Fol. 1b and Fol. 2b are obscured, indeterminable letterlocking

[Fol. 1a] ↵

On the Evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1797, [...tear...] R[ic]hardson<sup>1</sup> [...] accompanied by a guard with drawn bayonets, [...tear...] <sup>2</sup> man in coloured clothes[,] came into the room where <sup>we</sup> are at presen[t]<sup>3</sup> confined, he beg[an]<sup>4</sup> to abuse us in a most opprobrious manner (without the least provocation on our part) calling us scoundrels, villains, murderers & after a great deal of such abuse which w[e]<sup>5</sup> took little notice of, he observed that we all wore green stocks,<sup>6</sup> which with many imprecations he then tried to cut ~~them~~ off our necks, swearing at the same time that he would also cut our throats and actual[ly] attempted to put his threats into execution [sic] by drawing [...tear...] <sup>7</sup> knife from his pocket [...tear...] Ja<sup>s</sup> Burnside, who was [...tear...] but was prevented

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by the tear. John Richardson, the jailor who lived with his wife and children in the Governor's quarters of Kilmainham Gaol.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly, "and a."

<sup>3</sup> Partially obstructed by the tear.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> The stock was a simple form of neckwear (typically worn over the shirt collar) which replaced the cravat during the eighteenth century. It consisted of a piece of folded linen which encircled the neck and was buttoned (or buckled) at the back.

<sup>7</sup> Most likely, "a."

by the people who were about [...tear...] When he found he could not execute his threats he left the room swearing that he would bring Lord Carham[p]ton who ^would^ put his threats into execution before we would [...tear...]

[Fol. 1b, obscured]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

[Fol. 2b, obscured]

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<sup>8</sup> "9 June 97/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C." As this is written in MAM's later hand, presumably then it was she who pasted Folio 1 onto Folio 2 in an act of preservation.

**22. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 10 June 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/125

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 10 June 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>

I received yours of the 1<sup>st</sup> and am obliged to you for your care in giving me so early intel[<sup>l</sup>]igence of the racking in Belfast[.]<sup>1</sup> [T]here is no one thing can please me better while confined here than conversing in this manner with my frie[n]ds but I have not now opp<sup>y</sup> so frequently nor the necessary mat[t]ers to do it with[,] so that you must all excuse my not writing so often as I did at first[.] We are every night threatened with Irons & seperate [sic] cells, but as yet we continue in the same situation I have more than once described to one or other of the house[,] which you have read, but [I] think tomorrow or monday will alter the scene as Richardson<sup>2</sup> is at this moment at the Castle<sup>3</sup> for the purpose

of shewing the necessity of putting shackles on us all, in consequence of our making so much noise thro the jail all last night by singing and shouting Alls well &c[.] I expect the noise will be

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken to William McCracken, 1 June 1797.

<sup>2</sup> The jailor.

<sup>3</sup> Dublin Castle, headquarters of the Irish government.

doubled to night to shew our aversion to the  
conduct of the Jailer ~~conduct~~ if he does not make  
cession [sic][.] [H]e[,] last night in putting us up[,] went  
to the place where Harry is confined and seeing  
them all with green stocks[,] he went to cut Ja<sup>s</sup>  
Burnside[']s off when A. Gordon interfered[.] [H]e made  
a stab at him with the knife, however[,] it ended  
there with that ward, but on his going to where<sup>4</sup>  
[the] Gaoler is confined[,]<sup>5</sup> the prisoners resented his conduct  
to the other ward that he<sup>6</sup> put them into diff<sup>t</sup> cells  
the rest of the night and did not even allow them  
to put on a stitch of their cloth[e]s, nor give them  
any straw, so that the rage that was shewn

thro the whole Jail the instant it was known by  
all the prisoners[,] can scarcely be conceived -  
In all the letters I have received I have never  
got a sentance [sic] or word of information [on] how  
Frank comes on[,] tho the very first letter I wrote when  
I came here was to him.<sup>7</sup> If I thought  
he was out of the way I would be  
very anxious to get out on bail that  
I might fill his place in some manner  
the best I could[,] as yet I have always  
desired that Couns<sup>r</sup> Joy should not urge it  
and when ever I see you (if that[']s to happen) I will  
convince you I was right. [T]here was[,] for a few  
days[,] an idea that I would be admitted to  
bail but I don[']t at all think now that I will[.]  
If I can get a tryal soon it would be a matter  
of small moment to me whether or not[.] [G]ive my love  
to all[,] but in a particular manner to the Miss Templetons  
and believe[,] my Dear Sister[,] yours truly

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> ~~where~~ ^the cell^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>5</sup> ~~Gaoler is confined~~ ^the other ward^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>6</sup> ~~to the other ward that he~~ ^to their [...] friends. He^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>7</sup> Missing letter, HJM [Kilmainham Gaol] to Francis McCracken [Belfast], October 1796.

W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken –

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Rosemary lane

Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "10 June 97 -/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C/ ill treatment of/ the Prisoners."

**23. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 19 June 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/329

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Thomas Gunning Bashford

**Material features:** 1 folio stuck onto a larger blue folio by Madden, red wafer seal, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Kilmainham 19 June 1797

Dr Marg<sup>t</sup>

Since I wrote last to Mary, we have had great alterations here[.]<sup>2</sup> Richardson is become polite & obliging to us common culprits, & has put almost all the state prisoners together[.] [A]ll this has been in consequence of a quarrel we had with him the night after I had written my last, the particulars you will hear another time, perhaps Tom Bashford<sup>3</sup> can tell you[.]

[H]owever[.]

he behaved so ill that we were to swear against him. This day Will<sup>m</sup> will be removed into state prison[.] Couns<sup>l</sup> Joy called three or four days ago to let W<sup>m</sup> know that he might get out if he would take the oath of allegiance & give bail[.] [A]s Tom is just come in & has little time to wait I must refer you to him[.] [W]e are all in good health

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<sup>1</sup> "Changes for the better in the Gaoler."

<sup>2</sup> Possibly referring to Letter 20 (TCD MS873/123) or Letter 21(TCD MS873/124).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Gunning Bashford Junior, of Belfast, Protestant shopkeeper and United Irishman who appeared in the Fugitive Act of 1798. Bashford fled to America where he established himself as a merchant. See Kerby A. Miller, et al., eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letter and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 642.

[...seal...]<sup>4</sup> [s]pirits,<sup>5</sup> expecting to see other times - [K]eep up my  
father & Mother[']s  
spirits & believe me to be

yours affectionately  
Hy J McCracken

[Fol. 1b, obscured]

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<sup>4</sup> Most likely, "&."

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

**24. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 27 June 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/126. This item has been on loan to Kilmainham Gaol Museum since 29 March 1966. It is currently displayed in a glass cabinet as part of the museum's permanent exhibition

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered along with a letter from William McCracken

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 27 June 1797 [Fol. 1a]

Dr Sisters

When I was removed to this part of the Jail, I thought that I would have a better opportunity of writting, that is[,] I would have more leisure, the reverse is the case[.] [I]f you wish for a true picture of the inside of a Jail read the 2<sup>d</sup> Chap, 2<sup>d</sup> Vol. of Caleb Williams,<sup>1</sup> from being confined with such a variety of characters & all sorts of crimes charged on them, it makes a sort of amusement viewing the different turns of mind[.] [I]n the appartments allotted to us six northerns, we have got two very respectable men from the Rock<sup>2</sup> on treasonable charges – Since our removal my linen has made a great decline, however I have still 4 Shirts - It is expensive to live here plundered by Turn keys &<sup>cc</sup> & still more so when confined with others who cannot support themselves nor yet be left to themselves[.] [Y]ou may easy see that ^I^ wish for some money, but not much. I received

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<sup>1</sup> William Godwin, *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (London: B. Crosby, 1794).

<sup>2</sup> Possibly, the Rock of Cashel, County Tipperary.

the two guinea notes & two that John paid for me which is all that I have got to support myself & some others since the 10<sup>th</sup> May - I hate money[,] it makes one melancholy to think about it, & has entirely prevented me writting this time - [W]e are all well [and] get the use of ^a^ yard all day & play ball from morn to night - Will<sup>m</sup> is writting by the same oppt<sup>v</sup> -<sup>3</sup>

[G]od bless you all

H<sup>v</sup> J McCracken

[Fol. 1b, inaccessible]

[Fol. 2a, inaccessible]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Superscription]

Marg<sup>t</sup> & Mary A. McCracken

Belfast

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<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, William McCracken to McCracken family, 27 June 1797.

<sup>4</sup> "27 June 97/ H J McC."

<sup>5</sup> "Letters/ of/ Henry Joy McCracken."

**25. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 10 July 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/127

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, tears, tear caused by breaking of a black wafer seal on Fol. 1b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand, pencil]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Kilmainham 10 July 1797

Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>

I was very much pleas'd to find by your letter that you could keep your people together in such times as these.<sup>2</sup> I know it[']s more for their good than any profit you can have that makes you continue the business. I spent most of the forenoon with Henry yesterday, and when Mrs R<sup>n3</sup> came to take me away[,] she let him come with me so that we were together all the day[.] [I]ndeed[,] I think that even these people might be brought to do a kind action; I don't know if it would not be a good way to make this woman a present of half a p<sup>ce</sup> of muslin, it might get us indulgences of this kind, which I need not assure you is a great treat[.] [I]f you think with me[,] send it to me & assist Rose Ann to chuse me a light waistcoat. I can get it made here[.] I don[']t believe I can write to her this day but will tomorrow.

I am Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Improved treatment/ in prison."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin].

<sup>3</sup> ^Richardson the Goaler[']s wife^ [Madden ed., ink].

[mo]st<sup>4</sup> affectly

W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

<We have heard there are to <sup>^</sup>be<sup>^</sup> a great number of orange men in  
Belfast [on] the 12<sup>th</sup>.

God send they may do no harm. I fear greatly for you all till I hear  
from you afterwards><sup>5</sup>

[Superscription]

[Fol. 1b]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>5</sup> 12 July 1797 marked the first public march of Orangemen in Belfast, which McNeill claims to have been 7000 strong. See McNeill, *Life*, 122.

<sup>6</sup> "letters in 96 97 & 98/ marking the progressive/ changes in public opinion."

**26. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 12 July 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/128

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wax seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 12 July 1797

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Mary

I am sorry you made use of that excuse for not writing often[,] of fearing to say the same thing that has been said by another because it was the dirty reason given by Bunting[.] I knew well enough he never intended it. If that was his real reason it has long since ceased and I might surely have received one since where he might have an opp<sup>y</sup> of displaying his talents on [a] variety of new subjects. I perfectly agree with you that <sup>1</sup>at present there is very little prospect of our getting <sup>^</sup>out<sup>^</sup> unless some underhand work that is going on may alter the appearances. I don't like to say

any thing without having knowledge of the subject but some here are readier to attach blame to these secret correspondings [sic]. I think all is intended for the best and till I have reason[,] I will not think otherwise. I have to[o] good an opinion of the men to allow me[,] tho I must confess there are prisoners here that might have been consulted that were not. Geo.[.] James & Counse[l]lor Joy were here [the] other

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>^</sup>[<sup>^</sup> [Unknown ed., ink].

day & little Robt Holmes[.] [T]he Counsl<sup>r</sup> only got  
up to see me but I took the opp<sup>y</sup> of the  
door being opened to let the Counsl<sup>r</sup> out, to run  
out to the hall just to shake hands with  
them.<sup>2</sup> Remember me to Miss Legg and the Miss  
Templetons[.]<sup>3</sup> I'm sure its a very great blessing

to Henry and I to hear in every letter that  
our Father & Mother continue in good health and  
spirits, it is only what may ha[p]pen to you  
that are at home that can have any [...] <sup>4</sup>  
on ours[.] [Y]ou have a queer idea of monopoly  
when you blame me with it respecting Rose[.]  
[F]rom what you say of her you must acknowledge  
I did not pay her more attention than  
she deserved[.] [Y]ou can[']t say that I did not  
wish her [to] be perfectly acquainted with you[,]  
I was convinced you would like each other  
when you were[.] [W]rite to me how John was  
when you last heard from him. I had long and  
disagreeable dreams about him last night[,]  
among other things I thought J. Ramsey[']s<sup>5</sup> house  
was on fire and like to co[m]municate with his  
but for [H]arry and I that got it extinguished[.]  
I am[,] Dear Mary[,] your affect Brother  
W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>2</sup> ^]^[Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>3</sup> Miss Elinor Legge, married Hill Wallace, of Malone House.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly a misspelling of "impact."

<sup>5</sup> James Ramsey, a Belfast attorney.

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "12 July 97 Kilmainham/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken."

**27. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 22 July 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/129

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by William Davidson

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham July 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

I rec<sup>d</sup> two letters from you<sup>1</sup> & one from Peggy with money<sup>2</sup> which I should have answered, as well as let you know how we are but have not been able to write with the Rheumatism in my head, indeed[,] the unsociableness of the <sup>^state^</sup> prisoners make it painfull to write about their situ=  
=ation or even think of them - [A]t present I have sufficient money for to furnish ever[y] necessary for some time, & when I get better I will write you by post as I suppose in future it will almost be impossible to get an other conve[y]ance - Will<sup>m</sup> Davidson[,] the Bearer of this[,] can inform you of particulars respecting the footing we are on with the Jailer[.]<sup>3</sup> Remember me afft<sup>v</sup> to the Templetons & tell Eliza that I have a thousand thanks to give her for her kindness, but at present am not able - [Y]ou must excuse the shortness of this epistle & want of others on the same acc<sup>t</sup>[.] [B]elieve me to be always deeply impressed with affection for you all & that no=  
=thing can give me true satisfaction but to hear often that

you are all well - This minuet [sic] we have got a French man in as prisoner to our ward for being a spy, perhaps

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Two missing letters, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol].

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], money enclosed.

<sup>3</sup> William Davidson, United Irishman who was transported to Australia later that year.

he may be of use in reading Telemachus –<sup>4</sup>  
I remain[,] tho not in health, in good Spirits[,]  
yours  
Hy J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

It will be very pleasant to see F. here.<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast  
22<sup>d</sup> July

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> François Fénelon's, *The Adventures of Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, first published in 1699, was written as an attack on the French monarchy.

<sup>5</sup> Francis McCracken.

<sup>6</sup> "July 97 Kilmainham/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**28. John McCracken Junior [Money more] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 26 July 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/130

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, fold letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Harry

Belfast 26 July 97

I am sorry to hear that your health<sup>2</sup> has been worse than usual, & that some late occurrences have render'd your present situation rather more unpleasant than even confinement in Gaol ought to make it, however, I hope you will come to a right understanding again, & not afford a subject for rejoicing to your enemies. For this some time past I have been loitering my time at Money more, where an opportunity of writing to you was not to be found & I had nothing to tell you of except the barbarities committed on the Innocent country People by the yeomen & orangemen. [T]he practice among them is to hang a man up by the Heels with a Rope full of Twist, by which means the sufferer whirls round like a Bird roasting at the fire, during which he [is] lash'd with belts, &c. to make him tell where he has concealed arms. [L]ast week, at a place near Dungannon[,]<sup>3</sup> a young man being used in this manner call'd to his Father for assistance, who being inflamed at the sight[,]) struck one of the party a desperate Blow

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<sup>1</sup> "from John McCracken to his brother."

<sup>2</sup> ^Emerson^ [Unknown ed., pencil].

<sup>3</sup> Dungannon, a town in County Tyrone.

with his Turf spade, but alas! his life paid  
the forfeit of his rashness, his entrails were torn  
out & exposed on a thorn Bush.  
This is one Barbarity of the many which are  
daily practised about the County Tyrone & Armagh

however the County Antrim is not so bad, but I believe [Fol. 1b]  
is not much better[.] I suppose you have heard  
of an Engagement between the Kerry Militia & the orangemen  
at Stewartstown,<sup>4</sup> but as I was at Moneymore when it  
happen'd[.] [I] can tell you what[.] from sundry accounts[.]  
I think nearest the Truth[.]  
The Kerry Reg<sup>t</sup> being mostly Catholicks had, of course[.]  
a dislike to orangemen & the Stewartstown people being  
mostly orange were ready to pick a quarrel with them[.]  
The Militia were on their March from the neighbourhood  
of Colerain[e]<sup>5</sup> up the country & on the 12 of July march'd into  
S. Town where being drawn up for the purpose of  
receiving billets, were crowd'd very much by a number  
of People wearing orange cockades[.] [T]he serjeant with  
his halberd kept off the crowd but perhaps in a  
rough manner[.] [W]hen the men were billeted, two fell  
to the share of one Park<sup>6</sup> a shopkeeper, & old customer of  
our house, who would not receive them, nor even pay  
them, but would find them beds at a dry lodging  
which the men did not object to, untill they saw the  
Beds were not fit for any animal but Pigs to lye  
on[.] [O]f course they refused, & were for making good  
their billets[.] [A] scuffle ensued & Park snatch'd a Bayonet  
from some yeoman & stabb'd one of the men which brought  
on a partial Engagement with stones, the arms having  
been taken from the ~~Orangemen~~ Militia by their Officer[.]  
[T]his continued a long time, when the light horse  
(under Cap. Arsdall[.] the same who at Dungannon rode  
over the people at a funeral there) called out on

---

<sup>4</sup> Stewartstown, a village in County Tyrone, 7 miles from Dungannon.

<sup>5</sup> Coleraine, a town in County Londonderry.

<sup>6</sup> Mr Park, a shopkeeper.

the Kerry, cut down two & took 3 prisoners, thus taking

from the small party 5 men. [T]he remainder then on [Fol. 2a]  
the street[,] amount<sup>s</sup> to about 10[,] made to a House their Arms  
were in & stood on the defensive, when they were attacked  
by the Horse, the Scotch Fencibles, & about 300 yeomen[.]  
[T]he[y] kept up a continual fire from the House which killed  
3 yeomen[,] 2 Light Horse men[,] 1 horse[,] 1 Scotch fencible &  
wound[ed]

some more[.] [T]heir ammunition being out & an hundred English  
Fencibles coming into the Town, the[y] threw their Arms out of  
the House & surrendered at discretion, but horrid to tell[,]  
the yeomen butcher'd a number in cold blood[,] particularly  
Serg<sup>t</sup> Mahonny<sup>7</sup> [who] was shot from a window of the market House  
while taking up to the ~~man~~ Barrack. Another man who  
had been in one Teaker[']s house where he was billeted, was  
hunted through the Diamond & fell with 30 shots through him[.]  
[A]nother of them being billeted on one Smith[,]<sup>8</sup> a yeoman, was  
comforting Smith's wife & children as Smith was killed by  
a random shot[.] [T]he poor militia man was in the act  
of giving money to the children when he was stabbed by  
the Horseman[.] I am well assur'd that but 2 of the 7  
Kerry men died fairly[.] [T]he Day after this Lord Blaney<sup>9</sup>  
with a party of 90 Heavy & 20 light Horse, espied 4 of this  
regiment of but men who were not of the same party,  
they were sent forward to Dungannon for Billets for  
the Grenadier comp<sup>y</sup> & had been in Moneymore at the  
time the affray happen'd in S. Town & I myself saw  
them go through towards Cookstown[.] [W]hen they saw the  
Horses they thought it best to take into a field & lye  
down for fear of being insulted [sic] by the Horsemen, but Blaney  
spying them[,] order'd the Horse to pursue, & altho' the Serg<sup>t</sup>  
told his business & wished to shew his written order[,]  
Blaney Damn'd them for Rebels & would not hear them  
& immediately fell to them sword in hand[.]

---

<sup>7</sup> Sergeant Mahoney (d. 12 July 1797).

<sup>8</sup> Mr Smith, a yeoman.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Thomas Blaney (30 November 1770–8 April 1834), Lieutenant-General, Lord Blaney, Baron of Monaghan.

[T]he Poor fellows made a gallant resistance & fought [Fol. 2b]  
their way through the whole Horse, untill the ditch stopping  
them[,] two were killed & the Serg<sup>t</sup> got into a House where  
he was saved by the women[.] [T]he co[r]poral got into a Barn  
& withstood the whole Horsemen for an hour[.] [A]t length he  
fell cover'd with innumerable wounds, & Lieut. Col. Blaney[,]  
even after he was dead[,] cut his throat with his sword[.]  
[T]here died 10 of the Gallant Kerry Militia, lamented  
by every humane or honest man in the Country[.]  
As I am making a settlement of my Books,  
I wish you would send me the Book & accounts I gave  
you the last time but one that I was in Dublin[.]  
[D]o not forget it[.] [T]he first opportunity give my  
respects to Lieutenant Burnside & the remainder of your  
companions & believe me to be Dear Harry  
your aff<sup>e</sup> Brother,  
J M<sup>c</sup>C Jun<sup>10</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ^End Chap<sup>r</sup> -^ [Madden ed., ink]. This note refers to Chapter II of "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken," within *Antrim and Down in '98*, which concludes with this letter.

<sup>11</sup> "26 July 97 from/ John McCracken to/ H-J McC in Kilmain<sup>ham</sup>/ with an account of horr/or & cruelty & of Lord/ Lord [sic] Blaney's bar/barity in an affray/ between the King/ Militia & the Stew-/artstown Militia."

**29. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 3 August 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/148

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Robert Black

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wax seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Killmainham 3<sup>d</sup> August 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

Since I wrote you last[,] great changes have taken place here. I am now back to my old habitation living in the Room with T. Richardson, D<sup>r</sup> Nixon, Ja<sup>s</sup> Greer, & William[.] [I]t is the only part of this house where true comfort or cordiality exist [...], as we all strive to oblige [sic] each other. [T]he rest are rather striving to find occasion to be huff'd with one another –<sup>1</sup> [T]he alteration has been of great use to me as, by the care & attention of Nixon[,] I have almost got entirely quit of the Rheumatism[.] Two or three days ago I got a letter from Russell[;] he is very well & in good spirits - [I]t is strange that M<sup>r</sup> Killbourne is not liberated when others are getting out daily[.] [I]t must be from want of proper application as it is impossible for any one to think for a moment him<sup>2</sup> capable of any act that would merit confinement in a Jail - [Y]ou will all no doubt be very angry with me

for not writing oftener, indeed[,] I cannot have any excuse [Fol. 1b] when well & am perfectly sensible of my remissness but it ^was^ very seldom that in my former place of confinement ~~that~~ I could get so much quietness as would permite [sic]

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<sup>1</sup> "one, another" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>2</sup> "moment, him" [comma omitted (ed.)].

one to write three lines, however believe me not ~~untill~~  
 if I make promises, untill by an alteration in regularly  
 writing, you can't help it - Some of the prisoners here  
 have been very angry with me because I took notice  
 of an impropriety (to give it the softest term) in their conduct[.]  
 [T]hey have written to the North about it. [N]ow if you will  
 ask M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson in what manner I used Sam<sup>l</sup> ill[,]  
 I will be obliged [sic] to you; for tho others may ^have^ motives  
 beside the justness of ^the^ thing, for their actions, & hurt  
 their friends to raise themselves, yet will I rather  
 suffer than cobby what I despise so much -  
 The attention of the Jailor to M<sup>r</sup> R<sup>3</sup> & the people  
 in this room is a mark ~~that~~ of what proper conduct can  
 do[.]

It is a very shame for me that I have not a line to<sup>4</sup> [Fol. 2a]  
 send any friend but<sup>5</sup> this, you will give my compliments  
 to a thousand people, & tell them we are all well, but  
 there are many that cannot ^or ought not to^ be lump'd in that  
 manner[;]  
 you will therefore make the proper distinction -  
 Let me know ^how^ you all are, & what is doing, but I suppose  
 Frank[,] if [he] comes[,] will tell us ~~enough~~ - Tell Eliza  
 I am [a] lazy, idle, good for nothing fellow that has hardly  
 a word to ask how all their family are, you may tell  
 me[,] suppose I should not ask -<sup>6</sup> [D]o you ever hear  
 from Bunting[?] [D]oes he lament his absence for his  
 friend Loughy[?] - Rob<sup>t</sup> Black[,] the bearer of this, who  
 has been a prisoner exactly 3 months in this house, can

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Richardson.

<sup>4</sup> "line, to" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> "friend, but" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>6</sup> The term 'suppose' meaning 'pretend' in this instance.

<sup>7</sup> In a letter dated 15 May 1802, John McCracken Junior informs Edward Bunting that "Loughy thinks great long for you, he wakens the whole house at four o'clock, and won't let us sleep till I get up. I hope when Frank comes home he will keep him in better order." See Fox, *Annals*, 233. This would suggest that Loughy was the McCracken family's dog.

make you acquainted with our situation which is getting  
better every day –<sup>8</sup>

Dear Mary[,] I remain  
your aff<sup>te</sup> friend  
Henry J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

The first day I can force myself to sit down, I will  
write Marg<sup>t</sup>[.] [H]er opinion & mine are nearly the same  
now

respecting the selfishness of mankind, altho formerly very [Fol. 2b]  
different[.] [Y]ou will say we see the worst side of man in Jail[,]  
true, but I did not think he had so bad a side[.]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Black, publican, charged with High Treason and imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol on 1 May 1797. See *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 May 1797, 3.

<sup>9</sup> "3 Aug 97 Kilmainham/ H.J. M<sup>c</sup>C – read all."

**30. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 10 August 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/149

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, ruled paper, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 10 Aug 1797

Dear Harry

Tho' yours of the 3<sup>d</sup> gave me extreme pleasure in many respects,<sup>2</sup> yet the melancholy reflection of the disappointment you feel in your opinion of mankind (which is perhaps [...] the most painful conviction that can force itself on [...] ^our experience^ and is always produced by the most distressing of circumstances, the changeableness of those we thought our friends) has considerably lessened it. [T]hat one in whom selfishness was always visible[,]<sup>3</sup> should act consistently is not surprising[.] [N]or is it so that he whose boyish vivacity tho pleasing, had such a mixture of levity<sup>4</sup> as to prepare one for improprieties in his conduct, should tire of his situation and grow captious and fretful, but ~~that~~ ^that^ the man who always

---

<sup>1</sup> "Respecting their/ defamations in/ Kilmainham."

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 29 (TCD MS873/148).

<sup>3</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X H-Haslett>

Henry Haslett (1758–4 December 1806), moved to Belfast from Limavady to become a woollen draper with his brother John Haslett. They held business premises in Rosemary Lane. In the 1790s he became a ship broker and was a founding member of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen. Haslett was arrested on 16 September 1796 and imprisoned at Kilmainham Gaol until December 1797.

<sup>4</sup> ^O^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: < O Cha<sup>s</sup> Teeling >

appeared to have the affection of a brother and the esteem of a friend for you<sup>5</sup> and who piqued himself so much on his candour and love of truth, should act so disingenuously towards you, equally pains and astonishes me. I have not yet spoken to Mrs Neilson on the subject as I am not certain that you are serious in desiring it, and I do not wish to give unnecessary uneasiness to any body[,] especially one to whom we were so much indebted for kindness and attention at a time when we required it

and I am pretty certain that from her husband there were no [Fol. 1b] complaints as she made a point of showing us all her letters since we came from Dublin, a mark of confidence I did not much relish, as it demanded a return ^&^ that did not altogether accord with my ideas[,] besides I thought it imposed a degree of slavery upon herself as she appeared ashamed to withdraw it, tho the two or three last times we did not shew ours in return[.] [N]ot that we kept them back so much from reserve[,] as because we did not happen to have them about us when we saw her until they were out of date and when they did not mention her husband I thought they w[oul]d not be very interesting to her and still less so when he was mentioned with disapprobation - Frank will give you a shawl of our manufacturing for ^a^ present to the Jailor[']s wife either as a reward for past kindness or to procure it in future -<sup>6</sup> It gives us all infinite satisfaction to hear our friend Russell is well and in good spirits. I was much afraid he had no companions to his taste and of course that his spirits wd flag[.] [H]e still continues to be the first of men in the esteem of his young friends the Tombs, especially Isabella<sup>7</sup> who had heard a few days ago that he was soon to get out[.] [S]he begged<sup>8</sup> Babs wd make Ellen<sup>9</sup> teach her a tune she

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<sup>5</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X Neilson>

<sup>6</sup> ^XXXX^ [MAM later ed., ink]. Six X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

<sup>7</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: < Isabella Tomb 8 or 9 years of age>

<sup>8</sup> ^her sister^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>9</sup> Either the Ellen Holmes mentioned in Letter 3 or their mother, Elinor "Ellen" Tomb (b. 8 November 1749).

had observed he seemed to like, it was ““Away with you, kilties[,]”

that she might be fit to play it [---] when she wd see him [Fol. 2a]  
again, which she can now do. We have never heard from Bunting  
since he left home and as promised positively to write frequently  
we are beginning to be very uneasy lest some misfortune has  
happened

him and we don[']t know how to ~~enquire about him~~ ^make enquiry^  
as writing to

strangers in London about him wd be placing him in such an  
awkward situation and hurt his feelings very much -

We send you M<sup>rs</sup> Wollstonecraft's<sup>10</sup> travels thro Norway Sweden  
&c.<sup>11</sup> [O]n reading it I think it [---] ^seems^ rather a description  
of her own feelings[,] which appear uncommonly exquisite[,] than  
of the country she passed thro', but as every production of ~~such~~  
[...tear...] one possessing such talents is interesting[,] I hope y[ou]<sup>12</sup>  
[wi]ll<sup>13</sup>

find it a more pleasing amusement than drinking. [W]e have  
also added M<sup>r</sup> Godwin[']s<sup>14</sup> new publication which I suppose  
you have not yet seen[.]<sup>15</sup> [I]t is less excentric [sic] that is to say more  
con-

sistent with common sense than his Political Justice[.]<sup>16</sup>

[H]ow does it happen that people do not act according to their  
reasoning as he[,] notwithstanding all he says against matri-  
mony[,] is now married to M<sup>rs</sup> Wollstonecraft who had once  
an equal contempt for the ceremony but she was cured by

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft (27 April 1759–10 September 1797), English author, philosopher and proto-feminist.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (London: J. Johnson, 1796).

<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> William Godwin (3 March 1756–7 April 1836), English author, philosopher and journalist who married Mary Wollstonecraft on 29 March 1797.

<sup>15</sup> William Godwin, *The Enquirer. Reflections On Education, Manners, And Literature*. (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797).

<sup>16</sup> William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (London: G.G and J. Robinson, 1793).

experience[.] [F]or Mr Emily[.]<sup>17</sup> the gentleman to whom her letters are addressed[.] was much attached to her and wished to marry her, but as she was greatly involved in debt[.] she refused to submit to what she called a monkish ceremony as it would oblige  
 [Fol. 2b] ↵  
 him to pay what she contracted to serve her friends[.] [T]his I think was a false principle of honesty as it was more fit she should be in debt to her husband than <sup>^to^</sup> any body else[.] [T]he event proved she was wrong[.] for tho she considered the contract as binding as any ceremony could make it[.] the gentleman did not and when she returned from her travels with her infant daughter<sup>18</sup> whom she had taken with her[.] altho it was his business she was about which his situation prevented him from doing himself, yet she got him publicly living with an actress. [T]he effect this had on a woman of her feeling is easier imagined than described[.] [S]he refused ever to see or speak to him more. I have just

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<sup>17</sup> Gilbert Imlay (9 February 1754–20 November 1828), American author and diplomat with whom Mary Wollstonecraft had a brief relationship between 1793 and 1794.

<sup>18</sup> Frances “Fanny” Imlay (14 May 1794–9 October 1816), illegitimate daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay. After the death of her mother, Fanny was raised in the household of William Godwin and his second wife Mary Jane Clairmont, along with her half-sister Mary Shelly, née Godwin (30 August 1797–1 February 1851) and four other step-siblings. She committed suicide at the age of twenty-two.

rec<sup>d</sup> a most agreeable letter from M<sup>r</sup> Bunting,<sup>19</sup> the Irish Music<sup>20</sup> is complete[,] all but the Title Page and he has a prospect of making a great deal of money by them[.] [T]his will [...tear...]<sup>21</sup> as much as it does us - [O]n looking over what I have written I think we are rather fastidious, and that we ought to make great allowances for the actions of those who are still in a painful situation & who may perhaps be under considerable embarrassment about their family affairs, but nobody could ~~make greater allowances~~ have more consideration for the weakness of others

than you used to have[.] ~~without~~ [Y]our usual philosophy has forsaken you[,] however we shall expect a full and circumstantial account of every thing as you know Frank[']s reserve - M<sup>rs</sup> McCracken gives W<sup>m</sup> entirely into your charge and expects you will guard him like the apple of your eye and keep him and whatever might injure him at a distance from each other, as from what we hear[,] we are not a little afraid that you all make a great

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<sup>19</sup> Missing letter, Edward Bunting [presumably London] to MAM [Belfast], received 10 August 1797.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never Before Published, and also the Compositions of Conolan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers &c. in the Different Provinces of Ireland, and Adapted for the Piano-Forte, with a Prefatory Introduction* (London: Preston & Son, 1797).

Although the manuscript gives no publication date, it is often cited as 1796 which falls into conflict with the contents of this letter dated 10 August 1797, wherein MAM wrote to inform her brother of the manuscript's upcoming publication. Upon pointing out this discrepancy to music researcher Dr Karen Loomis, she referred me to a note within Bunting's annotated personal copy of his second volume, held in the British Library. It reads, "this air is my 1st vol: 1796 is so unlike his other melody's [sic] that I suspect the air is pure old Irish." See BL Addl 41508,f.57r. Colette Moloney, lecturer in music at Waterford Institute of Technology, confirms that these annotated notes are in Bunting's own hand. Further evidence that Bunting regarded the publication date as 1796 appears in *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, where Fox quotes from Bunting's "own circular" that the publication was "the first and only collection of genuine Irish harp music given to the world up to the year 1796." Fox, *Annals*, 23. In order to further answer my question, Loomis approached the harpist, Ann Herman who commented "given the political climate and the selling of subscriptions, typesetting, printing and distribution, I can easily see where pinpointing an exact date might be difficult. If I were Bunting, I would date it upon my completion of the work, perhaps even before rigorous editing." Loomis therefore concluded that "publication and distribution began in 1796 but continued into 1797, which would explain the comment in the letter." Dr Karen Loomis, e-mail message to author, October 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Obstructed by a tear.

deal too free with yourselves[.] [C]ould you not find more amusement  
in reading ^than drinking^ now that you subscribe to a circulating  
library[?] If you wish

for a novel next to Caleb Williams for originality get Emma Courtney  
\_22

<It is written by Mary Hayes[,] Mrs W<sup>23</sup> Godwin[']s particular  
Friend.>

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Hayes, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (London: G.G and J. Robinson, 1796). An early feminist novel.

<sup>23</sup> Evidently, MAM began to write "Wollstonecraft."

**31. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 24 August 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/132

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tears caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking, circular date stamp, postal charge

Kilmainham 24th August 1797 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

When Frank left this, it was my intention to have written very fully with him, but from his want of desision [sic] did not think he would have went so soon[,] as he at first said he would stay and spend all saturday with us[,] instead of which[,] he called on friday even<sup>s</sup> to bid farewell, and did not wait many minuets [sic], so disap[p]ointed many beside W<sup>m</sup> & I - [H]owever[,] as Tho<sup>s</sup> Kane will soon be in Belfast[,] the particulars you desire you will have by him as well as the Books for John. [S]ince Frank left this & for somedays before[,] I have been very much troubled with the Rheumatism in both my arms, so much so that untill this day I could not write, but am now considerably better[.] [Y]ou no doubt know before this that Cha<sup>s</sup> Teeling is admitted to bail on consequence of his having a fever, poor Story, I am afraid[,] is in the the same situation, all the rest of the prisoners are very well. [A]s W<sup>m</sup> has been writting since the letter you notice in yours[,] that I rec<sup>d</sup> this day[,] I need hardly say a word

except that he is very well. I am very sorry to hear of any [Fol. 1b] accident happening to M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson, she has suffered very much[.] [I]t is now nearly 12 months since Sam was taken, during which she has ^had^ little else than trouble & disap[p]ointment - Remember me affectionately to all the family & to our good

friends at Orange Grove –

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

The shirts are very good & fit very well except the wrist which is a little to[o] tight[.] [A]t present I have abundance. [W]hen I leave this, if ever[,] we will talk of more[.]

Mary Mar<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Circular date stamp, faint black ink]<sup>2</sup>  
[Postal charge]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Possibly a pen trial for the superscription.

<sup>2</sup> "[...]/ [...]/ 97."

<sup>3</sup> "5."

<sup>4</sup> "24 Aug 97 Kilmainham/ H J M."

**32. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 1 September 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/131

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by an unknown bearer

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, folding tears on Fol. 2, tears caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking. Fol. 3 was pasted onto Fol. 2b by Mary Ann to prevent further damage. The transparency of this folio reveals the text written on Fol. 2b

Kilmainham 1<sup>st</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 1797 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

This day I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of the 30<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1  
which has given us a great deal of uneasiness as Will<sup>m</sup> has  
written often since the 23<sup>d</sup>[,] none of which have gone to hand[.]  
[Y]esterday & the day before[,] he wrote<sup>2</sup> & will this night ^if^ he can  
get time[.]<sup>3</sup> as [H]e is busy at present writting for the Governor[.]  
We are all very well & in good spirits[,] not the least simptom [sic]  
of a fever in this place. Story[,] who was ill a few days, is  
at present well & ho<sup>p</sup>ping about[.] [S]ome of the prisoners may[,]  
for  
a day or so[,] get into bad spirits but no other illness has been  
here since Cha<sup>s</sup> Teeling left us, his father is here at present  
& will take this to the post office.<sup>4</sup> [H]e has told me that Char<sup>s</sup> is  
much better & able to go from one room to another - Neither

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin], 30 August 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letters, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to McCracken family [Belfast], 31 August 1797 and 30 August, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133).

<sup>4</sup> This would suggest that it was HJM's understanding while writing this letter, that it would be taken by Luke Teeling to the Post Office for postal delivery. However, in MAM's reply (Letter 34), she tells him that she had expected his letter to come by post but that it was in fact delivered by "a private hand" on Thursday 7 September.

Mr Killburn nor Sam<sup>l</sup> Neilson have <sup>^not^</sup> been ill <sup>^at least not</sup>  
dangerously<sup>^</sup> but I think they  
are both in very bad spirits. Ja<sup>s</sup> Burnside is perfectly well  
& has every appearance of continuing so - [M]y opinion is that  
not one of [the] prisoners here will be sent to Carrick this assises [sic]  
[.]

[W]hen Frank was here he could know very little about the [Fol. 1b]  
situation of our minds, or the causes of our actions as he gave  
us very little of his company[.] [H]e sat down three times in our  
room[.] [O]nce he staid better than 10 minutes[,], the other times[,]  
taken  
together[,], might amount to about 5 minutes[.] [B]y that you may  
judge how much he heard from me[.] [P]erhaps as he spent most  
of his time when in jail with others[,], he may have formed his  
opinion from them - [I]ndeed[,], he appeared very much distressed  
when  
here & I am sure he was so, to see the conduct of the people  
here, little wonder when one of his greatest favourites<sup>5</sup> struck me [---]  
in the head with a saucepan of scalding water without any  
just provocation [sic], & battered my poor pate untill the pan was  
crushed compleatly [sic] & would have continued longer his  
employment  
if he had not been prevented[.] [T]hen to show his courage when  
on equal terms he slunk off, but he is Rich & honourable, out  
of twenty two none but two have escaped his kindness that way[.]  
I should have given you a full account of what was the

origin of all disputes here, but have been for some days past [Fol. 2a]  
very ill with Rh[e]umatism[.] [T]his day I am much better &  
will[,], if <sup>^I^</sup> continue so[,], answer all of ~~you~~, <sup>^your</sup> letters rec<sup>d</sup>  
yesterday by M<sup>rs</sup> Dry[.]<sup>^</sup> [T]ell M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson  
Tho<sup>s</sup> is very well - It will be a shame for Rose Ann to be uneasy  
about W<sup>m</sup> when she h[ear]s<sup>6</sup> that the only sickness here is low  
spirits (at present) af[te]r<sup>7</sup> her accounting so well for his superior

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Haslett.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

temper, indeed all the jail are forced to admire it - [G]ive my  
love to all the family[.] [R]emember ^me^ also to our good friends in  
Malone[.]<sup>8</sup> [B]elieve me to be with affection yours  
Hy J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Y]esterday being my birthday[,] which I believe made me  
thirty[,] I gave a large jug of Punch to my fellow  
prisoners - ~~I should~~

[Superscription] [Fol. 2b]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

Mary Ann  
M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>9</sup> [Fol. 3a]

[Fol. 3b, obscured]

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<sup>8</sup> Referring to the Templeton family.

<sup>9</sup> "1 Sep 97 Prison/ H J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**33. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 1 September 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/133

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, folding tears on Fol. 2, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking, circular date stamp, postal charge

Kilmainham 1 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>

As Henry has wrote Mary this day[,]<sup>1</sup>  
I must this to you[,] tho it will be rather an answer  
to Mary[']s letter than the last I had from you[.]<sup>2</sup>  
I think Rose Ann must in this<sup>3</sup> have received  
some of four letters I wrote her since this day[,]  
eight days<sup>4</sup> and all of them design'd for the post  
& sent by people I thought would have taken the  
trouble of putting them in the office. I can acco<sup>t</sup>  
no other way for this not going to hand than the  
neglect of the persons I entrusted them with[.] [I]f  
the last I wrote Rose Ann is received[,] it will show  
that private hands are not any more to be  
depended on as my situation (from not having  
letters from Rose Ann who is pre[t]ty punctual)  
was fully as bad as you can possibly describe

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 32 (TCD MS873/131).

<sup>2</sup> Missing letters, Mary Ann McCracken to William McCracken, c. August 1797 and Margaret McCracken to William McCracken, c. August 1797.

<sup>3</sup> In this packet of letters.

<sup>4</sup> Since 24 August 1797.

<The news of a general peace that we heard by diff<sup>t</sup> people this day  
seems not to be doubted  
by any.>

yours to be[;] mine I will not pretend to describe[.] [Fol. 1b]  
[T]he information that Mary wishes for of our internal  
a[r]guments it is impossible for me to inform  
you of after the ^many^ different times I have said  
that every thing that hap[p]ened here should rest  
& abide with ourselves & nothing ^but^ seeing the  
innocent charg'd with faults committed by  
others will induce me to speak & I hope  
that will not ha^p^pen, if it does I will  
endeavour to lay the sa[d]dle on the right  
horse as far as comes within my knowledge[.]  
[B]oth Frank & Mary give me a great deal to[o]  
much credit on Account of temper. I don[']t believe  
any one felt more than I did nor was more  
inclined to resent certain actions but I considered  
our situations & the harm it might do the

whole & I must confess[,] tho I have the good fortune [Fol. 2a]  
to meet the ap[p]robation of you all[,] I will say Job himself  
could not hold out much longer[.] I know I am perfectly  
unequal to the task (it[']s a bad simile but I'm much vexed[.])  
I am glad to find the highlanders & the people are so  
friendly with each other but I w<sup>d</sup> rather it had been  
the entire soldiery. I am perfectly [aware] of Mary[']s opinion  
that in some situations the duty of a mother super  
=cedes [sic] any other but as I have said[,] nothing should  
transpire that ha[p]pens here[,] it may  
be that should go as far as one[']s  
thoughts[,] then I will only say that  
I never had an opp<sup>y</sup> of knowing mankind until  
I came here. It is extraordinary the effect a carriage of  
a person[']s own has in keeping them alive[.] [I]t might  
appear unfeeling to say pride kept the life going  
in the case Mary mentions, yet I can[']t help think

so, no disparagement to her[.]<sup>5</sup> [T]here is no one[,] for all that[,]  
has a better heart[.] [G]ive my love to Templetons and  
every other friend and believe me Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>  
Yours affc<sup>ly</sup> Wm M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

To Rose[,] what do you mean by “William liked black strap[?]” I knew your writing tho it was in Mary[']s letter[.] [Fol. 2b]  
[Y]ou stole it in so you need not say any more about  
it. [T]hat is[,] you need not say you did not write but  
you will [say] what you mean by it[.]<sup>6</sup> [G]ood night[,] I will  
write you in the morning[,] yours aff<sup>y</sup> W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>7</sup>

[Postal charge]<sup>8</sup>

[Superscription]  
Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[5 clover illustrations, pencil]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> William McCracken is likely referring to the Templetons' aunt who had been ill for some time and whose death MAM had presumably announced in her previous letter. See Letter 18 (TCD MS873/121).

<sup>6</sup> William McCracken does not expect his wife to explain the circumstances of her writing in MAM's letter but wishes to know the meaning of the sentence “William liked black strap.”

<sup>7</sup> “SE/ 2/ 97.”

<sup>8</sup> “5.”

<sup>9</sup> “Kilmainham 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 1797/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken.”

**34. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 11 September 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/134

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, lined paper, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, ink blots, tuck and seal letterlocking

Belfast 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 97

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Harry

I did not receive ^yours^ of the 1<sup>st</sup> instant till Thursday last<sup>1</sup> and had by that time given up all hopes of it as I supposed it had been detained at the post office on account of some unguarded expression and was therefore very glad to find I was mistaken as it came by a private hand —<sup>2</sup> [W]e were much more shocked than surprized at the brutal [be]haviour<sup>3</sup> of one who was always^been^ reckoned a Tyrant<sup>4</sup> and who has still been so universally disliked that I have frequently wondered at Frank's attachment to him, however we took care not to mention it to my Father or Mother as we knew how much it would vex them, and there is already too much made public of the interiour [sic] transactions of the prison and that[,] I believe[,] with exaggeration – I have not yet come to an explanation

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to Letter 32 (TCD MS873/131) which was received on Thursday 7 September 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Clearly MAM was aware that HJM had written to her on 1 September as William McCracken mentions it to Margaret McCracken in his letter of the same date, "As Henry has wrote Mary this day, I must this to you." See Letter 33 (TCD MS873/133). This would suggest that MAM had either read William McCracken's letter or that Margaret Margaret, having read it, informed her sister that HJM had also written a letter to her on 1 September.

<sup>3</sup> Partially obstructed by an ink blot.

<sup>4</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: < X H. Haslett >

to ^with^ Mrs Neilson as I thought the only proper method of so doing was by enclosing all yours and W<sup>m</sup>'s letters in which you had mentioned the affair as I considered it but fair to be as candid on the one side as I expected her to be on the other, besides I thought it would be the only

way to convince her in what style you spoke of it[,] as [Fol. 1b]  
I imagine you have been greatly misrepresented, but this I did not think myself at liberty to do without W<sup>m</sup>'s leave and yours[.]<sup>5</sup> [I]f you both approve of it you may let me know when you write next - We were all a little disappointed last week at not getting any letters ~~last week~~ by J-H<sup>6</sup> or any other private hand tho several arrived and our disappointment was more sensibly felt by our meeting with another much more severe on Tuesday last<sup>7</sup> ^from having our hopes raised even to c[er]tainty<sup>8</sup> of your liberation^ in consequence of the misinterpretation of a letter from the gentleman above mentioned<sup>9</sup> to Mr Hunter,<sup>10</sup> as it related to some business that it was not proper he should appear concerned in and was to come thro the post office[.] [I]t was intentionally obscure, and only meant to be intelligible to the person to whom it was addressed[.] [T]he expression that deceived us all was "that they were all out and would be down on saturday[.]" [T]his appeared so plainly to mean the Prisoners

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<sup>5</sup> [your]s ^consent^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>6</sup> ^John Hughes^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>7</sup> Tuesday 5 September.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by an ink blot.

<sup>9</sup> Presumably, Henry Haslett.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Hunter, Presbyterian ship broker, freemason and a member of the Provincial Committee of the United Irishmen. He was arrested sometime between 6 and 7 June 1798 and apprehended on the prison ship in Belfast Lough along with William Tennent, John Hughes, Samuel Smith and among others, his own servant. On 25 March 1799, Hunter, Robert Simms, William Tennent and Rev. Steele Dickson joined sixteen of the United Irishmen state prisoners from Dublin onboard a vessel bound for Fort George Prison in Inverness, Scotland. See Thomas Crofton Croker and Samuel McSkimin, "Secret History of the Irish Insurrection of 1803," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 14, no. 83 (November 1836): 546.

to the sanguine temper of the person who got the letter[,] tho' understanding what the rest of it alluded to[,] that he supposed its not being more explicit was owing to

the great haste in which it was written[.] [I]t was therefore [Fol. 2a] little wonder that we should mistake it[,] who only looked at one line[.] [T]he good news soon spread thro the Town, and smiles of pleasure and exultation brightened every countenance[.] I ran in to congratulate M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson who had already heard the joyful tidings and was weeping with delight, but short was our triumph, her tears soon [---] ^flowed^ from another source and all our joy ended in disappointment[.] [W]ithin about half an hour M<sup>r</sup> Hunter returned with a dejected look and voice to tell us that he was not [...seal...] now so sanguine as at first, as no other letter mention[ed]<sup>11</sup> the circumstance, and there was one from M<sup>r</sup> Simms<sup>12</sup> of the same date ~~in which he~~ and on further consideration he imagined his entirely related to the business it began about which he then explained, and we were all much surprized at his mistake (tho we could not be angry as it proceeded from his desire to believe what he wished to be true, and his haste in communicating it was from the same motive) – [T]ho considerably damped by this we by no means lost hope entirely as it

was still possible that all the letters of the same date [Fol. 2b] had been written in the morning and that it had been written late in the evening before it became generally known and this belief was strengthened by a report that a gentleman who came in the Mail Coach had brought the same account and after finding out who the gentleman

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<sup>11</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>12</sup> Either Robert Simms (March 1761–2 August 1843) or his brother William Simms (1763–1843). Presbyterians of Belfast, United Irishmen, owners of a paper mill at Ballyclare and proprietors of the *Northern Star*. They were incarcerated in Newgate Prison in 1797. Robert Simms reluctantly became adjutant-general for Antrim in November 1797 only to resign on 1 June 1798. After the rebellion, Robert was arrested and sent to Fort George Prison. He was released in January 1802 and permitted to return to Belfast.

was and that he was out of Town ^about a couple of miles^ we were  
obliged to  
restrain our impatience till M<sup>rs</sup> McCracken[']s Brother<sup>13</sup>  
rode out [---] to see him and make enquiry, and we then  
found to our extreme mortification that he had not  
heard the report till he came to Belfast, thus ended  
all our gay hopes and flattening expectations –  
The Templetons and both the M<sup>rs</sup> McCrackens join us  
all in love to you and W<sup>m</sup> - yours affec<sup>y</sup>

Mary

[Superscription]  
M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Kilmainham  
Dublin

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> James McGlathery, brother of Rose-Ann McCracken.

<sup>14</sup> "1797/ for D<sup>r</sup> Madden."

**35. Rose Ann McCracken and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 27 September 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/135

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tears caused by breaking of a red wax seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking, incomplete circular date stamp, town name stamp, postal charge

Belfast September 27<sup>th</sup> 1797 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Henry

As William will not answer my letters[,] I am now going to try what success I have with you, but there is great excuse to be made for you as your rheumatism is not quite gone[.] [I]f you are not very ill with it when you receive this[,] you will much oblige me by writing a few lines by return of post, as I fear that William is not well[.] [I]f he is[,] I think him very unkind[.] [H]e never was so long before without writing me but the time he was ill[.] [I]f you are not able to write yourself[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson will take the trouble of writing me a few lines[.] [I]f I was sure that you and he were both well I should not be so uneasy as I am at this moment[.] [W]e shall have the pleasure of seeing you as we intend leaving this for Dublin some time next week[.] [Y]our friends here are all well. Miss Mary will tell you all the news[.] [R]emember me to William if you think ^that^ necessary - [A]dieu Dear Henry and believe me to be your sincere friend

R A McCracken

P.S.[.] [P]lease present our compliments to M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson and tell M<sup>rs</sup> ^R^ I will be glad to hear soon from her[.]

Sept 27<sup>th</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1b]

Dear Harry

As William has been so frequently ill of late and there has been no letters from him since this day week,<sup>1</sup> we are all very uneasy lest he it should be sickness that prevents him ^from writing^[.] [D]o not therefore ^neglect^ to inform us truly how you both are directly on receipt of this[.] [W]e intend going up either ~~the~~ the latter end of next week or the beginning of the week following[.] [W]e would therefore wish you both to apply immediately for leave to see us, that there may be neither delay or demur when we arrive. We are informed that Bills of indictment were found at Carrick Assizes against all the State Prisoners who are at present confined in Dublin, and [---] all those who have been liberated on bail except W<sup>m</sup> Davidson,<sup>2</sup> but are not sorry to hear that their Trials can not come on before Feb<sup>y</sup>, as that of M<sup>r</sup> <sup>3</sup>Orr[']<sup>s</sup><sup>4</sup> has clearly proved that there is neither justice nor mercy to be expected[.]<sup>5</sup> [E]ven the greatest Aristocrats here join in lamenting his fate, but his greatness of mind renders him rather an object

of envy and admiration that [sic] of compassion. I am told [Fol. 2a] that his wife is gone with a letter from Lady London

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letters, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to McCracken family, received 20 September 1797.

<sup>2</sup> William Davidson, United Irishman from Greenwell Street, Newtownards and cousin of Joseph Orr. On 9 June 1798, later known as Pike Sunday, Davidson, alongside Samuel Rankin, led an attack on the King's forces at the Newtownards market house. In 1798 he was transported to Australia.

<sup>3</sup> ^[^ [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> ^trial^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>5</sup> William Orr (1766–14 October 1797), of Milltown, County Antrim, Presbyterian, landowner, mason, Antrim Volunteer and United Irishman. Orr was tried and executed in 1797, becoming the first martyr of the United Irishmen. During the 1798 rebellion "Remember Orr" was used as a rallying cry.

Derry<sup>6</sup> to her Brother<sup>7</sup> & on his behalf, if this be true I think it shows her to be equal in firmness and energy of character to her husband[.] [I]f you have not already heard it you will be surprized & when I tell you that old Arch<sup>d</sup> Thompson of Cushendall was foreman of the Jury, and it is thought will loose his senses if M<sup>r</sup> Orr[']s sentence is put in execution, as he appears already quite distracted at the idea of a person being condemned to die thro' his ignorance, as it seems he did not at all und[er-]<sup>8</sup>stand the business of a Jury man, however he held out from the forenoon till six o[']clock in the morning tho' it is said he was beat, and threatened with being wrecked and not left a sixpence in ^the^ World, on his refusing to bring in the verdict guilty, neither would they let him taste of the supper or drink which was sent to the rest, and of which they partook to such a beastly degree[.] [W]as it therefore to be much wondered at if an infirm old man should<sup>9</sup> not have sufficient resolution to hold out against such treatment[?]<sup>10</sup> It will not much surprize you I suppose to hear that two Attorneys have turned informers at Downpatrick, one of them cousin to Charles Brett,<sup>11</sup> [---] a Doctor also has acted the same worthy part which is rather

extraordinary from the liberal education they in general receive, but if we live long enough I suppose we will [Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> Frances Stewart née Lady Pratt (1751–18 January 1833), married Robert Stewart, 1st Marquess of Londonderry on 7 June 1775. The title “Countess of Londonderry” was bestowed upon her on 8 August 1796.

<sup>7</sup> John Jeffreys Pratt (11 February 1759–8 October 1840), 2nd Earl and 1st Marquess Camden, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1795 until 1798.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>9</sup> “man, should” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>10</sup> ^]^[Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>11</sup> Charles Brett (1752–23 June 1829), of Belfast, Anglican wine merchant and Barrack Master for Belfast from 1815 onwards. By 1790 he owned a large townhouse at 58 High Street and later built a house at Charleville in Castlereagh.

not be surprized by any thing. [D]o you not think  
your ~~taste for mechanism~~ [...] time might be  
usefully employed in your present situation by ~~im-~~  
improving your taste for mechanics[?] [T]hese are two  
subjects that have long made me wish for knowledge  
in that useful science[.] [W]ould it not be possible to  
contrive some machinery to supply the use of horses and  
servants[?] [A]t least it would be well worth the labour of many  
years to try some experiments to that purpose - [F]arewell[,]  
all the family join in aff<sup>t</sup> remembrances to you both  
and believe me to be yours, Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>12</sup>

[Town name stamp, red]<sup>13</sup>

[Postal charge]<sup>14</sup>

[Superscription]  
M<sup>r</sup> Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Kilmainham Prison  
Dublin

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>15</sup>

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "SEP."

<sup>13</sup> "BELFAST."

<sup>14</sup> "5 6."

<sup>15</sup> "from M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ 27 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1797/ enquiries for W<sup>m</sup>."

<sup>16</sup> "Respecting Orr's/ trial [...seal...] the/ general feeling/ on that subject/ Sep 97."

**36. Mary Ann McCracken [Dublin] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** October 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/136

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, lined paper, ink blots, faint ink finger print on Fol. 2a, fold letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Harry

Well knowing the candour and generosity of your heart[,] I am certain an explanation is as much wished for by you as by the person to whose peace of mind it is so very essential and as you can never find him alone[,] would it not be better to come to the point by writing, as <sup>^than^</sup> to wait for an opportunity, which may ~~never~~ <sup>^not^</sup> occur, & thus defer it until it is perhaps too late[.] [B]esides it would agitate, and affect him less, and that in his present state of health should certainly be considered[.] [A]nother reason why a written explanation should be prefe[r]red, is that it would be more decisive and less liable to misrepresentation, as the words of a conversation may be forgotten, and others substituted in their place, ~~merely~~ apparently similar, but not bearing exactly the same meaning, and that without the least ill intention[.] As a simple relation of facts is all that is necessary to restore harmony and affection, you whose motives, words and actions will<sup>2</sup> all

---

<sup>1</sup> "Respecting the disagreements/ between the state prisoners/ in Kilmainham in 1797."

<sup>2</sup> "actions, will" [comma omitted (ed.)].

will all [sic] bear the strictest investigation, ~~will~~ ^need^ not shrink from the task[.] [O]ught men of superior sense and virtue, who have long ~~been~~ enjoyed ~~the esteem and affection of each other~~ ^mutual esteem & confidence^ and who never for an instant suspected each other's integrity, suffer themselves to be disunited, and their affections estranged by<sup>3</sup> the misrepresentations of fools or knaves, when it is so easy to come to a right understanding by<sup>4</sup> merely

~~The pomp of courts and power of Kings~~ [Fol. 1b]  
~~I prize above all earthly things~~  
~~I love my Country but the King<sup>5</sup>~~  
declaring the truth - [I]f any thing contrary to that was requisite,  
I would not urge you, for much as I regard his peace of mind, and much  
as I value his life, if both depended on it, I would be the last person in the world to wish you either to utter or to sign a falsehood if that were necessary to restore him – Is it not the duty of every person to promote the happiness of others as much as in their power, and in the present case it is not merely the happiness of one or two individuals that is concerned, as ^in this ease^ the links that connect society  
and render the happiness of many in some measure dependent on that of each individual, is rather more extended than usual

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<sup>3</sup> “estranged, by” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>4</sup> “understanding, by” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> A poem written and distributed by Arthur O'Connor. Despite appearances, when re-arranged, the lines recant loyalty to the Crown and reaffirm the principles of the United Irishmen:

- (1) The pomp of courts, and pride of kings,
- (3) I prize above all earthly things;
- (5) I love my country, but my king,
- (7) Above all men his praise I'll sing.
- (9) The royal banners are display'd,
- (11) And may success the standard aid:
- (2) I fain would banish far from hence
- (4) The Rights of Man and Common Sense.
- (6) Destruction to that odious name,
- (8) The plague of princes, Thomas Paine,
- (10) Defeat and ruin seize the cause
- (12) Of France, her liberty, and laws.

and it is the ardent wish of all your mutual friends to see you again united and on the same footing of esteem, and affection, ^if possible[,]^ as

formerly. It is not injurious to the cause of union when two men who from the first went hand in hand ~~in~~ endeavouring to promote it, should set such an example of disunion betwixt themselves and that without any serious breach of friendship, is not your variance an equal cause of triumph to your enemies as of vexation to to [sic] your friends[?] [W]ill they not point at each of you as you pass and

[Fol. 2a]↵

^say^ there goes a promoter of union, he [c]ould<sup>6</sup> not agree with his bosom

friend, and certainly the situation of your families is deserving of some consideration, both have suffered much of late from a variety of causes, and ought you needlessly to add to their unhappiness[?] [N]ot that their sufferings should induce you to do any thing in itself wrong to alleviate them, but would you not feel most unhappy yourself to think you had ^at least^ embittered the last moments[,] per-

haps shortened the days of a friend when it was in you to comfort and console him and I ~~feel assured~~ you are above that little narrow pride so inconsistent with real dignity, of hesitating to make the first advances or I am much mistaken in you[.] [M]en of sense and integrity are pearls of too great price to be cast aside for every failing and if you both examine yourselves[,] you will perhaps find that<sup>7</sup> there are very few for whom you have so much esteem and affection as you have for each other[.] [C]onsider[,] my dear Harry[,] how much is at stake, for while the envenomed dart rankles in his bosom the wound can never heal, and it is in your power and yours alone to ~~heal it~~ extract it. I therefore entreat you will seriously reflect on the subject and remember that an entire reconciliation between you is not only the earnest wish of all your friends but must be that also of

every friend to humanity and Truth -

[Fol. 2b]

Your ever affectionate sister,

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<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by an ink blot.

<sup>7</sup> "find, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

M. A. M<sup>c</sup>C

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "written in Dublin in 1797 Oct<sup>r</sup> the reconciliation/ afterwards took place —."

**37. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Henry Joy McCracken  
[Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]**

**Date:** 3 November 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/137

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Belfast 3<sup>d</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Harry

I wrote this morning to M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup><sup>1</sup> intending to send it by post but was rather late, and understanding that Phoebe Burnside<sup>2</sup> wished for a letter to Kilmainham, where she and her daughter Peggy set off <sup>^</sup>out<sup>^</sup> for this morning on foot, I sent Tom Ramsey<sup>3</sup> after her on a horse with it, as I thought in her present situation any appearance of neglect must give her double pain.<sup>4</sup> I know you all too well to think it necessary to <sup>^</sup>request you may<sup>^</sup> use your interest to have her well treated[.] [A]s there was nothing of any consequence in the letter[,] I need not repeat it except that we arrived safe without being much fatigued, and found all our friends well & in good spirits[.]<sup>5</sup> I have sent M<sup>r</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rose Ann McCracken who remained in Kilmainham Gaol with her husband.

<sup>2</sup> Phoebe Burnside, presumably the sister of James Burnside as if she was the wife or mother of James Burnside, MAM would most likely have referred to her as Mrs Burnside.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Ramsey, possibly a relation of James Ramsey the Belfast attorney.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Rose Ann McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol], 3 November 1797.

<sup>5</sup> Referencing MAM and Margaret McCracken's safe return to Belfast from Dublin.

Russel[l]'s pamphlet<sup>6</sup> to him but as it was enclosed in a blank cover he will be at a loss to know who ^it^ comes from. On Tuesday night<sup>7</sup> Mr Gordon<sup>8</sup> (father to Alex and John) got his house wrecked and not only his but almost all the houses in Glenavy<sup>9</sup> were wrecked also, and this evening several houses in the plantation<sup>10</sup> met with the same fate[.] I need not tell you what Jurors are summoned as there are many going or gone up who can give you much more information on that subject than I could possibly do, but my Mother charges me to tell you that she had<sup>11</sup>

it from good authority that Conway Carleton[,]<sup>12</sup> who is one<sup>13</sup> [Fol. 1b] of the number, said on All hallows['] eve to Christ<sup>r</sup> Hudson[,]<sup>14</sup> that if he was to be on your Jury you should never come home as you had[,] he said[,] twisted off his napper<sup>15</sup> about two years ago, and requested the other would reme<sup>m</sup>ber you also in the same kind manner if it came to his turn[,] which he promised also but I don't suppose it is necessary to warn you of these two men as you know them already. As John[']s affairs are not yet settled and he does not know when they may[,] it will not be in his power to go up before the trials come on but as there are so many Belfast people going up at present who will be both able and willing

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<sup>6</sup> TR's pamphlet, *A Letter to the People of Ireland on the Present Situation of the Country* was published in September 1796 by the Northern Star Office in Belfast.

<sup>7</sup> 31 October 1797.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Gordon, wine merchant whose business "Alexander Gordon & Sons" was based on Belfast's Callander Street. See Young, *Ulster in '98*, 92.

<sup>9</sup> Glenavy, a village in County Antrim.

<sup>10</sup> ^a street in Belfast^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>11</sup> ^X X X X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. Four X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

<sup>12</sup> Conway Carleton, juror and Orangeman.

<sup>13</sup> ^X X X X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. Four X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Hudson, Orangeman and tanner, for whom Belfast's Hudson's Entry was said to be named.

<sup>15</sup> Eighteenth century slang for a person's head.

to serve you I hope you will be at no loss –  
Counsellor Joy set out this morning on horseback but does  
not expect to be in Dublin before Sunday, of course we did  
not write or send any thing by him! –<sup>16</sup>  
My sister recollects the little Scotch officer who came down  
with us to be the same M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup> told her W<sup>m</sup> had asked  
to take a bottle of wine with him, who answered he would  
with pleasure when he was out of prison but could ^not^ drink  
with him in his present situation. We took in a Gentleman  
at Hil[l]sbrough who had come outside from Newry and  
could not find out who he was tho' we had a great curiosity  
to know, as he said he was returning from London where  
he had been five weeks and ^had^ shook hands with M<sup>r</sup> Orr  
before he went away –<sup>17</sup> The weather has been so bad

[Fol. 2a]

that we have not seen [...seal...] <sup>18</sup> [R]ichardson[']s <sup>19</sup> children yet ↵  
but M<sup>r</sup> Green was in town to day[,] who told me that  
they were all very well – Remember us all to M<sup>r</sup> &  
M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson and to M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson and  
let us know how you are all going on and how the  
invalids are recovering - All the family join  
me in love to W<sup>m</sup>[,] M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup> and you - [F]arewell  
and believe me to be yours affecty

Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Tom M<sup>c</sup>Alis<sup>r</sup> wishes to know if you ever sent a line  
to M<sup>c</sup>Namee[,] the County Armagh girl, as she  
says you did —  
M<sup>r</sup> Kelbourn dined with us yesterday in company  
with M<sup>r</sup> Tomb<sup>20</sup> who was quite delighted with his good  
spirits[.]

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<sup>16</sup> Presumably, an ironic statement.

<sup>17</sup> The McCracken sisters encountered both the Scotch officer and the gentleman who was returning from London on their coach journey from Dublin to Belfast.

<sup>18</sup> Most likely, "M<sup>r</sup>."

<sup>19</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>20</sup> ^X^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This links to the following marginalia: <X David Tomb father to G. Tomb the Barrister>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>21</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

M<sup>r</sup> Henry M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "One Orangeman/ requesting another/ to find HJ M<sup>c</sup>C/ guilty if on his/ trial as a juror/ & Racking [sic] of houses."

<sup>22</sup> "Nov 97."

**38. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 15 November 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/138

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tuck and seal letterlocking, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, circular date stamp, postal charge

Kilmainham 15 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

We are all mad at you for not writing but I suppose you have been very busy as I know you are fond of writing and I take it into my head you care a little for us[,] therefore business is the only excuse left for you. [W]e hear this day that you are all well by a letter James Greer had from his wife[.] [T]hat is not the case with us[,] poor Harry is ill again with that infernal rh[e]umatism. I think if He could be got to make application he might get out[.] Pat Cleary<sup>1</sup> got out yesterday Evening and it is expected Will Kean will get out soon[.] [T]hey say he's in a bad fever. I have not went near him as I think [it] neither proper nor prudent[.]

We go on much as when you were here with the other parties. M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson makes the short wheele [sic] when she is likely to meet Rose and she does not chuse to force herself on her so that I don[']t go into Sam[']s room now as much as formerly[,] tho He and I are friendly enough when we meet. I am determined to be so with every one as long as I can and I think he will never give me reason to be otherwise[.]

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Cleary, clerk to Mr. Speers, the Belfast woollen draper. Cleary was transferred from Belfast's artillery barracks to Kilmainham Gaol in May 1797.

I would suppose John has time enough on his hands to devote 5 minuits [sic] in the week in writing a line to us to inform us how you all are. I did not use to be left without knowledge of you and Rose says you argued with her that a Sister must feel for her brother as much as a wife for her husband. I must say that your not writing

argues greatly against you. The Gov<sup>t</sup> continues to increase their care of us[.] [T]he Grand Jury were here yesterday examining the Jail Accounts &<sup>c</sup>. They ordered eighteen lamps to be put round the jail and that the Guard should fire on any one that ~~came~~ should come within fourteen yards of their post at night. I have been very busy writing Callendars [sic] for the Term and for the Sessions and A[cc]<sup>ts</sup><sup>2</sup> for the Grand Jury almost every day since you left this and was yesterday employed by a Justice that I met in the parlour to write a bail bond for! Bother the Grief. I don[']t know whether you were acquainted with that Lady. She has been confined here these 6 months for beating Justice Swan<sup>3</sup> and expected to be transported. I think it a small offence for so great a punishment. [G]ive my love to all the family with Rose & Henry[']s and believe me Dear Mary your affect Brother  
W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a]

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Postal charge]<sup>5</sup>

[Superscription]

Miss Mary Ann McCracken

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<sup>2</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>3</sup> Major William Bellingham Swan (c.1765–12 January 1837), of Dublin, commander of the Revenue Corps of yeomen, deputy and chief arresting magistrate to Major Sirr.

<sup>4</sup> "NO/ 16/ 97."

<sup>5</sup> "5."

Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "15 Nov 97/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C."

**39. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 19 November 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/139

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 19<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Marg<sup>t</sup>

It is almost time for me to write but as you heard from this by others[,] I thought it almost useless as the only thing we can say here is that we are still living either in health or otherwise[.] [A] few days ago[,] one of the State prisoners was liberated on Bail, P. Cleary[,] as no Bills were found against him, it is therefore very probable that more may have the same good luck, as there were none found against five – We have not yet had the pleasure of seeing Cons<sup>er</sup> Joy, but his maid by whom you wrote call'd with the letters & said he was very well[.] [I]ndeed[,] there are very few private hands that I would either wish to send or receive a letter by, as the one by M<sup>r</sup> W, whoever he is, from Mary to me, I got ready opened to my hand.<sup>1</sup> I suppose to ^was^ [sic] save me trouble as they knew that my arm was weak with the Rheumatism[.] [T]his attention I do not [know] who I am obliged [sic] to for, as I believe it was left in Bond[']s & it came to the jail by

[Fol. 1b]

M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson[.] [C]uriosity can do a great deal sometimes, it makes ↵ people do what they blame most in others - Yesterday[,] two men were executed in front of the Jail for Robbing the

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin], November 1797. It is unlikely that this is a reference Letter 37 (the previous letter from MAM to HJM) as this letter does not mention a "Mr W."

mail in June last, they died with the greatest fortitude[.] [I]t gives one a sort of carelessness about death to see such sights[.] [O]ne of them ^John Bynge<sup>2</sup> wrought in Belfast with a Cha<sup>s</sup> Davis when I

was taken up, he knew me very well, & lament[ed] greatly that he was to die for crime he was ashamed ^of^ & not for the good of his Country[.] [T]he morn<sup>s</sup> of his execution he said to the prisoners[.] you will live to see your Country free while I die for my folly[.] [G]oing past our window to execution he turned round & saluted us three times with the greatest composure - [Y]ou see that if there was anything worth while writing about you would have it, when such a trifle occupys so much paper[.] Mary still blames me for leaving so much paper waste, but ^what^ can one fill it with[?] - [Y]ou desire to know what effect the tryals being put off will have on the prisoners[.] [I]t is

impossible to say or<sup>3</sup> to account for any proceeding of [Fol. 2a] government as<sup>4</sup> they appear the most capricious set of mortals on ^the^ face of the earth, without either principal or wisdom[.] [I]t is probable that they might be ashamed of confining men 14 months for nothing - M<sup>r</sup> Sampson<sup>5</sup> was here [the] other day & he & I had a conversation about matters here, he wishes much to do every thing away, but I doubt it is out of his power[.] [A]t all times I have acted according to what I thought right, & hope I will do so, careless who I offend thereby —

Being very bad at remmembering who I ought to compliment, that[']s to[o] cold a word, but no matter[,] you know what I mean, therefore give my love to a Thousand people & Believe me to be yours

---

<sup>2</sup> John Byng (d. 18 November 1797), executed at Kilmainham Gaol for the crime of robbing a mail coach.

<sup>3</sup> “say, or” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>4</sup> “government, as” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> William Sampson (27 January 1764–28 December 1836), of Derry, United Irishman, lawyer, stenographer, political satirist and author of many radical pamphlets and books. In 1798 he was charged with high treason and exiled to Portugal, then France, followed by Germany and finally New York in 1806.

affectly  
Hy J. McCracken

I suppose Mary is ret<sup>d</sup> from Orange Grove as I am sure the  
Templetons have more sense than to require much condolance [sic][.]

[T]ell Bunting not to make a fool of Loughy till I [Fol. 2b]  
see him[.] ~~perhaps W<sup>m</sup> could play some~~

[Superscription]  
Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> McCracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "19 Nov 97/ H-J M<sup>c</sup>C."

**40. Rose Ann and William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin]  
to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 25 November 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/140

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tuck and seal letterlocking, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tears, black circular date stamp, postal charge

Kilmainham November 25<sup>th</sup> 97

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Miss Mary

I am happy to have it in my power to inform you that M<sup>r</sup> Torney along with 13 more prisoners were liberated yesterday, and cannot imagine how you heard the news so soon[.] [W]e had it from young M<sup>c</sup>Guiken<sup>1</sup> who was their agent[,] he was in high spirits at his success in being in part a means of getting them their liberty. I have some hopes of William getting out on bail from a Conversation Counsel[l]or Joy had with the Att<sup>y</sup> General<sup>2</sup> one day last week, in consequence of that[,]<sup>3</sup> William wrote a Memorial to the Lord Lieu<sup>t</sup> which the Couns<sup>r</sup> is to present, and the Att<sup>y</sup> Genera<sup>l</sup> said if it was refe[r]red to him he would take bail, and then W<sup>m</sup> and I would have nothing to do but set off for the North[.] [T]he only thing that could make that unpleasent [sic] is the Idea of leaving Henry behind us. I think if there was proper application made he would get out, many people have got out on bail on

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<sup>1</sup> James McGucken/ McGuckin (d. 18170), Belfast attorney. After his arrest in 1798, he became an informer.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Wolfe, 1st Viscount Kilwarden (19 January 1739–23 July 1803), Attorney-General for Ireland 16 July 1789–25 June 1798.

<sup>3</sup> ~~that~~ ^which^ [Madden ed., pencil].

their being represented to be in a bad state  
of health[.] [I]t could be said with more truth  
that he is in a bad state of health than

of any that have yet got out on that plea[.] I think [Fol. 1b]  
it impossible that M<sup>rs</sup> N could injure me[,] I hope  
I never shall leave it in her power[.] I do not  
doubt her inclination if I did[.]<sup>4</sup> [Y]ou need not have  
fear on that head as I think it likely that I will  
soon be home with you[,] that is to say[,] if W<sup>m</sup> gets  
out but you must not expect me for some time  
if that is not the case[.] [C]onfinement[,] as yet[,] has had  
no ill affect on my health which you will be a better  
Judge of when you see me. I trust that will be very  
shortly[.] [T]he account you ^give^ of the manner poor  
Torney was treated is truly affecting[.] [H]e is at last  
at liberty but what can make amends for the  
barbarous treatment he received ^from^ people worse than  
savages[?] I do not recollect saying that any person was  
in my debt for Callico [sic][,] if I did I was wrong. 13 or 14<sup>d</sup>  
would be two [sic] little[,] I could get that for them  
when brown[.] [A]s I am quit[e] out of the way of  
knowing the Prices of almost anything, your brother  
John will tell you what you should ask[.] [W]e  
spend our time much in the old way[,] we walk  
a little[,] read some and in the Evening play cards[.]  
[W]e contrive to make the day pass tolerably well  
considering all things[.] [R]emember me in the most affectionate

manner to all the fami[ly]<sup>5</sup> My Dear Miss Mary [Fol. 2a]  
and believe me to be yours affectionately  
R A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

PS tell my sister Shaw,  
when you see her[,] that I  
will perhaps write her before I leave this if not she

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<sup>4</sup> Mrs Neilson's hostility towards Rose Ann McCracken is expressed in Letter 38 (TCD MS873/138).

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear and the seal.

will soon see me.

Dear Mary,

I am pretty certain that I will get out on bail some time next week. [T]his is the first time I had any hope of it, tho it was often thought by others & I fancy I will not be disap[-] [p]ointed. I would like to pay M<sup>rs</sup> Richardson for Henry[']s Deebt [sic] &<sup>c</sup> before I leave this[,] which will require fifteen or Sixteen Guineas[,] perhaps it will be inconvenient for you to get that sent [to] me[.] [I]f so[,] it can[']t be helped but I would not like to leave him and that unpaid, it might make them suppose M<sup>r</sup> H[']s words were going to turn out true[,] that M<sup>r</sup> R. nor I could not pay them for our particular engagements of Deebt &<sup>c</sup>. James M<sup>c</sup>Guicken is this moment come in and says Mr Kemmis<sup>6</sup> desires to know when my memorial is given & the Counse[l]or shall have no further trouble so that I think I will soon be [wi]th<sup>7</sup> you[.] [T]ill then God bless you all[.]

[Yo]ur<sup>8</sup> affectionate Brother  
W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2b]

^Rev<sup>d</sup> Foster Archer Rev<sup>d</sup> Foster Archer [sic]/ Inspector General<sup>9</sup> ↵

[Postal charge]<sup>10</sup>

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary lane

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Kemmis (1753 – 1823), of Shaen Castle, appointed Crown Solicitor for Ireland in 1784.

<sup>7</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Signature inserted by Reverend Forster Archer (c.1759–17 May 1826), of County Cork, Anglican clergyman and Inspector General of Prisons in Ireland from 1795 until 1822.

<sup>10</sup> "5."

Belfast

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>11</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "NO/ .25./ 97."

<sup>12</sup> "Kilmainham 25 Nov 97/ M<sup>rs</sup> W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken."

**41. Henry Joy McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 28 November 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/141

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by James McGucken

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

Kilmainham 28 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1797

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

I take the opportunity of Ja<sup>s</sup> McGuicken going to Belfast of writting you as I am perfectly sure he will not follow the example of others. I rec<sup>d</sup> Marg<sup>tl</sup>'s letter yesterday with a note for 5 guineas<sup>1</sup> which ^are in^ very good time as M<sup>r</sup> Archer is

to bring a Physician tomorrow to visit me, who I expect will certify that if I am keep't here all winter it will be almost certain death to me. M<sup>r</sup> A is sure that I will get out & has promised to interest himself in the matter, he will go with the certificate himself to Cook<sup>2</sup> & represent in very strong terms my situation[.] [I]t was very fortunate that you left the muslin with me as I have written a note to M<sup>r</sup> A. with it saying you had ^sent^ it [to] him, this is a little trick to flatter his vanity, & make

him more active for the present. I have promised to get him a book which I beg you will endeavour to ^it^ procure for me, it is "Political Lectures" printed by J Story about the time I

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], received 27 November 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Cooke (27 June 1755–19 March 1820), under-secretary to the government's civil department from 1796 until 1801.

was taken[.]<sup>3</sup> [I]f you get it[,] send it by the post office directed to  
Rev<sup>d</sup> Foster Archer[,] Inspector General, under cover to M<sup>r</sup>  
Taylor[,]<sup>4</sup>

sec.<sup>y</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Cook[,] Dublin Castle, as by that means it will [Fol. 1b]  
save postage & come quick[.] [T]he people here are as good  
natured as usual, saying their best things behind their friends[']  
backs[.] [I]t sits very light with me as I have a faint prospect of  
being out as soon as any of them, when I will have an oppor=  
=tunity of representing every thing in its own true colours[.]  
I hope John & Bunting will have a pleasant trip to Magilligan[.]<sup>5</sup>  
I wish much that I could have been with them - Ja<sup>s</sup> Haffe[y]<sup>6</sup>  
requested me to enquire, the first time I would be writting[,]  
if Frank had rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from him[?] I believe it was abo[ut]<sup>7</sup>  
his situation, indeed there is great partiality shown to some  
by the people without or within[,] I can't tell which -  
[G]ive my love to all the familly & believe me to be  
yours aff<sup>ly</sup>  
H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Storey (d. 20 June 1798), brother of Thomas Storey, printer of Belfast's Northern Star and United Irishman. Storey was court-martialled and executed at Belfast after being found guilty of being a leader at the Battle of Antrim. His head was mounted on a spike on the town's Market-house and remained there until 17 August 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Hubert Taylor, private Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

<sup>5</sup> Magilligan, a peninsula in County Londonderry. Presumably, Bunting and John McCracken Junior were visiting Irish harpist, Donnchadh Ó Hámsaigh (1695 – 1807), known as Denis O'Hampsey or Hempson in English, who lived at Magilligan. Hempson (as Bunting referred to him), played at the Belfast Harpers Assembly of 1792. Bunting is known to have made several trips to Hempson's cottage to gather airs and information for his publications.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Haffey[,] a Catholic taylor [sic] who behaved/ very well in prison."

[List of items and their price, MAM's later hand, pencil]<sup>9</sup> [Fol. 2a]

[Numerical calculations determining the total cost of the listed items, MAM's later hand, pencil]<sup>10</sup>

[Superscription] [Fol. 2b]  
Miss Mary Ann McCracken

Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "6 Gowns - 0.2.6/ 4 Frocks - 0.08/ 2 Children[']s petticoats - 0.0.3/ 6 long shifts 0.0.9/ 4 small- 0.0.4/ 1<sup>1/2</sup> Doz<sup>n</sup> stockings 0.1.6/ 10 petticoats 0.1.0/ 2 Doz<sup>n</sup> [...] 0-1-0/ [...] 0-3-5/ 12 shirts 0-4-1/ [...] 0-0-4<sup>1/2</sup>/ 9 proces<sup>d</sup>/ house linen - 0-1-6." Evidently, MAM used the blank space within this letter to write the list at some point before the letter was handed over to Madden. The list may relate to one of MAM's charitable projects. Lists of similar items can be found in "Table 2.1: Goods made in Lancasterian School 1847" within Alison Jordon, *Who Cared? Charity in Victorian & Edwardian Belfast*, (Belfast: Queen's University Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, 1993), 34 and "articles distributed" by the "Belfast Ladies' Society for Clothing the Poor" within the *Post Office Belfast Annual Directory for 1843-44* (Belfast: Wilson, 1843), Appendix, 16.

<sup>10</sup> The grand total is unclear.

<sup>11</sup> "28 Nov 97 Kilmainham/ HJ McC."

**42. William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 6 December 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/142

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking, postal charge

Kilmainham 4 o[']Clock 6 Nov<sup>r</sup> ^Dec<sup>r</sup>^ 97 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

We receiv<sup>d</sup> your two letters and the money.<sup>1</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Archer is just come here and informs us that bail is ordered to be taken of both Harry and I <sup>^me^</sup>, from this we will require more money than I expected. I suppose we may [need] 15 Guineas more but can[']t yet have any proper idea of what fees, &<sup>c</sup> may be necessary, but I expect none of them will be as heavy as the first we have paid[,] that is the physician. Please god we will be with you soon & I hope Henry will soon be well when he gets with the family. I have not time to say more but expect[,] short as this is[,] you make it very welcome & give our love to all the family. We will soon be able to do so much for ourselves – Dear Mary, Your Aff<sup>t</sup> Brother  
W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to William McCracken or HJM [Kilmainham Gaol], late November or early December. Presumably, the second letter was from Margaret McCracken to HJM, containing 5 guineas (as detailed in Letter 41, TCD MS873/141).

[Postal charge]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann McCracken  
Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "5."

<sup>3</sup> "6 Nov 97/ W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>C."

**43. William McCracken [Dublin] to Captain John and Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 9 December 1797

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/143

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, fold letterlocking, tears, strip of paper pasted onto Fol. 1b

Dublin 9<sup>th</sup> Decem[ber] 1797 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Father & Mother

I have at last the pleasure to write you from outside the walls[.] Henry and I were admitted to bail yesterday which I suppose you are already acquainted with as Counsellor Joy said he would write as I could not get time[.] [A]fter the business was over I had to return to the Jail to Rose Ann. She and I will [s]et<sup>1</sup> off imm[ed]iately<sup>2</sup> for home as soon as we hear from you, but Henry will not leave this for some few days after us. He must call & see all the people that were so friendly with him whilst he was living on Jail allowance. I think he is better already[,] at least he is in better spirits and consequently looks a great deal better. I think we may leave this on Wednesday

Morning<sup>3</sup> in the Newry flyer and get the mail from that, in that case you will see us Thursday night[.]<sup>4</sup> We left the prisoners all pretty well except S. Neilson who I think is worse again. Henry was to see the

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 13 December 1797.

<sup>4</sup> 14 December 1797.

friends in N.te<sup>5</sup> and I will try and see them this day. I think there is some hopes of T. Richardson and James Greer getting out, but we will know more of that a[g]ainst<sup>6</sup> Mon[d]ay.<sup>7</sup> Rose and I would have [~~---~~] set off immediately but that the finances were quite reduced[.] [W]e will be sorry to leave Henry behind us but he thinks it absolutely necessary to call on the friends I mentioned, and we are to impatient to see you all to wait for that. I can have no sort of news, but that of our being out which is every thing to us[.] [F]or a few days and then we will be with you. I remain Dear Father & Mother

Yours most affectly

W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Newgate Prison.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Monday 11 December 1797.

<sup>8</sup> "William M<sup>c</sup>C and Rose."

**44. Henry Joy McCracken [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 8 May 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/144

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by James Burnside

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tears, tuck and seal letterlocking. Fol. 3 has been pasted onto Fol. 2b by MAM to prevent further damage. The transparency of this folio reveals the text written on Fol. 2b

Dublin. 8 May 1798

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary,

I should have answered yours of the 4<sup>th</sup> May sooner,<sup>1</sup> but you [know] how much I dislike writing when I have nothing particular to say that it is useless to make any appology [sic] - Burnside sets out this night for home on horseback so that it will [be] after you receive this that he will be able to get home. I have been obliged to borrow money to send him off - Barrett is recovering very slowly but he is entirely out of danger - [W]hen you work of our good friend T.R.<sup>2</sup>[,] measure W<sup>m</sup>[']s wrist & make some allowance larger. R.<sup>3</sup> is very well but when I told him Bunting was ill he appeared very uneasy for him & advised when I would go home (which will be in a day or two) for he & I to take a trip to the giant[']s causeway<sup>4</sup> [A]ll our friends here are well[.] I never seen Harriet Joy look better, nor Grace in

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Dublin], 4 May 1798.

<sup>2</sup> TR.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The Giant's Causeway located on the Antrim coast. TR and John Templeton shared a common interest in geology and had taken a tour of the Antrim coast some years previously.

better spirits - I have been with Ja<sup>s</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Annally

[Fol. 1b]

respecting my Mother[']s cambricks[.]<sup>5</sup> [T]here is 50 p<sup>s6</sup> on hand ↵  
which he thinks he will not be able to dispose of at  
the Invoice price, particularly the coarser lots which  
remain entire, & thinks if there is a demand at home  
for them it would be better to send them down, the[y]  
are in very good order as I examined them[.] [T]he trunk  
you order I will have left there & if my mother  
orders these home they can come in it[.] [T]here is three  
p<sup>s</sup> of coarse lawns<sup>7</sup> in bad order which will come with  
them, or if the ^ camb<sup>ks</sup>^ stay, be sold for what every [sic] the[y] will  
bring.

I have ^been^ often with S. Neilson, he appears what he did  
before he went to Jail[,] where I have been & all the  
attention that I could expect paid me - Tell  
Frank that he did not keep his word to me  
with respect to sending money, people can not  
live here on air, nor travel home without some  
little support[.] [L]et him consider the case of two

unfortunate beings in a strange place without a penny[,] [Fol. 2a]  
eighty miles to travel & one of them sick - If I had  
the names of the people on board the tender, with  
the names of the Cap<sup>t</sup> on board & the regulating  
officer on shore it is possible I may be of use to  
them, let it be sent to B Coil who knows what  
use to make of it - I should now tell you why  
I have not left this[;] it is some friends have insis-  
[ted]<sup>8</sup> [...seal...]<sup>9</sup> my staying - Give my lov[e]<sup>10</sup> to all

---

<sup>5</sup> White linen made at Cambrai, France.

<sup>6</sup> "pieces."

<sup>7</sup> Lawn, a linen fabric from the city of Laon, France.

<sup>8</sup> Obstructed by seal.

<sup>9</sup> Most likely, "on."

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

[...seal...]<sup>11</sup> [fam]ily<sup>12</sup> & believe me to be yours aff<sup>y</sup>  
Hy J. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Superscription] [Fol. 2b]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
of Rosemary lane  
Belfast

[Numerical calculations]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>13</sup> [Fol. 3a]

[Fol. 3b, obscured]

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<sup>11</sup> Most likely, "the."

<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by seal.

<sup>13</sup> "8 May 98 Dublin/ H. J M<sup>c</sup>C."

45. Henry Joy McCracken [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

Date: 12 May 1798

Archive: TCD

Reference code: MS873/145

Letter form: Original manuscript

Delivery status: Postal delivery

Material features: 1 bifolium, watermark, tuck and seal letterlocking, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, circular date stamp, postal charge

Dublin 12<sup>th</sup> May 1798 — [Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

It gives me great uneasiness not hearing from home these 4 days as my father is so ill. [Y]ou all think I have acted wrong in staying here so long[,] it would at at least^ appear so, but perhaps when I explain what has kept me[,] you will acquit ^me^ of a charge of want of affection which I feel at present my conduct appears to deserve - I have been with Maguire[;]<sup>1</sup> he says he can[']t sell fancy goods. Coil seems to wish for them most[.] [I]n future it may answer a good end to recollect their wishes in making up Boxes for them - My Mother[']s Camb<sup>ks</sup>[,] they [are] in Maguire[']s hands[,] he has promised to endeavour to push off[.] [H]e has been offered money for them this week[.] [A]s they are in very bad order[,] I advised him to make the best of them he could & get them immediately turned into money - The people expect to have the soldiers living at free quarters in the City, they have already seized on Sweetman[']s<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Possibly Alexander Maguire, whose business "Maguire and Son: Wholesale Linen and Muslin Commission-agents" is listed in Wilson's Dublin Directory for 1830 as being located at 58 Bolton Street Dublin. *Wilson's Dublin Directory, for the Year 1830* (Dublin: William Corbet, 1829), 100.

<sup>2</sup> John Sweetman (1752 – 1826), Dublin brewer and a member of the United Irishmen's Leinster Directory. He was active on the Catholic Committee and a delegate to the Catholic Convention. In 1799 Sweetman was arrested at Oliver Bond's house and was imprisoned at Fort George until 1802. Upon release he was exiled to the continent and did not return to Ireland until 1820.

house in the Country, every day searching for pikes & shafts thro  
all parts of the town, & carrying off all the timber that might

[Fol. 1b] ↵

be converted into that use[.] [T]here is this day a proclamation  
offering

a thousand pounds for Lord Edw<sup>d</sup> Fitzgerald,<sup>3</sup> & an other from the  
Lord

Mayor ordering a return ^to be made^ of all the strangers that sleep  
in the City

that the disaffected fugitives may be found[.] [T]here are most horrid  
accounts from the County Kildare[,] you must certainly have heard  
of some of them, but I suppose the worst you have heard ^is^ nothing  
in comparison to the real state of that unfortunate C:<sup>y</sup> <sup>4</sup>

[Y]esterday I dined with J. Richardson who expressed the greatest  
friendship for our familly & I believe is in earnest[.] [H]e feels very  
much

for the situation of those in our apartments, & would gladly[,]

if he had it in his power[,] be of use to them[.] [T]he people there are  
all well but I believe Barrett will not live any time -

[G]ive my love to all the family & believe me to be

yours affectionately,

H.<sup>y</sup>J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

I have said nothing about going home, however that does  
not make it the more distant[.] [Y]ou know, it is one of Godwin[']s  
principles[,] make no promises[.]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Postal charge]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Rosemary lane

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<sup>3</sup> Lord Edward Fitzgerald (15 October 1763–4 June 1798) of County Kildare, aristocrat and United Irishman. He died in Dublin's Newgate Prison after being mortally wounded during his arrest for High Treason.

<sup>4</sup> "County."

<sup>5</sup> "5."

Belfast

[Circular date stamp]<sup>6</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>7</sup>

12 May 98 H J M<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "MY/ 12/ 98."

<sup>7</sup> "12 May 98 H J M<sup>c</sup>."

46. Henry Joy McCracken to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 18 June 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/154

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by unknown bearer

**Material features:** 1 folio, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 1b, rectangular white paper patch pasted onto Fol. 1b, fold letterlocking. Three postal stamps have bled through onto this letter as a result of it being pressed against Letter 139 (TCD MS873/155) in storage

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Monday 18 June 1798

Dear Mary

[Y]esterday I rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from you enclosing two guineas & this day a Bundle of cloathes (by the Bearer)[.]<sup>2</sup> [P]art of the cloathes I sent back as not having occasion for them, the things you mention as being sent to some part of the shore I never rec<sup>d</sup> but <sup>^</sup>the<sup>^</sup> 1/2 guinea & trifles sent by G. Gray came safe – [T]he flannel waistcoat you sent has no sleeves however it came<sup>3</sup> in very good time as I had much need of a change having never had that luxury since I left home before - I will endeavour to fix things<sup>4</sup> so that any thing I want will come regularly to me, at present I cannot as my lodging is the open air, which with great abundance of exercise keeps me in good health & great<sup>5</sup> spirits, altho my companions are

---

<sup>1</sup> "From H.J. MacCracken to his sister after/ the battle of Antrim."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to HJM [Unknown], received 17 June 1798.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>^</sup>the clothes came<sup>^</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>4</sup> ~~fix things~~ <sup>^</sup>arrange matters<sup>^</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>5</sup> ~~great~~ <sup>^</sup>high<sup>^</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

not so numerous now as they were lately. [T]hese are the times that try mens souls -<sup>6</sup> [Y]ou will no doubt hear a great number of stories respecting the situation of this country, its present unfortunate state is entirely owing to treachery, the rich always betray the poor. In Antrim[,] little or nothing was lost by the people untill after the brave men who fought the Battle had retreated, few of whom fell[,] not more than 1 for 10 of their enemies, but after the villians [sic] who were entrusted with direction for the lower part of the County gave up hostages & all without any cause[,] private emolument excepted, murder then began & cruelties have continued ever since. It is unfortunate that a few wicked men could

[Fol. 1b]

thus destroy a country after having been purchased with blood[,] ↵  
for it was a fact, which I ^am^ sure you never knew, that on friday the 8<sup>th</sup> June all the country was in the hands of the people, Antri[m,]<sup>7</sup> Belfast & Carrickfergus excepted[.] [W]hen I see you I will tell you a variety of little anecdotes that have occurred since I left home - [L]et me hear all the news & when opportunity serves send me newspapers - [R]emember me to all the family & friends who I doubt are few & believe m[e]<sup>8</sup>

to be yours truly

H<sup>y</sup> J M<sup>c</sup>C

---

<sup>6</sup> "These are the times that try men's souls," is the opening line of Thomas Paine's pamphlet, "The American Crisis I" of 23 December 1776. See Thomas Paine, "The American Crisis I," in Mark Philp ed., *Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 63.

<sup>7</sup> Partially obstructed by binding.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

**47. Mary Ann McCracken [Carrickfergus] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 8 July 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/146

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

July 8<sup>th</sup>

Dear Sister,

We went directly to the Jail on our arrival here & were told by the Jailor that he had strict orders not to let any person see Harry[,] yet notwithstanding which[,] he ventured to let us speak to him for a few minutes[.] [H]e is very well & requested we would not let ourselves be vexed on his account[.] [L]et his fate be what it might, the only thing he thinks his friends can do for him is to get his trial delayed which he wishes very much, or perhaps they could get leave for him to leave the Country[.] [M]y father thinks we should return home as the Colonel

to whom Miss Bradshaw<sup>2</sup> applied[,]

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "(on H J M<sup>c</sup>C. arrest)/ from Miss M<sup>c</sup>C."

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Miss Ann Bradshaw (d. 3 March 1825), a daughter of the Belfast merchant John Bradshaw (1723–1782).

Mr McNevin<sup>3</sup> not being at home[,]  
^said^ that it was impossible any person  
could see Harry or ~~the~~ his compa-  
nions[,] there were such strict orders  
from Gen<sup>l</sup> Nugent[.]<sup>4</sup> [I]f therefore[,] any  
of his friends think of coming  
to see him they must apply to [the]  
Gen<sup>l</sup> for an order -  
Col<sup>l</sup> Anstruther<sup>5</sup> also said that he  
did not know when they were to  
be tried but that they should  
have timely notice of it.  
We intend leaving this at seven  
o[']clock in the morning if nothing  
happens to prevent us.<sup>6</sup> [F]arewell  
M. A M<sup>c</sup>C

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary Lane  
Belfast

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Captain Andrew MacNevin of the Royal Irish Invalids, stationed at Carrickfergus.

<sup>4</sup> Field Marshall Sir George Nugent, 1st Baronet (10 June 1757–11 March 1849), British Army officer. Promoted to Major-General in 1796, he went on to command the northern district of Ireland during the rebellion.

<sup>5</sup> Colonel Robert Anstruther (3 March 1768–14 January 1809), Scottish adjutant-general in Ireland and commanding officer at Carrickfergus.

<sup>6</sup> According to MAM's later recollections, she and her father returned to the jail the following morning but were refused entry. However, they did manage to see and talk to HJM through his cell window. See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 485.

<sup>7</sup> "July 8 - 98 Carrickfergus/ M A M<sup>c</sup>C." This was MAM's twenty-eighth birthday.

**48. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Thomas Russell [Newgate Prison, Dublin]**

**Date:** 18 July 1798

**Archive:** NAI, microfilm

**Reference code:** NRA 620/16/3/8

**Letter form:** Original manuscript. For a draft version of this letter see section 5.1.1 below

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, circular date stamp, town name stamp, postal charge, tears, black wax seal on Fol. 2b

Belfast, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1798

[Fol. 1a]

In obedience to the last request of a much-loved brother[,]<sup>1</sup>  
I write to ~~inform~~ you who were his dearest & most valued friend, to  
inform  
you of ^the interesting but afflicting particulars of^ his death, which  
took place yesterday in pursuance of a sentence of  
Court Martial by which he was found guilty of being a leader of the  
Rebel  
army in the battle that was fought at Antrim on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June last,  
though the two witnesses who swore against him contradicted each  
other in  
some material points & one of them declared the other[,] who was the  
same  
man that swore away poor Storey[']s life, to be a man of infamous  
character  
& not deserving of the slightest credit – I should have informed you as  
perhaps you do not see the public papers, that ^he^ was taken on the  
7<sup>th</sup>  
inst along with two others by either two or three of the Carrick  
yeomen,

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1842, MAM recalled this request during an interview with Madden. He recorded it thus: "I asked him if there was anything in particular that he desired to have done. He said, 'I wish you to write to Russell, inform him of my death, and tell him that I have done my duty; tell him also that the aspersions which were cast on Tom Richardson by his fellow prisoners were false; and, as I knew him well, my testimony, I trust, will be a sufficient proof of his innocence.'" Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 491. See section 5.4.3.1.

a mile or two from that Town & depending on a pass that had been procured for him in a feigned name[,] he did not think of making his escape until it was too late, he & his companions being unarmed & having no means of defence whatever[.] I am thus particular because he has been accused of cowardice in suffering himself  
to be taken at all tho he had no possible means of resistance[.] [H]e was  
committed to Carrickfegus Jail where he was closely confined in a cell until monday morning ^last^, when he was brought up to Belfast & lodg[-]  
ed in the Donegall Arms[,] which is now a prison[,] from whence he was  
removed in the afternoon to the Artillery Barracks[.] [H]is trial came

2

[Fol. 1b]

on yesterday at twelve o[']clock[,] at which I was present that I might bear  
testimony to his conduct which was cool collected & composed during  
the whole day[.] [H]e took notes of the trial & remarked on the contradictions of the witnesses, but at the same time was certain of being convicted as the trials here are mere matters of form, not one having been yet acquitted. I was also present when he received his sentence & was ordered for immediate execution, at which he neither changed countenance nor colour, but still retained his usual cheerful composure, for tho' he wished to live to serve his friends & his Country[,]  
yet he was resigned to die[.] [O]n being asked if he wished for a Clergyman  
he said he would be glad to see Mr Kilburn who was accordingly sent for

& in the meantime[,] as Doctor Dickson<sup>2</sup> was confined in the same  
 prison[,] he  
 requested to have his company which was also granted, [and] with  
 whom he  
 conversed with firmness & ease[.] [H]e said he was now vexed at  
 having  
 been angry at those by whom he had been cruelly treated, at one of  
 them in particular & from whom you would never have expected  
 such  
 conduct,<sup>3</sup> not content with perverting Henry[']s words in excuse for  
 his own  
 base desertion, he even attempted to blacken his character by accusing  
 him of  
 crimes which he never either committed himself or suffered others to  
 do on  
 whom he had any influence. Mr Kelburn[,] when he arrived[,] was so  
 overpow[-]  
 ered by his feelings, that it was a considerable time before his tears &  
 sobs would  
 permit him to utter a short prayer, after which[,] as the time was  
 short[,] I began  
 to take off a little of Harry[']s hair to preserve it for a few of his  
 friends, when  
 Major Fox entered to order him out & told me I might save myself that  
 trou[-]  
 ble as the Gen<sup>l</sup> had ordered him to take it from me[.]<sup>4</sup> [A]gainst this I  
 remonstrat[-]

---

<sup>2</sup> Reverend Doctor William Steele Dickson (25 December 1744–27 December 1824), of Carnmoney, graduate of Glasgow University, Presbyterian minister for Ballyhalbert, Portaferry and Keady, United Irishman who was to lead the rebels at the Battle of Antrim but was arrested at Ballynahinch several days beforehand. Subsequently, the command passed to Henry Joy McCracken. Dickson was incarcerated in Belfast before being transferred onto the city's prison ship in August 1798. On 25 March 1799 he was transported to Fort George where he remained until 13 January 1802. See William Steel Dickson, *A Narrative of the Confinement and Exile of William Steel Dickson, DD.* (Dublin: Stockdale, 1812).

<sup>3</sup> Presumably Robert Simms.

<sup>4</sup> Town Major William Fox (1744–3 December 1818) of Fox Lodge, Ballynafeigh, J.P. for the counties of Down & Antrim and officer of Belfast's garrison.

ed but in vain, he would take it from me by force if I did not give it up  
which  
at Harry['s request I did, who reminded me of what was true[,] that it  
was but  
a trifle – I accompanied him to the place of execution, where I wished  
to remain  
to the last, but even that small consolation was denied me. I was  
forcibly torn from

3

[Fol. 2a]

him as they said by the Gen<sup>l</sup>'s orders & should have made more  
vigorous  
resistance, but Harry requested me to go & I feared disturbing his  
mind in his  
last moments by such an unequal contest – I have been told since that  
when I left him Major Fox came up & ^asked^ him for the last time[,]  
^an offer of pardon having been made before trial some time^[,] if  
he would give  
any information[,] at which he smiled & told Fox he wondered what  
reason  
he had for supposing him such a villain but as they were now to part  
forever  
he would shake hands with him – I was also informed that when he  
ascended the  
scaffold he attempted to address the people but the noise the horses  
made  
was so great that he could not be heard. [A] few minutes put him  
beyond the power of oppression, but robbed his friends of a treasure  
never  
in this world to be recovered – [N]ever did I see him look so well[,] so  
intere[st-]<sup>5</sup>  
ing or seemingly in such perfect health as that day & the evening  
before[,] [---]  
notwithstanding the hardships he had of late undergone[,] being  
mostly ex-  
posed to the open air sleeping frequently on the cold wet ground &  
en-

---

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

during difficulties of every kind – [I]t is some small consolation that  
 even  
 his enemies were forced to admire his conduct both from what they  
 saw  
 & from the evidence by which he was convicted[.] [H]e acted like [...  
 tear...]  
 the last & smiled when the rope was put about his neck – [...tear...]  
 allowed ~~to get~~ [...] of [...] [...tear...]  
 of embracing his lifeless corpse on condition of interring it before dark  
 & the  
 numbers ^in that short time^ who crowded in to weep over it,  
 showed how much he was  
 beloved – It was as impolitic as cruel to murder one who was the idol  
 of the  
 poor, he who was so patient of injuries[,] so benevolent of heart[.]  
 [H]undreds  
 now pant for revenge[,] whom he had the power & ^the^ benevolence  
 to restrain, but what is  
 revenge[?] [I]t could neither restore him to life nor would it grati[-]  
 fy him if he could be sensible of it – [A]t the same time that he desired  
 me  
 to write[,] he bid me to vindicate his friend M<sup>r</sup> Richardson[']s  
 character from the  
 unjust suspicion which had been cast on it by his fellow prisoners &  
 for which the testimony of a dying man who had been his most  
 intimate ^friend^ will surely be sufficient – I have been this minute  
 because  
 it is probable we may never meet again, as Frank intends leaving this  
 unhappy Coun[-]  
 try in a few days & the rest of the family ~~intend~~ mean to follow him as  
 soon as he

[Fol. 2b]↵

can prepare a place of refuge in some distant land where we may in  
 peace cherish  
 the remembrance of him whose loss we must ever lament[,] whose  
 memory will be  
 always dear ^to us^ & whose virtues we will still admire & revere[.]  
 [A]t the same time[,] we  
 should endeavour to be resigned to the will of that being who  
 overrules & directs all

things & who would not suffer us to be afflicted but for some useful  
purpose –  
[T]hat the cause for which so many of our friends have fought & have  
died may yet  
be successful, & that you may be preserved to enjoy the fruits of it[,] is  
the earnest  
wish of one who remains with the truest regard your sincere friend  
Mary Ann McCracken

[Circular date stamp, indistinct]

[Town name stamp, black]<sup>6</sup>

[Superscription]  
Mr Thomas Russell  
Newgate  
Dublin

[Postal charge]<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "BELFAST."

<sup>7</sup> "5."

#### 49. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Francis McCracken

**Date:** c. 18/19 July 1798<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/147

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, ink blots, two faint ink finger prints on Fol. 1a

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

At this momentous but disastrous Period when Death and Desolation stalk around, when the late Enthusiasm of the public mind seems ~~past almost~~ sinking almost to despair, and when [...] Human sacrifices are become so frequent as scarcely to excite any emotion, to suppose the fate of a single individual could be generally interesting would be preposterously ~~vanity~~ vain, but to the friends to whom he was known, and by all of whom he was beloved and esteemed, the particulars relative to the death of Henry Joy McCracken will be long thought of with melancholy concern – Finding the efforts of the County Antrim unsuccessful (which was principally owing to the cowardice of their Leader[,]<sup>3</sup> most of ~~them having~~ ^whom^ deserted their parts either before or just at the time of action, ^for^ which they had their General[']s example who had resigned a week or two before), and that the [...] ~~of success~~ failure of their first attempt rendered it impossible again to rally them, and that [...] ^of course^ [...] ~~his exertions could not be of~~ he could not ^immediately^ exert his energies to serve his Country as he

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the letter is undated, Madden's endorsement indicates that it was written in the aftermath of HJM's execution.

<sup>2</sup> "To Francis McCracken after the execution of her brother/ from Miss McC."'

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Orr (1774 – 1831), brother of William Orr. He held a command at the battle but quickly retreated to Donegore Hill.

was obliged to be concealed at the risque of those poor but

[Fol. 1b]

worthy ~~friends~~ ^people^ who would have run all hazards to save ↵  
or serve him & by the advice of his friends he was [---] ^attempting^  
to

leave this unhappy Country until he could return to save

it with effect[,] when he was apprehended ^near Carrickfergus^ by  
^along^ with two others

by three yeomen ^those worst destroyers of the Country^ and  
depending on a pass which had been

procured for him in a feigned name[,] he did not think of

making his escape until it was too late, he & his companions

being quite unarmed and having no possible means of defence

whatever - [T]hey were lodged in Carrickfergus ^where they were  
closely confined^ in separate cells

& ~~not allowed to see any~~ until Monday when he was brought

[o]ut to Belfast & served with notice of his trial ^by Court Martial^  
which came

in the following day at twelve o[']clock[,] ^at which I was  
present[.]^ [I]mmediately preceding ~~the exam~~

immediately preceding [sic] the examination of the witnesses[,]

~~Pollock the att<sup>y</sup> employed by the Crown & who by~~

~~his own account has [...ink blot...] power of dispensing of life~~

~~& death called my poor aged~~ Father aside<sup>4</sup> who was just

recovered from a severe & tedious fit of illness & who appeared

to be sinking beneath the weight of old age & affliction[,] was

called aside by Pollock -<sup>5</sup> [T]hat he had such evidence against

his son as would certainly hang him[,] that his life was in

his hands[,] that he would save it if my Father would persuade

him to give such information as Pollock knew was in his power

[Fol. 2a]↵

to do[.] [T]o this my Father replied that [he] knew nothing ^nor could  
do nothing^ in the

matter[.] ~~yet Pollock~~ [Y]et the tyrant[,] not content with ~~having~~ ^the  
trial^

of his virtue[,] ~~to tryal~~ would torture him still further by calling

---

<sup>4</sup> The word "aside" should also have been struck through.

<sup>5</sup> John Pollock (d. 1825), attorney, government agent and the Crown prosecutor at HJM's trial.

Harry to the conference & repeated the same offer to himself who  
assumed that he would do any thing which he thought was  
right that his Father would advice him to [End]

[Fol. 2b, blank]

## 50. Henry Joy Junior [Belfast] to Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 22 July 1798<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/92

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Henry Joy Junior

**Material features:** 1 folio, watermark, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dr Aunt,

I drop this to say that the fellow who committed the Robbery of the<sup>3</sup> guinea was last night flogged, getting 300 Lashes, & ordered to be sent to the West Indies - He preferred going there to ^risque^ the yellow fever, rather than receive 800 Lashes which the Court Martial of his Regiment, the Fifeshire, were to have inflicted on him - Y<sup>rs</sup> truly,  
H Joy.

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<sup>1</sup> Although undated, Madden's endorsement claims that the half guinea was stolen on 16 July 1798 and as Henry Joy dated the letter "Sunday Morn.," presumably this related to the Sunday after the robbery which was 22 July 1798. This is corroborated in Madden's interview with MAM which states, "About two days after the fatal event, a servant girl was sent to the prison for the bed and other things that had been sent there for his accommodation, when one of the soldiers spoke of the man getting the half-guinea and bottle of whiskey; and the day following the girl was sent to give evidence at a court martial, by which the unfortunate man was tried for this offence, and sentenced to receive two hundred lashes." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 496. Also see section 5.4.3.1. The servant girl went to the prison "two days after the fatal event," being 19 July, given that HJM was executed on 17 July. "The day following the girl was sent to give evidence at court martial," places the court martial on 20 July. Within the present letter, Henry Joy states that the man was flogged "last night," being 21 July. Therefore, he wrote the letter the following morning, being 22 July.

<sup>2</sup> "This note we felt as an insult, in supposing/ that we would delight in the suffering of others."

<sup>3</sup> ^half^ [MAM later ed., ink].

Sunday Morn.  
One of his officers stays in the house with us.

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

To

M<sup>rs</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

or M<sup>r</sup> Fra<sup>s</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken.

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<sup>4</sup> "The above wreaked the greatest indignation in our / family."

<sup>5</sup> "July 98 from H Joy Belfast / Edt<sup>r</sup> of Belfast News Letter / relates to a Man being / flogged for obtaining half a / guinea on the 16 July."

51. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Thomas Hughes

**Date:** 22 August 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/106

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, fold letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Sir

I fear you will charge me with indifference or neglect in delaying so long to answer yours of the 19<sup>th</sup>,<sup>2</sup> but tho you were frequently recalled to my mind by that misfortune which has entirely engrossed it this some time past & which I knew how sensibly you would feel, yet independent of other objections to mentioning it by post, the particulars are too tedious for the bounds of a letter & it is still with the utmost difficulty I can command my attention to any other subject even for a few minutes –

I endeavour to rejoice in that change of measures which may bring happiness to others tho' individually it cannot now affect myself, yet am obliged to confess that the pleasure I feel is but languid to what it would have been had those measures been sooner adopted & that the contrast still increases a sense of that loss I must ever lament – [Y]et still it is a consolation, but a small one[,] that the friend we have lost, died with the regret & admiration even of his enemies & that some of them were heard to say that if ever they were in a similar situation they ^wished they^ might act as he did, but of ^what^ consequence is their regret or admiration[,] it neither saved his life nor can it now recall him from the grave –

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<sup>1</sup> "To Thomas Hughes who had been Clerk in Kemmis's/ office the Solicitor General in 1798."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Thomas Hughes to MAM [Belfast], 19 August 1798.

I hope you have long since found some situation more advantageous  
& more agreeable than that you have quit & that it has been the

[Fol. 1b]←

hurry of business which prevented you ^from^ writing again according to your promise – [F]our weeks ago Frank left this for Jamaica from whence he is to proceed to America, whither the rest of the family wish & intend to follow him in the course of a few months, if the situation of affairs here do not before that time greatly amend –

William & Mrs McC<sup>3</sup> are at last returned home again, but not until he was taken on suspicion & detained for a few days[.]

Mr McGlathery<sup>4</sup> has been admitted to bail, & a great number of those who have been conceal'd this some time past, several of whom there had been rewards offered for apprehending, have got away a few days ago in an American vessel –

I was sorry to hear by Mr Zachariah S<sup>5</sup> who called here a few weeks ago that his Brother Jonas was recovering very slowly, I hope however before this time that he is perfectly well[.]<sup>6</sup>

Joined by the rest of the family in most affectionate regards  
& best wishes for your happiness. I remain dear sir

with esteem & affection yours

Mary Ann McCracken

Belfast 22<sup>d</sup> Aug 1798

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ^racken^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> William McGlathery.

<sup>5</sup> Zachariah Shaw (c.1773–c.1852), a Quaker from Hillsborough and wholesale hosier. He and his family were transported to Sydney Australia in 1834 when he was found guilty of forging stamps in Dublin.

<sup>6</sup> James Shaw, who was “flogged at the prévôt in Dublin Castle by Lord Kingsborough’s orders.” Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98*, 82 and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 1, 502.

<sup>7</sup> “James Shaw never recovered from the/ effects of being flogged but lingered for a few/ months, he was a quaker & remarkably mild.”

**52. John McCracken Junior [Belfast] to Francis McCracken  
[Kingston, Jamaica]**

**Date:** 27 September 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/93

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tuck and seal letterlocking, black wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, town name stamp, circular date stamp, postal charge

Belfast 27 Sep 98

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Frank

On the Day you sailed from Cove[,]<sup>1</sup>  
three French Frigates landed Troops at Killala, C<sup>o</sup> Mayo<sup>2</sup>  
& succe[ed]ed in penetrating the County to Castlebar[.]<sup>3</sup> [T]hey had  
two or three engagements<sup>4</sup> with General Lake & other Officers<sup>5</sup>  
& took nine pieces of Cannon but them being so few, only  
one thousand Men[, ] they were all taken prisoners at St Johnson[']s  
in the Co<sup>y</sup> Leitrim on the 8th inst[ance]. I am sorry to add that

---

<sup>1</sup> Cobh, a port town in County Cork.

<sup>2</sup> Killala, a village in County Mayo. The expedition landed in Killala on Thursday 22 August 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Castlebar, a town in County Mayo. The Battle of Castlebar took place on 27 August 1798.

<sup>4</sup> These engagements are known as the Battle of Collooney (5 September 1798) and the Battle of Ballinamuck (8 September 1798).

<sup>5</sup> General Gerard Lake, 1st Viscount Lake (27 July 1744–20 February 1808), a British army officer. The other officers included Colonel Charles Vereker, 2nd Viscount Gord (1768–11 November 1842), at the Battle of Collooney and the Lord Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief of Ireland, Charles Cornwallis, 1st Marquess Cornwallis (31 December 1738–5 October 1805), at the Battle of Ballinamuck.

Bart: Teeling<sup>6</sup> was among them, as ~~adjutant~~ ^aid du camp^ to the French General Humbert<sup>7</sup> & was taken to Dublin, tryed by a court Martial, condemned, & executed on Monday the 24th[.] [H]e was hanged in the French uniform & dyed with great Fortitude. John Hughes has turned out a complicit Informer, as you will see by the newspapers,<sup>8</sup> he mentioned the names of a number of people in this Town as belonging to his society of United Irishmen. Hy, W<sup>m</sup> Hogg, Will: Thomson, Hu: Crawford, Walter Crawford, the three M<sup>c</sup>Cleans[,] Robert Hunter[,] &c &c[.] [H]e also swore a good deal about Bart Teeling & John Magennis relative to an intended rising that he says was to take place last summer. Trade was getting very good untill the French landed but is grown very slack again - We got a remittance in full from Holmes & Rainy<sup>9</sup> & sent it to London, but we have got nothing yet from M<sup>r</sup> Montgomery[.]<sup>10</sup> There have been a good many Bills to pay on your acct particularly one to M<sup>r</sup> Ferguson<sup>11</sup> for 283- which has kept us very bare of cash, but I hope soon to have every thing smooth & clear, except [if] there is another Invasion this winter which is generally expected, this day it is said the French fleet are at sea[.]

I will give you an account of the Bills we have rec<sup>d</sup> since you were here.

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>6</sup> Bartholomew Teeling (1774–24 September 1798), elder brother of CHT. He joined the Society of United Irishmen in 1796 and travelled to France to muster support for an invasion. As General Humbert's Chief Aide de Camp, Teeling secured a victory at the Battle of Collooney. Three days later however, at the Battle of Ballinamuck, Teeling was captured and later executed at Arbor Hill in Dublin.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Joseph Amable Humbert (22 August 1767–3 January 1823), a French general.

<sup>8</sup> The publication of *The Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons* in 1798 was widely covered in the press and publicly exposed John Hughes as an informer.

<sup>9</sup> Hugh Holmes and Robert Rainey, partners in the Irish linen trade, based in Philadelphia.

<sup>10</sup> ^Politics end here^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>11</sup> Possibly Daniel Stephenson Ferguson, a Belfast linen draper.

[F]rom Holmes & Rainey rem <sup>ce</sup>		£931 British or 10005 - Irish
James Ham. woods [...]		45 - 10
Cap Swift on [...]		111 - 9 - 0
Charles Stewart Larne, his accep <sup>ce</sup>		84 -
A Carlings acco <sup>t</sup>		18. 10 -
Rob: Watson[']s Note		32. 10 -
Wm Anderson & G Whites		36 -
Mr Caldwell & Hu. Graham		106 -
Henry Hartell his aft on Brown/Oak		56.18.4
Brown & Oaksman, their 2 acc.	250-0.0	
Dedeed [sic]		
Ours to them	<u>200 - 00</u>	50-0-0
James Lemon, Mr Smith's note		20-0-0
McAulay & Hughes for [...]		
our aft C 61 Days		82-0-0
Tot: Whittle for the Horta in Bank Notes		<u>95-0.0</u>
		1742.17.4
John Alexander &c. in cash	£20.0.0	
Rob. Dobbs	10.0.0	
Bell & Williamson	11.12.10	
Sir W <sup>m</sup> Kirk	5.15.3	
W <sup>m</sup> Campbell	11.7.6	
James H Woods	15.4.0	
for Hemp		
John Porter &c <sup>o</sup>	9.80	
Wm Maclean	7.9.10	
Geo. Longley	<u>4.80</u>	
	<u>95.55</u>	
	<u>£1838:29</u>	
& we have paid viz.		
Thomas & Bonar	1005 -	
Warbuck & Holt	108 -	
James & Ge <sup>o</sup> W Ferguson	288 -	
Leave of Town Parks	72 -	
[...] to James Holmes	100 -	
Miss Ow <sup>s</sup> received our note to them	50 -	
S Heron for Int	12	
&c &c &c &c		

[N]otwithstanding that[,] we have received so much yet we are not able to get any of Mr Boyle['s] Bills lifted[.] [W]e have got Mr Hull['s] & he has paid the new Draft[.] [W]e have an order for 120 Bales [of] Canvas from M. Lalor of Dublin & could sell more if we had it[.] [W]e are getting export ready for Mr Montgomery, & Hemp is selling in this town at 40 guineas[.] R. Getty had a small cargo, so had Mr Crawford. [I]t is only 36.10- in London. I have looked over all your Books but can find no account of the Millfield Tenement, but will get William to give a list of them all & shall make him shew their receipts. I am to pay Rich<sup>d</sup> Maning for Miss Tomb tomorrow, this is as fair a state of [...] business as the nature of a Letter will admit of, & I think it will give you a tolerable idea of how we go on, but take notice that I give you all the annexed particulars from memory, as I write this at the House after shutting the office for tonight –

Bunting is at home again & as usual, he & Stewart have many grievous Battles about the Ropewalk[.] [T]here has been a Letter from Jm<sup>s</sup> Mountford dated at sea 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> being there 57 days on board the Abigail<sup>12</sup> & all well, & expecting to get to Philadelphia in a week or 10 Days.

William has not begun to spin any at Millfield yet, on account of the dismall [sic] appearance of the times[.] [W]e have got an addition to the family since you were here, it is a little Girl said to be a Daughter of poor Harry['s], it was bro<sup>r</sup>[,] very much against my inclinations[.]<sup>13</sup>

Old Mr Teeling, Tennent &c, were brought up from the prison ship this Day to the Donegall Arms, having been there ever since the French Invasion. Jm<sup>s</sup> McGlathery was liberated without a Tryal, & neither of Tennent[,] Hunter &c. have been tryed yet[.] Tom Bashford & Rob Maguire made their escape, & young Kane

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<sup>12</sup> A schooner.

<sup>13</sup> Maria McCracken (1794–5 August 1878), HJM's illegitimate daughter. It has been speculated that her mother was Mary Bodell (b. 29 March 1774), a daughter of labourer David Bodell, whose cottage on Cave Hill provided shelter to fugitives. Indeed, MAM met and dined with her brother there on 22 June 1798 (See TCD MS873/104). Maria married widower William McCleery in 1847 and became step mother to his four children. MAM and her niece continued to live together until the former's death in 1866.

is also gone to America, tho William & James is sent away  
to Waterford with a number to be sent to serve in Regiments  
abroad, Hu: Adrain is of that number[.] I will write to you  
to Charlestown by the salty from Larne[,] she is to sail the 14 or 20<sup>th</sup>  
October[.] [T]he family join me in love to you & Eliza begs to be  
affectionately mentioned to you, for myself[,] I remain

Dear Francis[,] y<sup>rs</sup> sincerely

J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken Jun

[Town name stamp, red]<sup>14</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

M<sup>r</sup> Francis M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

care of

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Campbell & Whittle<sup>15</sup>

merch<sup>ts</sup>

Kingston

Jamaica

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>16</sup>

[Postal charge]<sup>17</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "BELFAST."

<sup>15</sup> Campbell and Whittle were the owners of three small ships which operated out of Kingston.

<sup>16</sup> "OC/ 4/ 98" The stamp also includes the letter "D" perched on top of the circle.

<sup>17</sup> "4  $\frac{3}{6}$ / per packet}  $\frac{2}{8}$ ."

<sup>18</sup> "J M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ Barth Teeling[']s/ death/ Sep 98."

53. William Thompson<sup>1</sup> [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** c. early November 1798<sup>2</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/91

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, tuck letterlocking, formerly enclosed within Letter 179 (TCD MS873/90)

Miss Mary

[Fol. 1a]

Excuse the Manner I take to return my thanks for the goodnes[s]  
& care you took in my late little Mischances,<sup>3</sup> for to you I may say  
I owe my Health; I would have Returned my Warmest thanks  
Verbal[l]y; only at a Crissis [sic] like this; When you have lost a  
Brother;

Mankind a true Friend & Myself[,] the only man on Earth  
I ever had a Truely [sic] sincere Regard for, or Perhaps ever will[.]  
[A]s I shall quit this Country in a few hours never to return,<sup>4</sup> any  
Trinket sent to me that ever Belong'd to him, I would look upon it  
As the Instrumental Part of my Religeon, [sic] & learn from its  
Philanthropick [sic] owner to Live & Die –

[Y]our for Ever Oblig'd Umble [sic] Servt –  
Will Thompson –

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>1</sup> William Thompson, an English calico printer employed by HJM.

<sup>2</sup> Although the letter is undated, Grizzel Joy's comment in Letter 55: "Tompson is still in Dublin, he has been three times put back by contrary winds, I am told he is to sail again next week," places it approximately several weeks before Letter 55, which is dated 13 November 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Having refused to inform on his employer, Thompson received two hundred lashes on a charge of engraving a seal with the image of a harp and the motto of the United Irishmen. See Letter 179 (TCD MS873/90) and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 489.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson's emigration plans did not come to fruition.

54. Grace "Grizzel" Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 10 November 1798<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/102

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tuck and seal letterlocking, red wax seal on Fol. 2a/b

My dear Mary

[Fol. 1a]

We yesterday received the piece of plaid Muslin and liked it so well that I thought it unnecessary to send your letter to the Factor – [Y]ou have probably heard from my Aunt<sup>2</sup> (to whom Harry wrote immediately on our arrival) that we got here on Monday to dinner –<sup>3</sup> I felt my cold very heavy on the morning I left Belfast and by the time I reached Newry<sup>4</sup> I had become so extremely hoarse that I could only speak in whispers, I soon however recovered my voice, I have still a slight cold but by the good care I take of myself I hope to get entirely rid of it in a few days –

The trial of the unfortunate Mr Tone came on today[.]<sup>5</sup>

[I]t occupied the court but a very short time as he pleaded guilty to all the charges – He was dressed as a french officer in a superb and beautiful suit of Regimentals and behaved in the most firm and dignified manner – He read his defence which was ^at once^ inflammatory and eloquent – "He came" he said "to raise three million of his country

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<sup>1</sup> Although the letter is undated, Grizzel's comment that "Mr Tone's trial came on today" allows it to be established.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Ann McCracken.

<sup>3</sup> On 5 November 1798, Grizzel, Harriet and their brother Counsellor Joy returned to Dublin after visiting their aunt, uncle and cousins (the McCracken family) in Belfast.

<sup>4</sup> A town extending across both County Armagh and County Down.

<sup>5</sup> ^XXXXXX^ [Unknown ed., ink]. Six X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

=men to the rank of Men<sup>6</sup> in enterprises of this kind[.]” [H]e continued[.]

“success is every thing – Washington succeeded<sup>7</sup> – Kosciusko failed–” [P]erfectly aware of the fate that awaited him, he had only one request to make “that as a french officer he might be shot.”

“This is the death” said he [“we give our emigrants, Sombreuil

[Fol. 1b]

had the hono[u]r of falling before a file of French grenadiers,<sup>8</sup> de Castris the same.<sup>9</sup> I am in a similar situation in this country and ought to be treated in the same manner[.]” [T]o obtain this favo[u]r he begged leave to lay his commissions before the Lord Lieutenant, and requested the sentence might be executed as soon as possible – Harry meant to have attended the trial, but as he was late of going[,] it was ended before he reached the Barrack, the particulars I have mentioned he had from a gentleman who was present – If I can procure a a copy of M<sup>r</sup> Tone[']s defence, I will send it you as I suppose it will not be published – [Y]ou will not allow me to say I pity such a man, I certainly feel the deepest regret at his unhappy fate, and the sincerest commiseration for his wife and family –

Harriet and Harry join me in love to my Uncle, Aunt and all the family - [D]on't forget to give Kissy<sup>10</sup> Joy[']s love to Mary<sup>11</sup> and Ann,<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ^!^ [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Eugene Gabriel of Virot, marquis de Sombreuil (11 July 1770–28 July 1795), French Royalist general who was captured and shot for his part in the Quiberon expedition.

<sup>9</sup> Grizzel was possibly referring to François Athanase de Charette de la Contrie (2 May 1763–26 March 1796), French politician, soldier and leader of the 1793 Revolt in the Vendée for which he was shot. See Theobald Wolfe Tone, *The Writings of Theobald Wolfe Tone 1763–98: France, the Rhine, Lough Swilly and death of Tone, January 1797 to November 1798*, ed. T.W. Moody, R.B. McDowell and C.J. Woods, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 407.

<sup>10</sup> Kissy, possibly a nickname given to Grizzel by the youngsters in the McCracken household.

<sup>11</sup> Possibly Maria.

<sup>12</sup> Presumably, Ann McCracken, John McCracken Junior's daughter.

and believe me dear Mary[,] with warmest affection

Yours

G. Joy

Temple Street[.] Saturday night

I have not yet heard what answer the Lord Lieutenant returned to Mr Tone[']s request, it is generally supposed his execution will take place on Monday –

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>13</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Marry Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's hand]<sup>14</sup>

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "G Joy / Account of / Tone[']s trial."

<sup>14</sup> "Letters from G. Joy."

<sup>15</sup> "from the Joy family - Grizzy in par- / ticular."

55. Grace "Grizzel" Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 13 November 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/99

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, tuck and seal letterlocking, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 1a, circular date stamp, postal charge

**Missing attachment:** A sketch of the trial of Mr Tone

I enclose you[,] my dear Mary[,] a sketch of the [Fol. 1a]  
trial of Mr Tone, but from what I have heard of his  
speech, the one I send must have been very imperfectly  
taken – You have doubtless heard before this, of the attempt  
he made on his life, he however suffered the wound in  
[...seal...] his throat to be dressed, and is so much better today that  
little doubt is entertained of his recovery –  
Tompson is still in Dublin, he has been thre[e]<sup>1</sup>  
times put back by contrary winds, I am told he is to sail  
again next week – I have ^not^ heard anything of the other  
prisoners –

Be so good [as] to let my Aunt Dunbar<sup>2</sup> know that my cold  
is quite gone, I had written to her today but as I could not  
get a frank I shall keep my letter till tomorrow, when  
I will also write [to] Mrs Holmes –<sup>3</sup>  
Remember me affectionately to all the family, and  
believe me ever sincerely

yours

G Joy

Temple Street[.] Tuesday night

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>2</sup> Grizzel Joy's maternal aunt.

<sup>3</sup> Grizzel Joy's elder sister Mary Holmes.

Dublin November thirteen 1798

[Fol. 1b]

[Superscription]

Miss M. A. McCracken

N<sup>o</sup> 10 —

Ja<sup>s</sup> McClelland Belfast<sup>4</sup>

[Postal charges]<sup>5</sup>

[Circular date stamp, black, indistinct]

Mary Ann McCracken

Belfast

[Numerical calculations]

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<sup>4</sup> Possibly, this letter was sent care of James McClelland.

<sup>5</sup> "1.5/ 1.8/ 5.4" Presumably this is a calculation ( $1.5 + 1.8 = 5.4$ ) determining the postal charge for both the letter and the attachment.

## 56. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Mrs Mary Ann Hamilton<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** c. late 1798<sup>2</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/97

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final version of this letter was delivered by Thomas Hughes, accompanied by 18 guineas in a "little pillbox" as described in Letter 171<sup>3</sup>

**Material features:** 1 folio, watermark, fold letterlocking

Pardon the presumption of strangers [Fol. 1a]  
who, ^tho they^ have never had (probably never may  
have) the pleasure of seeing you ~~but who~~ ^yet^ admire  
your character & am acquainted with your situ-  
ation, for thus ^daring to^ intrud[e]ing on you & entreating  
your acceptance of the enclosed, it comes from  
~~those who were acquainted with your Uncle & who  
have suffered in the same cause with you & him  
what can never be repaired~~ those who have  
suffered in the same cause with yourself  
to an extent that can never be repaired,

---

<sup>1</sup> Mary Ann Hamilton née Russell, daughter of John Russell (c. 1748 – c. 1812) and niece of TR. She married United Irishman, William Henry Hamilton and had two children.

<sup>2</sup> In Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89) MAM refers to writing to Mrs Hamilton after expressing her surprise to her sister "at Ladies who had seen M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton in the latter end of 98 & pitied her, young & handsome & unprotected."

<sup>3</sup> "I expressed my surprize to her [Margaret McCracken] at Ladies who had seen M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton in the latter end of 98 & pitied her, young & handsome & unprotected[,] visiting her uncle ^&^ lodging in a dressmakers, & working for the woman of the house for payment of the rent, & as I thought the Ladies might have invited her to come & reside with them, my sister replied[,] you might assist her without doing so[.] [H]ow[?] I replied[.] [B]y sending her some money[.] [T]his had never occurred to me & I of course was much gratified with the proposal & as Tho<sup>s</sup> Hughes was going up to Dublin I put up 18 guineas in a little pillbox[.] I wished to have sent 20 but ^had^ not so much on hand[.] I did not put my ^name to the^ note not wishing her to know who it came ^from but^ lest she should fear it had been from some person that she would wish to be obliged to & therefore I gave her to understand that it was from females but Hughes bungled the matter & let out the secret[.]" See Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89).

& whose greatest consolation is that of being  
useful to others, ~~but~~ particularly ~~to~~ their  
fellow sufferers in the Cause of humanity[,]  
Liberty & Truth, surely you would not wish  
to ~~refuse~~ <sup>deny</sup> [...] the unfortunate the only real  
delight this world affords – [I]f you ~~can~~  
will not accept it as a gift at least you may  
without hesitation ~~take~~ <sup>receive</sup> it as <sup>a</sup> loan which when  
your own situation & that of our unhappy  
Country amends you can repay to the unfortu-  
[nate]<sup>4</sup>

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

Excuse the presumption of strangers  
who ~~have~~ never had <sup>&</sup> probably never may have<sup>^</sup> the pleasure of  
seeing you[,] for  
<sup>thus</sup> intruding on you ~~in~~ to entreat your acceptance  
of the enclosed [End]

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<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>5</sup> "Mary McCracken/ to/ Mrs Hamilton/ T. Russell[']s niece."

57. Grace (Grizzel) Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 19 January 1799<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/98

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, tuck and seal letterlocking, red wax seal on Fol. 1b, white paper binding strip

**Missing attachment:** *The Anti-Union* newspaper of 19 January 1799 (See section 5.2.2 below)

[Numerical calculations]

[Fol. 1a]

My dear Mary

M<sup>rs</sup> Echlin<sup>2</sup> requested I would write to you to know if you could let her have a piece of plaid muslin the same as ours, if you have none exactly the same, send me patterns of those you have, that she may choose - Some time ago you sent me patterns of Cambrick muslin. We liked the one marked 6:6 extremely and thought it quite thick enough[.] I would have begged of you to keep that piece for us, but as we had no immediate opportunity of getting it up, I thought you might get it sold in Belfast and we would get the next you would make. If that piece, however is still on hand[,] we shall be glad to have it, or if not[,] as soon as possible a piece of the same kind. M<sup>r</sup> Waring the atty would[,] I am sure[,] bring it up for us -

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<sup>1</sup> Although the letter is undated, Grizzel Joy's comments allow the exact date of composition to be determined. She states that "Parliament sits Tuesday next," which it did on Tuesday 22 January 1799. In her sign-off, Grizzel dates the letter "Saturday night" suggesting that it was written on the Saturday before Parliament sat, which was 19 January 1799. This date is further validated by her comment, "I enclose you the anti-union of today" in which her brother's article was featured and which was dated 19 January 1799.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Echlin, Grizzel Joy's friend in Dublin.

I enclose you the anti-union<sup>3</sup> of today, in it is a short<sup>4</sup> address of Harry's to the electors of Ulster.<sup>5</sup> I am astonished that on a Subject of such importance to the Country, the people of Ulster and particularly the Inhabitants of Belfast have not expressed their sentiments, a measure on which the very existence of Ireland as a nation depends. My pride as an Irishwoman would lead me to detest it, if I ever were not, as I am convinced, that it will be destructive to the interests of Ireland, our manufactures it will annihilate and our taxes will be increased

beyond calculation. Parliament sits on Tuesday next [Fol. 1b] when it is expected the question will ^be^ brought forward. I can scarce give you an idea of the agitation of the public mind here on this subject. [---] I have no patience with Belfast. Yours in great haste

G. Joy

Temple street[,] Saturday  
night

[T]he most affectionate love to my Uncle, Aunt & all the family[.]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast.

Miss M. A. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast

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<sup>3</sup> *The Anti-Union* newspaper (1798-1799), established to oppose the proposed Act of Union.

<sup>4</sup> ^XXXX XXXXXX^ [Unknown ed., ink]. Ten X-marks spaced evenly above the entire line.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Joy, "To the Electors of Ulster," *The Anti-Union*, no. 11 (Saturday 19 January 1799): 41-3.

<sup>6</sup> "from Miss Joy[,] sister of the late H Joy."

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "G – Joy –/ with her brother[']s/ address to the/ Electors of Ulster/ against the Union."

58. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Grace (Grizzel) Joy [Dublin]

**Date:** 1799<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/100

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium

My Dear Grizzy ~~effected effectual effected~~ [Fol. 1a]  
~~effected effectual<sup>2</sup>~~

As "the Dumb have been made to speak and the Blind to see" I should think myself totally deficient in their christian charity, was I not to rejoice that<sup>3</sup> so many of my Countrymen, & Countrywomen<sup>4</sup> have recovered the right use of their senses. [H]owever disagreeable those truths ~~may be~~ <sup>are</sup> that can only be forced on our observation by painful experience, yet as "Moral Reasoning is but the awakening of certain feelings"<sup>5</sup> and as the feelings of the majority of mankind are so torpid, as only to be aroused by the idea of individual sufferings, I consider that<sup>6</sup> event as fortunate which obliges those,<sup>7</sup> at last, to open their eyes who have been so long wilfully blind in regard to the situation of Ireland, with respect to England,<sup>8</sup> but what are we to think of those who

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the fact that this is a draft reply to Letter 57 (TCD MS873/98).

<sup>2</sup> These isolated words were most likely attempts to spell out the correct form of "effect" before entering it into the body of the letter.

<sup>3</sup> "rejoice, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>4</sup> "Countrywomen, have" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 135.

<sup>6</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>any</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>7</sup> ~~those~~ <sup>people</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>8</sup> ~~with respect to England~~ [Madden ed., pencil].

have so long preached up non-resistance &<sup>9</sup> passive obedience to<sup>10</sup>  
all existing Governments as an absolute duty, & who execrated those  
as Monsters who even wished for a Revolution<sup>11</sup> because it<sup>12</sup> could  
not

be effected without bloodshed,<sup>13</sup> & yet themselves now talk  
of opposing force to force, merely to prevent an Union which  
would only render this Country in appearance what it has  
long been in reality[,] a Province dependant on Great Britain.  
[H]ave they already forgot how often it has been asserted that ~~this~~  
Ireland could not otherwise exist[?] Revolution, Reform or whatever  
else you please to call it[,] is beginning in the right place, the  
public mind[.] [A]lready are the clouds of error fast dissipating before  
the sunbeams of truth, & it is with extreme pleasure I observe such  
an unexpected change has taken place in Harry's political

sentiments, tho I can scarce think it possible that it is he who [Fol. 1b]  
recommends the consideration of public measures to the attention  
of the multitude, he who so lately appeared to think it sacri-  
ligious to infringe any of the laws or oppose any of the measures  
of Government & to think a law was sufficiently obligatory in  
being generally known, & who seemed also to disapprove so high-  
ly of individuals not connected with government neglecting  
their own business to meddle with politics – [H]owever[,] I think  
the motto of his address perfectly applicable to the present  
situation of the country but in a sense quite the reverse of  
what he means – [W]hat a wonderful clamour is now raised  
by this idea of an Union, which if it takes place[,] will doubtless  
lessen the property of the Rich, but can it increase the suffer-  
ings of the poor, of those alone who are <sup>truly</sup> entitled to our com-  
miseration, the wretched Cottagers of the south, whose [---]  
labour can scarcely procure them a single meal of potatoes  
in the day & whose almost total want of cloathing makes

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<sup>9</sup> ~~non-resistance &~~. [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>10</sup> "obedience, to" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>11</sup> ~~even wished for Revolution~~ <sup>^thought opposition^</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>12</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>^reform^</sup> [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>13</sup> ~~bloodshed~~ [Madden ed., pencil].

them fly the approach of strangers - [Y]et how entirely insensible did we all appear to that accumulation of injuries and oppressions under which they have so long groaned & by which they were finally driven to their late unhappy insurrection. I say unhappy because unsuccessful – [T]o what they have suffered in consequence I shall not advert, but long before a sword was drawn or a gun leveled against the government of the Country[,] the same shocking cruelties were practiced tho' on a less extensive scale, this I do not assert merely from hearsay, having seen a great number of affidavits in support of it[,] collected by one whose exertions are now at an end,<sup>14</sup> one who in neglect of every personal consideration[,] every motive of individual advantage, set danger and difficulty at defiance

in an ardent investigation into the situation of the Country[,] [Fol. 2a] more particularly <sup>^the^</sup> ~~County Armagh~~ a neighbouring County Armagh, where a licensed Horde of Ruffians under the denomination of Orangemen[,] were allowed to commit such atrocities as humanity recoils to think on, and is that constitution worth a sigh or a struggle, under which every right of Justice & Humanity have been trampled on, openly & daily and that with impunity, but why do we talk of the Constitution[?] [W]here is the reality of it to be found[?] [O]nce[,] it was supposed to rest on an immutable basis, the Habeas Corpus Act<sup>15</sup> & trial by Jury, but experience having <sup>^since^</sup> proved that these foundations may be removed at the will & pleasure of a British Minister,<sup>16</sup> convinces us that what was once admired with such romantic fondness is but an empty shadow of theoretic beauties that has no existence but in the visionary brain of the political enthusiast who<sup>17</sup> represents things as they should be, not as they are, as there are two distinct bodies of people in the North & [I] know not which of them Harry means to address[.] [I]s it that body, who once[,] vainly im-

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<sup>14</sup> Evidently referring to her brother, HJM.

<sup>15</sup> The Habeas Corpus Act of 1679 was established to prevent unlawful imprisonment.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Stewart, 2nd Marquess of Londonderry (18 June 1769–12 August 1822), often referred to as Lord Castlereagh.

<sup>17</sup> “enthusiast, who” [comma omitted (ed.)].

aging they had a C were in possession of a Constitution sufficient to protect their liberties, stepped boldly forward & were willing to hazard life, property[,] every thing they held dear in support of it, [...] a British [...] ^but the delusion is now vanished^ the intrigue of a British faction weakened by dividing them, & it is now no longer necessary to deceive them, & they are left without the means of resistance if they had the inclination, & must passively submit to the tyranny of their Oppressors or incur fresh punishment by complaining, merely to show that they have only the power to complain. ~~some it is true have got~~

~~arms in their hands~~ [A]ll[,] it is true[,] are not in this situation, some having deserted their first principles & taken up arms against that very liberty they were once enrolled to support. The people of the North have not been inattentive to the political history of their country these few years past, & what do they there find (a few trifling concessions excepted[,] more half way measures that did not meet their wishes, & which were only to be valued as being an acknowledgement of the right or power of the people over those who should be, but who are not[,] their representatives) but a total overthrow of what the[y] once considered their Constitution, whose foundations ~~have once~~ ^were^ thought ~~to have been~~ immovable but which have been entirely destroyed by the caprice of a British Minister[,] as children wantonly chase & destroy the bubbles which themselves have raised, & what is there now left to contend for[,] the substance gone, shall we quarrel for the shadow[?] [B]ut even the shadow itself of Liberty is vanished from this unfortunate Land, & nothing ^now^ remains in its stead but the ~~most~~ most oppressive Tyranny grinding the inhabitants to the very dust – You will perhaps say that we may still look forward with hopes of ~~attaining~~ a reform but what reasonable grounds are there for such a hope, has not the British Minister long possessed the power either by fraud or force to controul [sic] the Irish Parliament to his wishes, & to force on the people of Ireland[,] laws which were totally contrary to their feelings & their wishes[?] ~~& can we expect that~~ [End]

Mary

59. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Grace (Grizzel) Joy [Dublin]

**Date:** 1799<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/101

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium

My Dear Grizzy

[Fol. 1a]

I sent you last week[,] by M<sup>r</sup> Wright[,] a peice of Cambrick Muslin ^of^ the same web, tho not the very piece off which the pattern you liked best was taken, and should have written to you by the same opportunity, only I had not sufficient time. I wrote ~~also~~ to Maguire desiring him to send you two pieces of Plaid Muslin, but not having since heard from him[,] I apprehend they have both been sold.<sup>2</sup> I therefore shall write to Coile & tell him to send you ^with^ this[,] the only piece he has of it on hand -

I thank you for Harry[']s address which afforded me much pleasure, if any publication was to be issued here, written with such spirit & boldness, both writer & publisher would run a great risque of having their houses demolished, besides being committed to the military prison –

Tho' it is with extreme pleasure I observe such an unexpected change has taken place in Harry[']s political opinions, yet I can scarcely think it possible that it is he who so strenuously recommends the consideration of public measures to general attention, he who so lately appeared to ^think^ it sacrilegious to oppose any of the measures ^of Government^ or infringe any of the laws which

he thought sufficiently obligatory in being generally known, who seemed also to disapprove so highly of individuals

not connected with Government, neglecting their own affairs [Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the fact that this is a draft reply to Letter 57 (TCD MS873/98).

<sup>2</sup> MAM [Belfast] to Alexander Maguire [Dublin], 1799.

to meddle with politics -<sup>3</sup> [T]he motto of his address appears to me perfectly applicable to the present situation of the Country but in a sense quite the reverse of what is meant. What a wonderful clamour is now raised at the name of [---] Union, when in reality there has always been such an Union betwixt England & this Country, as there is betwixt husband & wife[,] by which ^tho'^ the former has the power to oppress the latter if he has the inclination[,] yet if he is a man of justice & humanity[,] she will almost forget she is a slave, but if on the contrary he is cruel & tyrannical[,] she will then taste all the bitterness of slavery, however as an Union will tend to injure the mercantile[,] the manufacturing [End]

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<sup>3</sup> Referring to her brother, HJM.

**60. Counsellor Henry Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Robert Magill Young, ed., *Historical Notices of Old Belfast* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co., Limited, 1896), 274. Young describes the epistle as an “annexed letter in the M’Cracken MSS” and was one of the items within Young’s (now dispersed) collection of McCracken papers

**Date:** 11 December 1801

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

[Endorsement, MAM’s hand]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR MARY, –

I did expect you would, as I hoped you cou’d, be the means of assisting me to facts respecting at least the Battles of Ballynahinch<sup>2</sup> and Antrim,<sup>3</sup> and any time previous to them, that might be communicated with propriety. Secrets I don’t wish to know anything about; but what can be mentioned with truth and propriety you will, I trust, still endeavour to do. With respect to Antrim I have very imperfect accounts, therefore on that subject I hope you will be particular. What was the plan of the Battle? In what points did it fail, and in what manner? Numbers engaged; and how was it connected with any general plan, had it been successful? How did it happen that the North did not move when the South did? When Antrim did step forward, what was the cause that Down did not? Why did Down, at the time it did? Were those actual leaders Leaders on the field, who were appointed by any higher power to be the leaders? What

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<sup>1</sup> “1801. From Henry Joy respecting information about the Battles of Ballynahinch and Antrim, which I declined procuring him.” Young provides this endorsement within his introduction to the letter and speculates that MAM did not pass on this information due to her awareness of TR’s “inflexible purpose.”

<sup>2</sup> The Battle of Ballynahinch, 12 June 1798, led by United Irishman Henry Monro (1758–16 June 1798).

<sup>3</sup> The Battle of Antrim, 7 June 1798, fought by the rebels under the command of HJM.

description of Leaders did appear, and what did not? and why did they not? These are some of the Questions that I would wish to have resolved; and as their answers require no names, nor the disclosures of any secrets that can in possibility injure any one, there will be the less reasonable objection to the answers. Had Antrim been successful, what was to have followed? and Down in like manner.

I am, Dr Mary, expecting your assistance in this,

Yrs. truly,

H. Joy

Friday, 11 Dec., 1801

**61. Patrick Lynch<sup>1</sup> [Westport] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 2 July 1802

**Archive:** LHL

**Reference code:** Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 3

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tuck and seal letterlocking, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, circular date stamp

Westport<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> July 1802

[Fol. 1a]

Madam

I am too long detained in this place expecting the return of letters I wrote to y<sup>r</sup> Brother John[,] one on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June<sup>3</sup> and the other on the 21<sup>st</sup>[.]<sup>4</sup> [F]inding no answer comming to either[,] I have taken the liberty to write to you, and to let you know that it was agreed [sic] before I left Belfast that I should correspond with y<sup>r</sup> Brother in the absence of M<sup>r</sup> Bunting, and that he should remit me such sums as w<sup>d</sup> be necessary on this Journey; consequently[,] I wrote to him from Ballina<sup>5</sup> on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Lynch (1757 – 1829), Irish scholar, secretary hired by Edward Bunting to collect Irish airs across Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Westport, a town in County Mayo.

<sup>3</sup> The letter to which Lynch is referring is actually dated 3 June 1802, however, his journal states that the letter was posted from Westport on 4 June. See Patrick Lynch to John McCracken Junior, 3 June 1802, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/35/30 and "Patrick Lynch's journal," Bunting Collection, QUB Digital Special Collections & Archives, accessed 27 October 2017, <http://digital-library.qub.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15979coll9/id/1132/rec/6>.

<sup>4</sup> See Patrick Lynch to John McCracken Junior, Westport, 21 June 1802, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/7/2.

<sup>5</sup> Ballina, a town in the north of County Mayo.

<sup>6</sup> Enclosed within John McCracken Junior to Edward Bunting, 15 May 1802, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/35/29.

and received his answer according to appointment in Castlebarr<sup>7</sup> with 3 guineas in notes enclosed. I wrote immediately on the receipt of this giving account of my progress thro the mountains of Erris [sic]<sup>8</sup> – I stayed in Castlebarr some nine or ten days, had good success, got near 50 songs, and chiefly from the Mechanicks [sic]. I found it expensive[,] it cost me 2 guineas.

I went to Belcara<sup>9</sup> and staid there 3 days. I came to Westport on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and posted a letter to Mr John McCracken giving a further account of my progress and requesting another remittance of 5 guineas to the care of the rev<sup>d</sup> Doctor Lynah in Westport –<sup>10</sup> I must now tell you Madam[,] something about a bitter orange – When I went to the post office I had no wafer[.] I asked the post master to seal it for me, I s<sup>d</sup> it was for Belfast - [H]e looked very sour – [H]e gave me the wafer but refused to take the letter into his hand – [H]e told me very roughly to put it in outside and immediately he closed the door against me. I found before I was three days in Westport that this post master[,] whom the[y] call Sergeant Kelly[,] had told several persons that I should and would be apprehended as one on some secret mission from Belfast - I could not get many songs in Westport on account of this report[,] for the persons from whom I expected them were afraid to be seen in my company[.] [O]n the tenth of June I left the town

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<sup>7</sup> Castlebar, a town in County Mayo.

<sup>8</sup> The barony of Erris, a boggy, mountainous region of County Mayo.

<sup>9</sup> Belcarra, a village in County Mayo.

<sup>10</sup> Dr Charles Lynah, P.P., Westport, appointed Bishop of Achonry in 1803, died April or May 1808.

and went 8 or 9 miles into the mountains South of the Rick<sup>11</sup> where I  
got  
above 30 songs at a cheap rate – [O]n the 16<sup>th</sup> I returned to Westport[.]  
[O]n the 17<sup>th</sup> I inquired at the post office if there was a letter for Pat<sup>k</sup>  
Lynch  
to the care of D<sup>r</sup> Lynagh[.] Kelly said no – S<sup>d</sup> I, It's a wonder, you mind  
sir I posted a letter here on fryday [sic] the 4<sup>th</sup>[?] He made no answer  
but look<sup>t</sup>  
sulky and closed the door against me whilst I was speaking – I began  
to suspect that Kelly had suppress'd my letter – I was told by several  
persons  
that Kelly w<sup>d</sup> have me confined unless I had good credentials to  
show[.]

[Fol. 1b]

[O]n fryday the 18<sup>th</sup> I waited on Doctor Lynah, he was very civil[.] ↵  
[H]e told me to have patience for two or three days and hoped that  
my letter was not miscarried and that he w<sup>d</sup> go to the post master and  
convince him that I had no design but merely to look for Irish Music[.]  
I went back to the mountains in ^the^ evening and staid till Sunday  
when I returned to Westport. On Monday June 21<sup>st</sup> I wrote a  
letter to M<sup>r</sup> John M<sup>c</sup>Cracken and enclosed a list of 150 songs  
with the names of the places and persons from whom I got them[.]  
I waited on Doctor Lynagh[,]<sup>12</sup> he was very kind[,] he wrote the  
superscription  
of the letter and went with it himself to the post office - I agreed with  
the  
Doctor that I should order the direction of ^the^ answer of my letter  
to be  
in his name and that my name should not appear on the outside  
and that whatever remittance should come w<sup>d</sup> be safe for me –  
The Doctor then lent me some silver and gave me a letter to  
a priest in Louisborough[,]<sup>13</sup> ten miles to the west – I went to Louis-  
borough on Tuesday 22[.] I staid in a publick [sic] house – On the 23 I  
went  
3 miles further west in quest of a school master[,] got 3 songs

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<sup>11</sup> Croagh Patrick.

<sup>12</sup> Alternative spelling of Doctor Lynah.

<sup>13</sup> Louisborough, a small town in the south of County Mayo.

from him[.] [O]n the 24<sup>th</sup> I returned to Louisborough and heard of a  
Blind piper[.] I went to a Dancing where I found him and appointed  
to meet him next day at Hugh O'Donnell[']s in Louisborough –  
Fryday 25<sup>th</sup> I took down six good songs from the Blind man and  
I never found any one who had so great variety of good old songs and  
tunes[.] nor any who could repeat so correctly – [H]e sings well and  
has

a great memory[;] in short he w<sup>d</sup> be more useful to M<sup>r</sup> Bunting  
than any man in Connaught – [H]owever I could not stay by him  
for I was out of money and had to return to Westport where  
I am running in debt and getting no songs – Lord! [H]ow long must I  
be confined this way? - My credit will not last long here - [N]o answer  
comming[.]

[H]ave all the posts conspired to stop my letters? I'll post this in  
Castlebarr

to morrow morning – [O]r is it possible that M<sup>r</sup> John M<sup>c</sup>Cracken is not  
at home and that there is no one allowed to open or answer his  
letters[?]

My D<sup>r</sup> Miss Mary, I hope you will see me relieved out of this hobble  
and Direct to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Doctor Lynah, Westport  
and it will ever oblige y<sup>r</sup> humble servant,

Pat<sup>k</sup> Lynch

PS I think it is best that my name shall not be on the on the outside  
but D<sup>r</sup> Lynah's only and I know it will be safe for me –

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Mary McCracken

Wine cellar entry

Belfast

by Dublin

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Lynch about Irish songs/ Westport 2 July 1802/ Pat<sup>k</sup> Lynch."

[Address, pencil]<sup>15</sup>

[Endorsement, unknown hand]<sup>16</sup>

[Circular date stamp]<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> R M Young/ Rathvara/ Belfast." For some time, Letters 61, 62 and 95 were in the possession of Robert Magill Young, before passing into the hands of his daughter Eleanor (Norah) Skelton Beath (1888–1974).

<sup>16</sup> "from Miss Mary."

<sup>17</sup> "[...]/ 1802."

62. Patrick Lynch [Westport] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 9 July 1802

**Archive:** LHL

**Reference code:** Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 4

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Bernard O'Byrne

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

Westport July 9<sup>th</sup> 1802

[Fol. 1a]

Miss Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

The bearer[,] Mr Bern<sup>d</sup> O'Byrne[,] is a respectable shop-keeper in Westport - I find he deals in Belfast[.] [I]f my letters are come to hand you may trust him with any commands to me - I wait for relief[.] I wrote to y<sup>r</sup> Brother on the 4<sup>th</sup> June requesting 5 guineas remittance[;] got no [an]swer<sup>1</sup> - Monday 21<sup>st</sup> of July<sup>2</sup> I wrote a letter to y<sup>r</sup> Brother John[;] I have got no answer - I am detained here wanting money[.] On Monday 21 of June I wrote to M<sup>r</sup> John M'Cracken on the same subject[;] got no answer[.] Saturday the 3<sup>d</sup> of July, I wrote to you[.]<sup>3</sup> I have got no answer[.] I fear there is something wrong[.] My dear Miss Mary[,] I have been very attentive[,] very zealous and very diligent in this Business[;] I have near 200 songs - I have done all I could yet I am detained for want of travelling charges Y<sup>r</sup> brother was to supply me[.] I hope you have got my letter[.]

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>2</sup> This should be 'June'. Lynch mistakenly wrote the month in which he was writing the present letter. See Patrick Lynch to John McCracken Junior, Westport, 21st June 1802, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/7/2.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 61 (LHL, Beath MSS, Box 1, Letter 3) which is dated 2 July. Therefore Lynch was probably referring to the day on which it was posted.

I am in a very uneasy situation[.]  
I hope you will excuse this trouble as I suppose  
y<sup>r</sup> brother is not at home and that you will  
do something to relieve - y<sup>r</sup> humble serv<sup>t</sup> P. Lynch

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary McCracken  
wine Cellar entry  
Belfast  
by Dublin

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's hand]<sup>4</sup>

[Endorsement, blue ink]<sup>5</sup>

[Numerical calculations]

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<sup>4</sup> "Westport 9 July 1802/ PA<sup>k</sup> Lynch."

<sup>5</sup> "from Miss Mary."

### 63. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Bernard Coile [Dublin]

**Source:** Handwritten transcription (within McNeill's Notebook 3, 5 volumes of notes for Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/3).

**Date:** 8 July 1803

**Archive:** McNeill located the original manuscript at Dublin's State Paper Office, the collection of which is now housed at the National Archives of Ireland. However, the NAI has no record of this letter<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

**Attachement:** 15 guineas

No. 14 Linenhall Street  
Dublin

Dear Sir

It was not in my power to get the commission sooner executed which you entrusted me with respecting Miss Russell I supposed at first that I would have no difficulty in prevailing in a few of Mr Russell's most intimate friends in Belfast to promise something annually what would be sufficient to support her but on applying to one who had been once the warmest in professions of friendship, most liberal in offers of service, I met with a point blank refusal. The next I applied to promised to assist me in every possible manner but took care never to come near me afterwards. Those I spoke to afterwards advised me to drop the first plan and under-take a general subscription that was to apply to all those who were considered worthy characters whether they had been personally acquainted with Mr Russell or not, to this I was extremely unwilling lest it might be repugnant to Mr Russell's feelings if ever he should come to the knowledge of it. However as there were no other means I was compelled to have resource to it, tho I was put off from time to time on account of it being always an unfavourable time -

However at least I have got it nearly finished and am ashamed of the little benevolence in spirit shown in the town of Belfast when all I have got amounts to no more than 25 guineas ten of which I sent by

---

<sup>1</sup> Following an email correspondence with an NAI archivist, it was concluded that the manuscript is currently missing.

my brother & by this mornings post have remitted the 15 (*now*) addressed to your care which you be so good as forward her immediately. I am extremely sorry that it has not been in my power to do the business more to my satisfaction but being of so little consequence was one cause of my want of success. However I expect something more yet which shall be forwarded without delay.

I remain Sir

Yours respectfully

M. McCracken

Belfast 8 July 1803

You will let us know when you commence business again.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Following MAM's fundraising efforts "a Mr. Skeffington, subsequently Lord Masserene, hearing of this subscription, gave information against Miss M'Cracken, charging her with raising money to buy arms. Miss M'Cracken, who was held in the highest respect, even by the Orangemen, among the authorities of Belfast, received a friendly hint that it would be advisable for her, for some time, "to keep out of the way." Miss M'Cracken, true to her noble character, kept her ground; she rejected the advice of friends as well as foes on this point." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Series 3, vol 2, 275–76.

#### 64. Thomas Russell to Margaret Russell [Dublin]

**Date:** 15 July 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/339

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered. Margaret Russell entrusted this letter to Mary Ann. However, sometime around 1830, she lent this letter to Charles Hamilton Teeling to assist with an *Ulster Magazine* article. Subsequently, Teeling forwarded it to Madden

**Material features:** 1 folio, red wafer seal on Fol. 1b, contained within an envelope along with a note

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Envelope]

July 15.

[Fol. 1a]

My ever D<sup>r</sup> Sister,

Should I fall in the great cause in which I am embarked[,] I trust you will shew by your fortitude, that you approve my principles & by your resignation that you are a real Christian. You will be in ^my^ thoughts to the last & I trust we will rise together to a blessed immortality. [T]he nation will[,] I am sure[,] support you. [M]ay our god & saviour protect you & pardon my sins[.] [R]emember it[']s in the cause of virtue and Liberty I fall. ^I trust you will have me buried beside my father and mother^

T. Russell —

15. July —

[Superscription]

[Fol. 1b]

Miss Russell

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<sup>1</sup> "Thomas Russell's/ farewell letter to his sister/at the time of his joining/ the insurrection of 1803/ given to me by/ Charles Teeling/ &/ Last lines written by him." This letter had originally been entrusted to MAM by Margaret Russell. However, sometime around 1830, MAM lent this letter to CHT to assist with an *Ulster Magazine* article. Evidently, CHT failed to return it to MAM but did pass it on to Madden, as this endorsement reveals.

to be opened after  
my death

The Lord is nigh  
unto them that are of a broken heart  
and saveth such as be of a contrite  
spirit

[Note, Fol. 1a]<sup>2</sup>

[Endorsement, CHT's hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Note, Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>2</sup> Catalogued as TCD MS873/340.

<sup>3</sup> "These words were appended/ to the original note and is in the/ hand writing I believe of the sister/ of T. Russell."

## 65. Thomas Russell to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 15 July 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/640

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by Mrs Rabb to Mary Ann, which she passed on to Charles Hamilton Teeling sometime around 1830. It then came into the hands of Thomas Russell's nephew John Alexander Russell,<sup>1</sup> presumably as a result of his appeal to Teeling for any materials relating to his uncle (see section 5.1.3 below). John Alexander Russell later forwarded the manuscript to Madden (see section 5.1.4 below)

**Material features:** 1 folio

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

I go this Moment for the purpose of[,] if in my power[,]  
rectifying the mistakes that have taken place[.]  
[W]hether I fall or succeed is in the hands of God  
but the cause I will never relinquish[.] [H]e has for the  
present stopt our progress for purposes no doubt  
wise – [C]ourage alone was wanting here[,] as far as I  
can see[,] to render our success not only certain but  
easy[.] [A]t the same time[,] I consider that it was rather  
misfortune than want of it or of principle that  
stopt us here[,] tho perhaps I shall find it no easy  
task to make that believed – [I]f you hear of my

---

<sup>1</sup> Captain John Alexander Russell "JAR" (c. 1801–2 December 1848), nephew of TR and captain in the 92nd Highlanders.

<sup>2</sup> "Copy of a letter of Thomas Russell to Frank McCracken 15 July 1803." However, Madden later cites the recipient as MAM, referencing it as a "letter from T.R. brought to Miss McCracken by Mrs Rabb after his failure in Antrim." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 221–22. Further evidence that this letter was intended for MAM can be found in Madden's Questionnaire, where MAM quotes part of this letter before commenting, "The above named note was brought to me by a young country woman in the sole of her stocking. That note was given to Teeling." See section 5.4.1. It must be concluded therefore, that in this instance, Madden's endorsement is incorrect.

friend<sup>3</sup> you will tell him[,] or any other person[,] I am gone to join any body I can find in arms and support of their rights and that of mankind —  
I wish much it may be understood so and that I shall shortly be heard of – [I]t undoubtedly afflicts me that I should [leave] any in prison on account of this but I trust to be yet able to serve them[;]  
my stay here could not now as far as I can see but I think my departure should be a secret as I trust I shall be soon back – [T]he Millitia [sic] now with you are all good. I am sorry my arrangemen<sup>ts</sup><sup>^</sup> hinder me seeing some of them, but all in good time – Let me request of you not to suffer your <sup>^</sup>[...] <sup>^</sup>to be dispirited[,] the cause will succeed tho individuals may fall – [R]especting the proclamation[,]<sup>4</sup> there was one omission thro haste – [T]hat is[,] the Trust in the king[']s regular forces were to be considered as English, and not as Rebels, respecting it[,] rely on it – [I]t will be adhered to[.] [I]n one word I beg it may be stated that I have no anger to the country[.] I have no doubt committed faults but I acted for the best and I still hope I may be able to repay and set all right[.] I received by a lady on wednesd<sup>ay</sup><sup>^</sup> what you sent me[,] for that and all your kindness accept all I can give[;] my thanks and be assured I will either die or be successful in the cause[,] excuse the several  
[End]

[Endorsement, JAR's hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>3</sup> <sup>^</sup>Hamilton<sup>^</sup> [CHT ed., blue ink].

<sup>4</sup> The original manuscript of TR's proclamation, issued to "the Men of Ireland," was given to MAM by TR himself. It was dated, "Head Quarters, July 24th, 1803." MAM gave the document to James Standfield of Belfast who gave it to his son, Thomas Standfield, who in turn passed it on to Young. See Young, *Old Belfast*, 276 and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 225–26.

<sup>5</sup> "Copy of a letter/ from T-R. to I-think/ FK-M.Cn/ -15 July 1803-/ to-H.W. Hamilton" This endorsement reveals JAR's confusion over the recipient of the letter.

## 66. Thomas Russell to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Destroyed manuscript

**Date:** Between 24 July and 9 September 1803<sup>1</sup>

**Source 1:** Questionnaire, Attachment (5.4.2)

**Source 2:** Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693)

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered by a messenger passing through Belfast on his way to Dublin<sup>2</sup>

**Material features:** Written in a solution of laundry blue or “common-house blue,” a starch for whitening cloth<sup>3</sup>

### Source 1: Questionnaire, Attachment (5.4.2)

I hope your spirits are not depressed by a temporary damp in consequence of the recent failure, of this be assured[,] of ultimate success I am ~~success I am~~ still certain[,] the failure alone was surprizing – Let me beg of you to give the bearer two guineas & write to[,] or draw on \_\_\_ & he will pay you[.] [D]o not shew this to any creature but your sister – [O]f some of the causes of the failure I am yet ignorant, others I know & shall inform you of them when we meet[,] if that pleasure is reserved for me – [B]urn this when you have read it –

### Source 2: Letter 135

I hope your spirits are not depressed by a temporary damp, in consequence of the recent failure. Of this I beg you to be assured that of ultimate success I am still certain & the cause I will more relinquish - [W]ill you give the bearer two guineas & either write to[,] or draw on \_\_\_ & he will pay you – ~~with some of the causes of the~~ [D]o not shew

---

<sup>1</sup> The letter was written while TR was in hiding, therefore it dates somewhere between the failure of Emmet’s rising and TR’s arrest. See, however, note 4 below.

<sup>2</sup> As explained by MAM in Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693).

<sup>3</sup> This information is supplied by MAM within both sources.

this to any creature but your sister – With some of the causes of the failure I am still ignorant, others I know and shall inform you of them when we meet[,] if that pleasure be reserved for me - Burn this when you have read it –<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In Letter 135 MAM continues, “I did as he desired with this note, having/ read it several times so as to imprint it on/ my memory.” It must be borne in mind, however, that Mary Ann wrote this based on her own recollections of the letter forty years after casting it into the fire.

67. James Orr<sup>1</sup> [Dublin] to Margaret McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 1 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/684

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, red wafer seal on Fol. 1b, tear caused by breaking of a second red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand, pencil]<sup>2</sup> Dublin 1 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803 [Fol. 1a]

D<sup>r</sup> Madam

I have to apologise to you for my long silence. I receiv'd yrs<sup>3</sup> with a letter enclosed for the Sister of your friend.<sup>4</sup> I have deferr'd answer  
=ing merely from the very uncertain state<sup>5</sup> he has since been in, his situa=  
=tion is most distressing, his life is[,] as it has been from the state he has  
been in[,] compleatly [sic] despair'd of by all except the friend to whom  
you have written,<sup>6</sup> she still has hopes but they depend on what I

---

<sup>1</sup> James Orr, Francis McCracken and the McCracken sisters' mercantile agent in Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> "Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> Mc<sup>c</sup>."

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken and MAM [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], September 1803.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken and MAM [Belfast] to Margaret Russell [Dublin], September 1803.

Margaret Russell, (1752 – 13 September 1834), Dublin-based school teacher and sister of TR.

<sup>5</sup> ^your friend is in^ [Madden ed., pencil].

<sup>6</sup> ^(his sister)^ [Madden ed., pencil].

am afraid cannot be accomplish'd and even if done[,] I cannot  
conceive

the benefit arising would be at all what she expects, she thinks  
a sum of money would relieve his mind sufficiently to make a change  
in his situation but that sum is £150 or £200[.] I wish'd to know in  
what way this could have the effect but either from prudence or  
fearful her hopes arose from too sanguine a disposition and that my  
opinion would not coincide with hers[,] she rather declined saying & I  
did

not of course[,] being quite unknown to her[,] wish to press her[.]<sup>7</sup>  
[S]he is most

grateful for the attention she has met with from you, she sees your  
[Fol. 1b]

friend every day of late and has told him of your wishes for his ↙  
recovery – [F]rom the great danger of his complaint[,] few[,] or  
rather[,] no

friends here have ventured visiting him[,] which though perhaps pru=  
dent[,] is not what could be wish'd – [W]ith regard to the Saisnet  
Muslins[,]<sup>8</sup> we have found it so very difficult to get any in=  
=formation respecting them that we have deferr'd writing but on  
Monday<sup>9</sup> we can positively say with regard to the practicability [sic]  
of falling into the Manufacture[,] there is also another kind of  
Muslin we will attain patterns of which are very beautif[ul]<sup>10</sup>  
and much worn, which we have no doubt of your accomplishing[.]  
– I see when I began on business I forgot I was writing from  
myself - [H]owever[,] I am sure this inaccuracy will be excused –  
M<sup>r</sup> Russel[.] is to be taken from this to Downpatrick on Saturday  
next<sup>11</sup> to stand his tryal which is to be on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month[.]  
I hear he does not wish to have any council assign'd him  
but depends much on what I think impossible –

I remain D<sup>r</sup> Madam

---

<sup>7</sup> The money was to be used to bribe TR's jailor.

<sup>8</sup> Sarsenet, Fine silk.

<sup>9</sup> Monday 26 September 1803.

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>11</sup> Saturday 8 October 1803.

Your oblig'd friend

James [Or]r<sup>12</sup>

I would have sent this according to your wish but from [Fol. 2a]  
very extraordinary appearance respecting the parcel of Muslin  
which we this day received, it was evidently opened and the  
letter both to me and the enclosed open'd,<sup>13</sup> however[,] I care  
not but on your account wish'd not to follow your directions[.]  
[W]hen you send bank notes to us you need not enclose them  
as we receiv'd a small sum lately which were which is [sic] unne=  
[-cessary]<sup>14</sup> - I know you will excuse this disapp[ro]bation<sup>15</sup>  
of what you have done –

Your answer to the first part of this will materially oblige  
by return of Post –

[Superscription]

[Fol. 2b]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by the first red wafer seal.

<sup>13</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken and MAM [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], received 1 October 1803.

<sup>14</sup> Although partially obstructed by a tear, the torn piece of paper upon which is written “-cessary,” remains attached to the second red wafer seal on the opposite side of the page.

<sup>15</sup> Partially obstructed by the second red wafer seal.

<sup>16</sup> “Dublin 3 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803/ James Orr.”

68. Ellen Rabb<sup>1</sup> [Ballysallagh]<sup>2</sup> to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 2 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/656

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, watermark, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, tear covered with blue paper patch on Fol. 2b

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear friend[,]

[Y]ou begged  
me to let you know if I should  
hear any thing relative to the  
evidence to be produced against  
Mr Russel[1][.] [Y]ou know Mr [---]  
Culogh[,] Brother[-]in[-]law to  
[W]itherspoon[?]<sup>4</sup> [H]e[,] like him[,] had  
made his confession and got  
home but on friday<sup>5</sup> was taken

---

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor "Ellen" or "Nelly" Jane Rabb née Bryson (29 January 1772–3 November 1857). She married Daniel Rabb of Lower Ballysallagh (21 July 1759–c.1843), on 1 April 1796. McNeill states that when in hiding in the North of Ireland, TR stayed with "a weaver who worked for the McCracken sisters." McNeill, *Life*, 213.

<sup>2</sup> Ballysallagh, a County Down townland.

<sup>3</sup> "from Mrs Rabb Ballysallagh."

<sup>4</sup> James Witherspoon, Covenanter, United Irishman and weaver. Charged with treasonable practices, he was incarcerated at Downpatrick Goal between October 1803 and August 1804. He then "transported himself, under Act of Parliament." "Return of Persons confined in Goals in Ireland under Acts for Detentions of Persons suspected of Conspiring against H.M. Government, 1803–1804," 25. In *Parliamentary Papers Session 1805*, vol. 6 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office 1805), 431. Also see section 5.3.2 for MAM's account of James Witherspoon.

<sup>5</sup> Friday 2 September 1803.

into custody[,] made his escape  
and came to our house on  
saturday<sup>6</sup> and intended if pos-  
sible [sic] to have gone to America  
in the Lady Washington<sup>7</sup> and  
I was to have been in Belfast  
today on that Business ~~but~~  
but his Brother came after  
^him^ in the evening and told him  
they had taken both him and

his Father and that they  
were obliged [sic] to give a recogn-  
izance<sup>8</sup> of two hundred pounds  
to [...] him[,] which they were  
resolved to do[.] [H]e according[-]  
ly went along with him  
but he assured me that he  
never would swear against  
Mr Russel[1] but I am afraid  
he is ill calculated to withstand  
the treatment he will meet  
as I make no doubt that he  
is a prisnor [sic][.] [I]f you can find  
a mode of conveyance[,]<sup>9</sup> ^I^ think  
the only way would be to try to  
work on his pride[,] shew him in  
the worst light the character of  
an informer[,] yours affectionately  
Ellen R            Oct<sup>r</sup> 22

[Fol. 1b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>10</sup>

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>6</sup> Saturday 3 September 1803.

<sup>7</sup> Brig Lady Washington sailed between Belfast and Charleston, South Carolina.

<sup>8</sup> A bond.

<sup>9</sup> To deliver a letter to Mr McCullough.

<sup>10</sup> "Mrs Rabb where Mr Russell/ was sheltered for some time/ neither McCullough nor/ Witherspoon appeared against/ Russell."

[Fol. 2b, blank]

**69. James Orr [Dublin] to Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 13 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/683

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, circular date stamp, tuck and seal letterlocking

Dublin 13 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803

[Fol. 1a]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> McCracken & C<sup>o</sup>

Ladies

I am this day favor'd with yours of 11<sup>th</sup> inst<sup>t</sup> enclos  
=sing £93.13.2,<sup>1</sup> which leaves a ball<sup>ce</sup> of 1018 which I have  
placed to your credit – [T]here is nothing new here. M<sup>r</sup> Russell left  
this strongly guarded yesterday morning for Downpatrick to stand  
his tryal, he had only a few moments warning, which deprived  
him from seeing his sister after he knew the determination[.] [T]his  
perhaps, was better on his account, the parting of friends from each  
other, in such sircumstances, must be truly distressing[.] [M]any  
here say there<sup>2</sup> is not sufficient against him to affect his life  
but this I imagine could not be the case as[,] was it  
so[,] he never would have been removed from this - [T]he money[,]  
which was receiv'd[,] has not been in any way made use of by

---

<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Margaret McCracken and Co. [Belfast] to James Orr [Dublin], 11 October 1803.

<sup>2</sup> "say, there" [comma omitted (ed.)].

the young man who receiv'd it[.]<sup>3</sup> [H]e still holds it, untill he sees  
[Fol. 1b]  
whether he can be entirely relieved by it[.]<sup>4</sup> [I]f not[,] he will return ↵  
the principal part[.] [H]e was in hopes that by paying one debt  
here all would be settled, but finding that not the case[,] he has  
gone to the country in hopes of turning it to some advantage  
there[.]<sup>5</sup> [I]t is a bad time for speculation but his sircumstances  
are in such a melancholy situation that[,] could any thing be done[,]  
it would be truly distressing not to have the means –  
[T]he silk[,] I will purchase as soon as possible and forward it to  
you - I remain Ladies  
Your sincere friend  
James Orr

Miss R[ussell] desires her love to you and is much  
pleased at what you have done for our friend[.]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken & Co  
Belfast —

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>3</sup> "The young man" refers to Patrick Smith, a convict and assistant to the turnkey George Dunn. It is important to place his sentence in context. MAM sent £100 to TR via Orr, which was to be used as a bribe to effect his escape from Kilmainham Gaol. However, TR was unable to put the money to use as on the night of 12 October, he was transferred without warning to Downpatrick Gaol. He entrusted the money to a fellow prisoner, St John Mason, instructing him to pass it on to his sister the following morning. Instead however, Mason handed the money over to Patrick Smith. What this sentence tells us is that Smith, "the young man who received it," did pass on the money to TR as Orr states, "the money, which was received." Indeed, Madden cites a "Copy of a Letter from Mr St. John Mason to the High Sheriff of the County Down," of 14 October, requesting the High Sheriff to "make application to Mr Russell," as to whether or not he received the money and to write back to him with the facts. The letter was returned to Mason with the following line written upon it in TR's hand: "I got the note from Smith. Mr Ramsey will see to my affairs." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 245–46.

<sup>4</sup> "He" in this sentence no longer refers to Smith but to TR.

<sup>5</sup> "The country" refers to Downpatrick.

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>6</sup>

[Circular Date Stamp]<sup>7</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "13 Oct<sup>r</sup> Ja<sup>s</sup> Orr."

<sup>7</sup> "OC / 13 / 1803."

<sup>8</sup> "Dublin 13 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803 / James Orr."

## 70. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Templeton [Belfast]

**Date:** 14 October 1803<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/108

**Letter form:** Possibly a draft manuscript due to the lack of letterlocking.<sup>2</sup> However, there is a chance that the unlocked letter was hand delivered by a bearer and later returned to Mary Ann upon her request, as Letter 73 (TCD MS873/107) appears to have been

**Delivery status:** Undelivered (if a draft). Hand delivered (if the original manuscript)

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Eliza

I was never so completely  
vexed & perplexed in all my life ~~any~~  
~~to~~ as at present, owing to my absurd &  
ridiculous indiscretion<sup>4</sup> in mentioning my

---

<sup>1</sup> Within this letter, MAM tells Templeton that she plans to write to TR via Ramsey the next day. The final version of her intended letter, Letter 72 (TCD MS873/688), is dated 15 October, revealing this letter's date as 14 October.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently McNeill did not consider the possibility that this letter was in draft form as she commented, "No ending - no signature!" Instead, McNeill suggested that it was MAM's emotional state that resulted in her failing to sign off "this torrent of wrath" (McNeill, *Life*, 220). However, McNeill overlooked the fact that all of the extant letters between MAM and Templeton are devoid of end salutations.

<sup>3</sup> "To Eliza Templeton."

<sup>4</sup> "ridiculous, indiscretion" [comma omitted (ed.)].

intention to Mr Teeling,<sup>5</sup> never supposing it possible that any person would think of opposing <sup>^what^</sup> I considered so natural & so much my duty — I should have recollected, but no matter – [I]t is an injury I can never forgive[,] from whatever motive it proceeded[,] to have my liberty of action confined & circumscribed[.] [H]ad Mr Teeling kept his advice for my own private ear[,] or communicated his opinion on the subject to no one else but my

sister[,] I could have easily have brought her over[,] as I have already, but not satisfied with that[,] he had mentioned it to Frank & called himself just as I was at breakfast. I can not however blame him altogether for introducing the subject as Frank first mentioned it & after I had prepared my mother by despising cowardly friends & various other preliminary conversation[,] Mr Teeling got her so completely intimidated by his plausible arguments of involving the family of my Father[,] Mother[,] brothers &c, the house being marked & various <sup>^other^</sup> absurdities[,] that she has declared her determination that if I ~~did~~ do go[,] her & I should part for ever[.]

[Fol. 1b]

[N]ot that I would attend to that silly threat, only as it shows

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> Luke Teeling, whose son Bartholomew had been executed for treason in September 1798. Whilst in hiding during August 1803, TR had requested a meeting with both Bunting and Teeling at Witherspoon's house. Teeling declined and in a biographical account of James Witherspoon's life (see section 5.3.2 below). MAM said on the subject, "I was told that it was not intended that any who had suffered loss of near relatives in 98 should be risked further." The death of his son, coupled with Luke Teeling's own long (unjustified) imprisonment, gave him good reason to caution other victim's families.

the degree of fear she labours  
under[,] I am not certain that  
I should give her serious unea-  
-siness without a probability  
of doing some real good. I am  
just at a loss what ~~to~~ course to  
pursue, but this I know[;] that I  
henceforth renounce all such cow-  
-ardly friends & shall take particu-  
-lar care never to hold any confi-  
-dential communication with any  
°of that family again or give them  
an opportunity of inf<sup>l</sup>uencing my conduct  
by their madd<sup>e</sup>ning officiousness, but in  
the present instance, of what use are these

determinations[?] I know of no other  
course I can pursue than<sup>7</sup> write by  
Mr Ramsey tomorrow ~~tomorrow~~ to  
know if it be possible to do any good  
or give any pleasure by going, & if so[,] to  
defy all prohibitions –<sup>8</sup> I hate such  
half measures but I know not  
what I ought to do – [F]arewell[,] I  
do not ask your advice because I know  
you would not wish to give it, & yet I  
would like to have to it – [O]nly this  
I know[,] that the greatest enemy  
I could possibly have, could not  
have caused me the same degree  
of uneasiness that a professed friend  
has,<sup>9</sup> whom I wish now that I had never

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> ^one^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>7</sup> ^to^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>8</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to James Ramsey [Belfast], 13 October 1803. Ramsey acted as TR's law agent in Downpatrick. His notes on TR's trial can be found within Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 260–64.

<sup>9</sup> ^done^ [MAM later ed., ink].

considered as such –

71. Eliza Templeton [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 14/ 15 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/110

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, fold letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

I never felt myself so much at a loss when writing to you as I do this minute[.] [Y]ou have not an idea how uneasy I feel[,] that ^I^ dare not offer you any advice on the present occasion[.] [F]ar be it from me to encourage you to dare your Mother[']s resentment[,] however I may disagree with her in opinion[,] she has a right to demand a great deal of love and respect from you and every one that knows her[,] for where will you find her equal for kindness and goodness of heart[?] [O]n that I rely entirely[.] [F]or[,] depend upon it[,] not even the reality of danger would induce her to see you so very unhappy as she and all of us knows you would be if you were to think you had neglected one that is so very dear to every one that values Virtue in its brightest form[.] [Y]our Mother was always one of his greatest admirers and [I] am convinced if you do not irritate her ^by^ opposing her too warmly ~~and treating her with so much contempt as you are but too apt to do~~ she will give her consent yet[.] [D]o you think Counsellor Harry could be induced to take your side of the question[?] [I]f he

would think it at all reasonable[,] I think it

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "from Eliza Templeton Sep ^Oct^ 1803."

would have great influence with the whole family[.] [I]ndeed[,] to confess the truth[,] it would please me to hear he approved of it as being a generous act of friendship without any regard to party[.] [F]or what would satisfy him[,] would certainly convince any one[,] for no one can know better than him what would be likely to risqu<sup>e</sup> your safety or any of your family[.] [H]e could tell whether any one in a similar situation had ever been endangered[,] for as you are only going as a friend to endeavour to give some sort of consolation about his unfortunate Sister and to consult with himself what he thought the best method of providing for her future life[,]<sup>2</sup> for[,] as his delicasy [sic] might prevent him from expressing his wishes so freely by writing[,] you feel extremely anxious for even five minutes conversation[.] [I]f he should happen to disapprove of your going and <sup>refuse</sup> any protection he might have in his power to offer you when there[.] We all think that if your Mother can be brought to consent (merely for sake of gratifying you both who are far more dear than any of her other children) that it will be full as prudent for you to go without the knowledge or consent of your brothers[,] for however careless you are

of your own safety[,] you ought not to risque them if you could help it, and therefore if your <sup>mother</sup> would condescend to pretend to be displeased[,] it might contribute to ensure their safety[,] that even though there should be some risque to yourself[,] your family would surely be exempt[,] for no one could suppose that they would be in any danger of being punished for <sup>an</sup> action they had all set their faces against so very decidedly[.] (I beg of you[,] demand the old Gentleman[']s authority[.] [Y]ou have a right to have it given up.)

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Russell.

After all my dear Mary[,] I am sometimes  
a coward about it on your own  
account and am doubtfull it is  
more owing to dependance on your  
judgement than any reason I can give for  
being willing myself to let you venture, indeed[,]  
your Sister coming into it reconciled me better  
than any thing else, for many a beating heart the  
thought of your endangering yourself has given me  
but your safety being more dear to her than even  
to me[,] her giving her consent satisfied me at once[,]  
for the higher the value we set on a person[,] the  
more clearsighted we are to any danger they may  
involve themselves in[.] I ^have^ [been] half tempted ^to^ say against  
it  
many a time and could not bear the idea of your  
going without your Sister and me with you to keep  
you in some order[.] I believe you will be angry at the last  
sentence but no matter[,] for if you and her go[,] I go also[.]

Do not write to our friend what you mention  
in your note[.] [D]o you not think the thought of seeing  
you will be a great pleasure to him and why would  
you deprive him of such a gratification untill the  
very last moment[?] [H]e would conceive your  
reason for it and of course he would deny having  
any wish or desire for you[,] however anxious he  
might be to see his two most valuable and best  
friends who have never yet deserted him[.] [End]

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Interesting papers."

72. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Thomas Russell [Downpatrick Gaol]

**Date:** 15 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/688

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final manuscript was hand delivered by Mr Ramsey

**Material features:** 1 folio, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a

**Missing attachment:** small supply of cash

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

The first wish & intention of both my sister & I<sup>2</sup> was to visit you immediately on your arrival at Downpatrick, to learn if there was any means left of serving you to this we were equally prompt -ed by inclination & a sense of the duty we owed to the memory of our beloved departed brother[.] It is not therefore without the most poignant regret [that] we are obliged to postpone at least[,] if not to relinquish our design, as from the well meant tho ill judged officiousness of a friend[,] whose my mother's fears have been excited to such a degree that I am apprehensive we shall have some difficulty in allaying them – [I]f[,] however[,] we can be of any real use to you I am sure she will not object to our going, do not therefore hesitate to command us in any

manner we can be of use to you, it would be to us a source of continual regret & self-reproach were we to suffer ourselves to be deterred from doing any[thing] which could either be essentially serve you or even contribute in the

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "From Mary McCracken to Thomas Russell."

<sup>2</sup> ^me^ [Madden ed., ink].

smallest degree to your satisfaction –  
[F]earing you might be short of cash[,] I have  
taken the liberty of enclosing you a small  
supply. I entreat you will inform us in  
what manner we can best serve you. Joined  
by my sister in ~~the~~ most anxious wishes for  
your safety & happiness[,] I remain yours with  
the truest esteem & affection[.] [End]

Belfast 15 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ^To this JR replied that he did not wish us/ to visit him as it might injure us & could not/ serve him – [T]hat that [sic] letter was given [to] C Teeling^ [MAM later ed., ink].

Along with other materials, MAM gave TR's letter of reply (Letter 76, TCD MS873/642) to CHT, then proprietor and editor of the monthly *Ulster Magazine*. See "History of the Letters."

### 73. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Templeton [Belfast]

**Date:** 16 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/107

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered. The remains of a broken seal would suggest that this letter was successfully delivered to Eliza Templeton who, at a later date, gave it back to Mary Ann

**Material features:** 2 folios stitched together with white thread, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

**Attachment:** Missing copy of Letter 72 (TCD MS873/688)

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Your advice[,] my dear Eliza[,] I approve of entirely but am sorry part of it came too late as you will see by the enclosed copy of a letter which I sent by M<sup>r</sup> Ramsay last night[.]<sup>2</sup> [I]t was written before the letters came from the post office<sup>3</sup> & as it was then ten o[']clock[,] I had not time to make any alteration[.] [H]e would of course be quite at a loss to comprehend the reason of the enclosure but I did not know in what manner the money sent before had been applied or whether any part of it remained in his own hands[.] I should not however have written in the manner I did[,] had I ^retained^ any hopes of being able to

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<sup>1</sup> "To Miss Templeton."

<sup>2</sup> Copy of Letter 72 (TCD MS873/688). Assuming that MAM sent the final version of Letter 72 via Ramsey on the date of its composition (15 October 1803) then the present letter's date would be 16 October 1803.

<sup>3</sup> It would appear that MAM had received Templeton's advice, as found in Letter 71 (TCD MS873/110), before she wrote Letter 72. However, MAM states that she had written Letter 72 before the letters came from the post office, carrying another piece of advice from Templeton. This would suggest that Templeton wrote a further letter to MAM which, unlike Letter 71, was posted. Unfortunately, this letter and the advice it contained, arrived too late for MAM to make any changes to Letter 72.

overcome my Mother[']s fears, but there ^is^ scarcely  
any hope, however I shall try the Counsellor as  
you advice which I never thought of before –  
[A]s to the faint gleam of hope in M<sup>r</sup> Orr[']s

letter[,]<sup>4</sup> tis like the last rays of the setting sun which [Fol. 1b]  
every instant weakens[.] M<sup>r</sup> Ry<sup>5</sup> [...] brought intelli[-]  
gence last night ^from Downpatrick^ that the principle evidence  
against M<sup>r</sup> Russell had made his escape[.]  
[H]e had not been in prison but was guarded  
by two men whom he somehow eluded. I have  
scarcely slept any last night contriving plans  
& schemes but all to no purpose – F.<sup>6</sup> intends  
sending Tom H<sup>7</sup> to Down to collect money that  
he may be in the way of being useful, he  
knows the gaol & gaoler well, & can perhaps  
assist if ^any^ thing can be done – [A]s this affords  
a faint glimmering of hope[,] I am the more  
unwilling to act in direct opposition to my  
mother[']s wishes, as if these hopes were realized[,]  
of which there is scarcely a possibility[,] there  
would be the more ground for my mother[']s<sup>8</sup>

fears, & should I be the cause of unhappiness [Fol. 2a]  
to her & my Father I should never forgive my-  
-self – & if what we apprehend should hap-  
-pen & I am retained from acting according  
to the dictates of my own feelings & understanding,  
I shall feel unceasing regret – [A]ll this comes  
from Mr Teeling[']s officious meddling. I hope  
none of his family may come across m[e]<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Letter 69 (TCD MS873/683).

<sup>5</sup> Mr Ramsey.

<sup>6</sup> ^Frank^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>7</sup> ^ughes^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>8</sup> ^fears^ [---] [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>9</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

as I cannot bear the thought of seeing or speaking to any of them. I shall never be inclined to think well of a man with spurious smiles & courtly manners again, when I suffered so much by my ill placed regard –

[Superscription]  
Miss Templeton

[Fol. 2b]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "To E Templeton from Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ Oct 1803 during T. Russell['s] Trial."

**74. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Counsellor Joy [Dublin]**

**Date:** c. 16/17 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/697

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final manuscript was hand delivered by James Ramsey

**Material features:** 1 folio

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Harry

As the only manner in which we can show our respect & affection to the memory of a parted friend is by doing these things which would have pleased them when living & shewing kindness & affection to the friends they loved & Mr Russell having been the most highly valued friend of that brother whose loss I have not yet ceased to regret[,] it was the intention of my sister & me to have gone to Downpatrick to see him[,] that we might learn in what manner we might be able to serve him but from the ill judged officiousness of a well meaning friend[,] my Mother[']s fears have been so much excited as to probable consequences to the rest of the family[,] that we can

not prevail on her to consent – [A]s you have the the [sic] best opportunity of judging what foundation there is for such apprehensions[,] which appear to me totally groundless, you will oblige me in a most particular manner[,] if you will[,] by a single line endeavour to convince my Mother that an act of kindness or even of friendship

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "To Counsellor Joy 1803/ before Mr Russell's trial."

could not endanger any one.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ^It would be a libel/ on Government to suppose it would^ [MAM later ed., ink]. This was possibly the concluding line of the final version of the letter.

^I wrote this over again as I could not bear the/ address "Dear Harry" as I was used to begin my letters/ thus to my brother & substituted the formal "Dear Sir"^ [MAM later ed., ink].

75. James Ramsey [Downpatrick] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 19 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/696

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along Fol. 2b, blue paper patch covering a tear caused by breaking of a red wax seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

**Attachment:** Letter 76 (TCD MS873/642)

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Downpatrick 19<sup>th</sup> June  
1803

I enclose the answer to your letter[,]<sup>2</sup> mentioned in mine of yesterday –<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>The trial of M<sup>r</sup> Russell was postponed today on Account of the post but will be proceeded on at an early hour tomorrow morning – His intention was not<sup>5</sup> ~~not~~ to enter on a defence, and nothing would have shaken his determination but my representation that a brief examination of the witnesses produced against him might eventually benefit the other unfortunate Persons – I have spent every hour I had to spare with him – [F]rom what I can discover, I am afraid of the Event. He is making every preparation[,] looking on his

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<sup>1</sup> "from J. Ramsey/ The date must be wrong." Indeed, the date should read, "19th October 1803."

<sup>2</sup> Ramsey enclosed Letter 76, which was TR's reply to Letter 72.

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, James Ramsey [Downpatrick] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast], 18 October 1803.

<sup>4</sup> ^[^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>5</sup> "was, not" [comma omitted (ed.)].

fate as determined –<sup>6</sup> I hope Hughes will have no objection to perform what you mention[.] [I]f he should[,] I will endeavour to procure some person who will, but if he is unfortunately convicted and time allowed untill the other Trials are over[,] I will do every thing of that nature myself – [M]any things I have to communicate which I cannot do thro this medium[.]

Yours truly[,] JR

I am in haste to deliver your papers

J.R.

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

I will deliver your letter  
to M<sup>r</sup> Joy<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> ^ [Madden ed., ink]. This bracketed text is quoted within Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 255–56.

<sup>7</sup> Presumably Letter 74 (TCD MS873/697).

**76. Thomas Russell [Downpatrick] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 18 or 19 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/642

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Hand delivered to Mary Ann within Letter 75 (TCD MS873/696), which she passed on to Charles Hamilton Teeling sometime around 1830, along with Letter 65 (TCD MS873/640). It then came into John Alexander Russell's hands, presumably as a result of his appeal to Teeling for any materials relating to his uncle (see section 5.1.3 below). Russell later forwarded the manuscript to Madden (see section 5.1.4 below)

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

To the more than friendship I owe to you and your Sister[,]<sup>2</sup> it is impossible to be sufficiently gratefull[,] nor will I wound your feelings by attempting to thank you[.] I would not wish you to make an attempt to see me[,] which would be fruitless and could only serve to draw suspicion on you or your family.<sup>3</sup> As to me – I shall only say that to the last moment of my Liberty I was not thinking of myself or acting for myself

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<sup>1</sup> "Copy of a letter of Thomas Russell to Frank McCracken written just previously/ to his Trial Oct<sup>r</sup> 1803." However, Madden later references it as, "A letter from Russell to Miss McCracken written a day or two previous to his trial [which] shews what his opinion was as to the result of the latter, and his feelings with respect to the failure of his efforts." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 252. It must be concluded therefore that, as with Letter 65 (TCD, MS873/640) Madden's endorsement is incorrect in this instance.

<sup>2</sup> This line is referenced in Letter 135 (TCD MS873/693) from MAM to Madden, stating, "His letter to myself...began thus, "To the more than friendship I owe to you and your sister." This further suggests that the letter was addressed to MAM.

<sup>3</sup> This line confirms that this letter is a reply to Letter 72 (TCD, MS873/688), at the end of which MAM has added in a later hand, "To this J R replied that he did not wish us to visit him as it might injure us and could not serve him - that letter was given to C Teeling."

but for my Country and though now what I was engaged in with the Immortal Hero<sup>4</sup> who has fallen is considered as perhaps wild[,] yet I could show and it will be shewed that the failure was alone surprisi<sup>ng</sup>[.]<sup>^</sup> [W]ith some of the reasons I am still unacquainted[.] [R]especting what you sent me[,]<sup>5</sup> I had more than enough which will be returned[,] as Mr R<sup>6</sup> can tell[.] The government have[,] I am sure[,] made a point of my death[.] [I]f it is to take place[,] I wish to make it as usefull to the cause that I live for and your brother and so many have died – My intention was to have employed no counsel but Mr R informs me that the other men <sup>^</sup>who are to be tried<sup>^</sup> may be benefitted by the cross examination on mine[,] which is the first[,] so that I believe I shall suffer them but intend to speak in conclusion myself[,] my political and religious opinions – I perfectly know that not a hair of my head is in the power of man without the permission of God and am perfectly resigned to his pleasure[,] he can and perhaps will <sup>^[may]^</sup> deliver me but whatever he wills is best – [H]umanly speaking, I expect

[Fol. 1b]

to be found guilty and immediately executed – [A]s this may be ↵  
my last letter[,] I shall only say that I did my best for my Country and for mankind[.] [E]rrors from my fallible judgement I have doubtless committed and I beg their pardon for them, for I have no wish to die, but far from regretting its loss in such a cause[,] had I a thousand lives[,] I would willingly risk or lose them in it and be assured Liberty will[,] in the midst of these storms[,] be established and [G]od will wipe of[f] the tears from all eyes – I do most sincerely hope and earnestly recommend that when Freedom comes my country may be mercifull [sic] – Politically[,]

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Emmet (4 March 1778–20 September 1803), leader of the failed uprising of 1803. See Marianne Elliott, *Robert Emmet: The Making of a Legend* (London: Profile Books), 2003.

<sup>5</sup> The money enclosed in Letter 72.

<sup>6</sup> <sup>^</sup>amsay<sup>^</sup> [JAR ed., blue ink].

I have nothing but what I glory in – [M]orally[,] when I acknowledge myself a grievous sinner I trust for pardon and mercy thro my saviour[,] as I do most sincerely forgive all those who are about to take my life – [T]o his protection I recommend you and your and my friends – I need not recommend my Sister to you – I am satisfied – May god Almighty bless you all[,] is the wish and prayer of your sincere and affectionate friend,

T.R.

It may be a satisfaction to know that I was not betrayed for reward[.] [A]ccident led to my apprehension[;] this I know and it was the same as to Emmet[,] you may be certain of this – [A]dieu[,] we shall meet in a happier state –

[Endorsement, JAR's hand]<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, JAR's hand, blue ink]<sup>8</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>7</sup> "Copy of a letter to/ Francis McCracken/ Belfast." JAR's endorsement is once again, incorrect.

<sup>8</sup> "–Copy of letter from T.R/ to F.M.C -/ Written just previous/ to the trial Oct 1803."

**77. Counsellor Henry Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS 873/109

**Letter form:** Original manuscript<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, white paper patch covering a tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

My dear Mary

[Fol. 1a]

The contents of your Letter (which has just been brought me)<sup>2</sup> I am so far from being surprised at, that I was prepared to expect them – I was convinced that you would be desirous of evincing your friendship for Mr R. at a time when you thought he would most require the kind offices of a friend. But however I hono[u]r the motive, I can hardly approve of the act – I mean, circumstanced as you are - So far from being able to dispel your mother's fears[,] I confess they are mine – Perhaps whilst I am at Downpatrick I shall be able to make some arrangement which if it does not entirely come up to your wishes, will approach as near them as will be consistent with prudence. In the mean time be assured he shall know your kind intentions, & the motives which alone could induce you to abandon them; a regard for the happiness of those for whom you are bound to sacrifice every private gratification – I am my dear Mary

Yours affectionately [End]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of this letter can be found at TCD MS873/681. It is endorsed by Madden, "From Counsellor Joy/ (subsequently Judge Joy)/ to Miss M. McCracken on/ her intimated intention of/ attending the trial of Tho<sup>s</sup> Russell."

<sup>2</sup> Letter 74 (TCD MS873/697).

<sup>3</sup> The folio has been shorn of the signature, however, Madden adds "H. Joy" to his handwritten copy (TCD MS873/681).

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary McCracken

[Fol. 2b]

**78. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Thomas Russell [Downpatrick Gaol]**

**Date:** 19 October 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/644

**Letter form:** Copy of the final manuscript in Mary Ann's earlier hand

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final manuscript was delivered but was not read by its recipient, who immediately threw it on the fire

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, large tear covered with white paper patch on Fol. 2b

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

I hoped to have had the pleasure of seeing you once more but as that satisfaction seems now improbable[,] I feel most deeply at the disappointment[.] [N]ot that I supposed your mind required the support of any human consolation, possessing as you do that comfort which the world can neither give nor take away, but I wished to have assured you of my intentions of continual friendship to your sister, and also to request if there are any others who have claims on your affection, that you will not[,] thro motives of false delicacy[,] scruple to mention them, that those who shall ever venerate your character may know how to shew it that respect of which it is so truly deserving – [I]t is perhaps impious & certainly cruel in us to repine at the prospect of your removal from a world every way so unworthy of you, yet it is impossible

to divest oneself so entirely of selfishness as not to feel the deepest regret for the loss society will sustain in<sup>2</sup> being deprived of one of its most valuable members – [A] firm reliance on the wisdom & goodness of that Providence that governs the universe, & who does not

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "Letter of Mary McCracken to Thomas Russell delivered to him the morning of the Execution/ Given R. R. M by Miss McCracken. It is in her handwriting./ To T R."

<sup>2</sup> "sustain, in" [comma omitted (ed.)].

permit afflictions in vain, can alone reconcile us to such  
a melancholy event – [I]f there is any thing I can do  
either now or hereafter that would in the least degree con-  
-tribute to your satisfaction[,] you can not gratify me more  
highly than by naming your wishes – I have no doubt  
but that the day will yet arrive when your loss & such  
as yours will be universally [---] ^deplored^ even by  
those who are ~~now~~ ^at present^ most active ~~in their endeavours to~~  
~~take away your life~~ against you[.] [M]ay I request  
you will indulge me with another lock of your hair, that  
I received already[,] & for which I am particularly obliged[,]  
I had to divide with my sister & ~~Eliza~~ my friend Eliza[.]  
[E]ach of us ^shall^ preserve ~~the~~ ^our share of the^ invaluable  
treasure as a memen-  
-to of virtues ^seldom equalled^ worthy of affection[,] esteem &  
imitation[.]  
[F]orgive me imposing so long on your so very [Fol. 2a]  
precious [time] – ~~to be thought of by you with esteem~~ ^[T]o be  
considered worthy of your^  
& affection ^friendship^ is an honour which we shall ever most  
highly value – ~~friends joined by my sister~~  
~~forgive me for that~~ [J]oined by my sister [---]  
I ~~remain~~ in every sentiment of attachment & veneration

I remain,  
yours most truly,

189 Oct 1803

M. McC

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Superscription]  
Mr Russel[1]

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>3</sup> "The letter[,] of which this is a copy[,] / Mr Ramsey handed T R ^ (Tom Russell) ^ the / morning of his death but having / then made up his mind ~~to die~~ / for the event[,] / which he fully / expected tho' not then brought / to trial, he declined read- / ing it lest[,] / as he said[,] it / ^should^ disturb his mind - but / as the gentleman (Trevor / I think was his name) / who had been sent from / Dublin to watch him / was present[,] / he might / fear he would insist / on seeing it & put it on the fire."

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "relative to our wish to/ visit T R at Downpatrick."

79. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Margaret Russell [Dublin]

**Date:** post 21 October 1803<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/646

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b

**Attachment to final manuscript:** Bank notes worth 8 guineas

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

Fearful of intruding unseasonably I have hitherto forborne to write, & perhaps even yet will be unsuccessful in attempting to offer any consolation – None but those who have been taught by experience can know how inefficacious all human comfort is & that nothing but a strong sense of religion & the hope of meeting again in a happier state can support us under those trying separations from friends dear to us as our own existence & in losing whom[,] we seem to have lost a part of ourselves – [Y]et whilst we endeavour to submit to the dispensations of providence without repining[,] we cannot help feeling most sensibly the loss the world in general & ourselves individually have sustained in being deprived of so

bright an example of every virtue, but at the same time we must acknowledge our regrets are selfish & that the removal of one from this world of whom it is so entirely unworthy must be to him a happy change – [A]s you will doubtless be anxious to know any particulars respecting the melancholy event[,] I think it

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Although undated, this is a letter of consolation to TR's mourning sister, presumably sent in the immediate aftermath of TR's execution.

<sup>2</sup> "To Miss Russell from Miss Mary McCracken/ Original Letters."

incumbent on me to inform you that the public papers  
are full of the grossest falsehood & misrepresentations  
& that you are not to put confidence in any reports  
you may hear until you shall see the gentleman<sup>3</sup> ^a friend of mine^  
who

~~was our beloved friends [...]~~ against which] will be in the call  
^on you in the^ course of eight or ten days & who will ~~then~~ inform  
you of the

truth of any particular - [I]n the meantime[,] it will per-  
-haps gratify you to hear what you would no doubt  
know without being told[,] that the [...] composure, dig-  
-nity & firmness of our beloved friend[,] both on  
his trial & at the last awful scene[,] commanded  
the esteem[,] admiration and astonishment of all who  
beheld him & those who had never before had the

pleasure of his acquaintance & who had only for a few [Fol. 2a]  
days an opportunity of conversing with him[,] found  
themselves attached by an extraordinary & irresistable [sic]  
impulse ^such as they had never held for any man before[.]^ [E]ven  
those who had been most active in

pursuing him to death[,] now launch out in his praise  
& lament the [...] ^necessity^ they imagined themselves under[,] of  
making him a sacrifice[.]

[B]ut their praise[,] their admiration[,] ^their regrets[,]^ were of no  
avail[.] & I have

At the conclusion of his trial[,] he addressed the court  
~~no doubt but the time will yet arise when they shall~~  
in a speech the most beautiful[,] affecting & dignified[,] dur-  
~~have cause to regret the sacrifices they have made not~~  
ing which the most profound silence prevailed & all were  
compelled to acknowledge that however they might differ from [him]  
in

opinion[,] that they believed him to have been actuated by the purest  
of intentions[.]

[T]o them[,] safety lead to their savage revenge - [I]t will  
also be a satisfaction to you to know that he ~~was trusted~~ ^expressed  
the highest sense of obligation to gov<sup>t</sup> for^

---

<sup>3</sup> James Ramsey.

~~with all possible respect~~ ^the kind[,] noble & respectful treatment  
which he received^ & ^also^ that his remains were  
properly attended to & decently interred in the Church-  
-yard of Downpatrick by one who had formerly the  
pleasure of his acquaintance & with whose kind  
attentions he expressed himself much gratified –<sup>4</sup>  
[A]ll the articles he had in his possession are taken  
care of ^by a gentleman of the strictest integrity<sup>5</sup> & will be delivered  
to you shortly - excepting his  
letter to you & the book he had been occupied in  
writing which were taken in charge by the Rev<sup>d</sup> Taylor Trevor<sup>6</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

who is[,] I believe[,] inspector general of the Prisons & who handed ↵  
delivered by him to the Attorney General  
them over to the Attorney General<sup>7</sup> – the latter will no doubt  
[binding...]<sup>8</sup>

~~promised to give to you as I understand [...]~~

delivered [to] you & perhaps the book after it has been delivered[.]

[A]s I shall [ever] ^always^ esteem it an honour of the highest

value to have been considered worthy a place in

the friendship of one whose memory I shall

^ever^ revere, so it will be still my greatest pleasure

to serve[,] in any manner[,] the sister of that friend

who was by him so tenderly beloved – ^Wishing you that comfort

which the world can neither give nor take away, I remain[,]^ joined

by

my sister in every kind & affectionate regard[,] ~~I remain~~

Dear Madam

yours most truly

---

<sup>4</sup> Presumably, Thomas Hughes. However, Madden believed this person to be a Dublin shoemaker named Mr W. Cole.

<sup>5</sup> James Ramsey.

<sup>6</sup> Reverent Taylor Trevor, prison inspector.

<sup>7</sup> Standish O'Grady, 1st Viscount Guillamore (1766–21 April 1840), served as Attorney General from 10 June 1803 until October 1805. However, Dr Madden names the Attorney General as "McClelland" who was in fact the Solicitor-General for Ireland. See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 277.

<sup>8</sup> Most likely, "be."

M. A. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[E]nclosed are Bank Notes for eight guineas which  
~~I have received on your account~~ had been  
promised for you some months since but which I  
never received until today –

**80. Patrick Lynch [Downpatrick] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** Between 22 and 28 October 1803<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/679

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, blue paper binding along Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Bills were found to Day against three only[,]  
to wit[,] Drake[,]<sup>3</sup> Maguire[,]<sup>4</sup> and Corry<sup>5</sup> but it is  
thought more will be found tomorrow and [the]  
next day –<sup>6</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Ramsey spoke to Drake  
and says that M<sup>r</sup> Bell<sup>7</sup> is in Dublin and  
will not come for less than 35 or 40 guineas[.]  
[H]e says ^M<sup>r</sup> Ramsey^ he cannot furnish cash to fee him – [H]e  
will be in Saintfield all day tomorrow and expects  
the prisoners will send the money as early

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the letter is undated, the contents tells us that James Drake was still alive at the time of its composition. Drake was executed on 29 October 1803, therefore the letter must have been written before this date. As no mention is made of TR and Counsellor Bell is said to be in Dublin, the letter was presumably written following TR's execution.

<sup>2</sup> "from Patrick Lynch."

<sup>3</sup> James Drake (d. 29 October 1803), a horse dealer who was executed for high treason at Downpatrick.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Maguire, United Irishman convicted of high treason but who narrowly escaped execution (set for 19 November 1803) by informing on his accomplices. He was pardoned and exiled to Botany Bay, Australia. See *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure for November, 1803* (London: M. Brown, 1803): 384.

<sup>5</sup> James Corry (d. 30 October 1803), United Irishman and shoe-maker of Downpatrick who was executed for high treason.

<sup>6</sup> Presumably, bills of indictment for felony.

<sup>7</sup> Counsellor Bell, TR's defence lawyer.

as possible[.]<sup>8</sup>

I am better in health, no one has examined me yet[.]  
[A]ny letter to me might be sent to Miss Anne M<sup>c</sup>Kerry[,]  
Milliner[,] Downpatrick[,] by hand with a cover –  
I do not know how this can be sent you or  
how I should direct it.

I do not know  
whether the  
Bills will be  
found against  
me or not[.]

[Fol. 1b, blank]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>9</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]  
Miss Marry Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
wine cellar entry  
Belfast

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<sup>8</sup> Saintfield, a village in County Down.

<sup>9</sup> "various/ Respecting/ T- Russell."

**81. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Reverent James Nelson<sup>1</sup>  
[Downpatrick]**

**Date:** 22 November 1803

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/682

**Letter form:** Original

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, blue paper binding along Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

**Missing attachment:** 18 guineas

Sir

[Fol. 1a]

I received your letter of introduction from the barr[ister] & am extremely concerned it is not in my power to render any essential service to the unfortunate people for whom you are so kind as to interest yourself –<sup>2</sup> [H]aving been applied to a short time before the late trials, to endeavour to raise a fund for the purpose of employing Lawyers, which I undertook without hesitation, I have in consequence been obliged to call on all my friends & many others with whom I was not acquainted, yet the sum collected is still above an hundred & sixty pounds short of what I had to advance, the Lawyers alone requiring an hundred guineas each for<sup>3</sup> the

two Counties – [O]f course I cannot come on my friends [Fol. 1b]  
again with a new demand as it would be altogether fruitless – [A]ll[,] therefore[,] I have been able to procure on the present occasion is two guineas

---

<sup>1</sup> James Nelson (1 May 1768–28 January 1838), Presbyterian Minister at Downpatrick from 1791 until his death.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Reverent James Nelson [Downpatrick] to MAM [Belfast], November 1803.

<sup>3</sup> “each, for” [comma omitted (ed.)].

which will be but a temporary relief & I am  
sorry to find I have no prospect of success in  
any farther application – I remain sir  
with the greatest respect  
yours &c  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Belfast 22 Nov 1803

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>4</sup>  
[Superscription]  
Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Nelson  
Downpatrick

[Fol. 2b]

18 gui<sup>s5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Thomas Russell/ original/ Documents/ and other Papers."

<sup>5</sup> As this is written in MAM's hand, it must be assumed that she subsequently found the means of raising a further 16 guineas.

**82. Hamilton and James Orr [Dublin] to Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** c. late 1803<sup>1</sup>

**Reference code:** MS873/647

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, tear, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 1b, fold letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> McCracken & C<sup>o</sup>  
Ladies,

We were yesterday favour'd with yours of 8 inst with Invoice of 35 pieces [of] Muslin which we have reciev'd & find right and have no doubt of their meeting a quick sale –<sup>3</sup> We have received from Miss R[,] for your account[,] £100 which we have placed to your credit, the two Bills sent by M<sup>r</sup> Ramsey we have honour'd – We remain Ladies,

Your obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>ts</sup> –  
Hamilton & Orr

J:O saw Miss Russell this morn<sup>g</sup> & was sorry to find every means which she could devise had proved ineffectual as to her getting permission to visit her

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the letter is undated, the contents reveals that the £100 advanced by MAM for TR's defence had been returned to her by Margaret Russell. This occurred in the aftermath of TR's execution.

<sup>2</sup> "Original letter from Miss Mary McCracken[']s mercantile agent in Dublin to Miss/McC acknowledging rec<sup>t</sup> of £100 from Miss R-(ussell). This money had been/advanced by Miss McC. for the defence of Thomas Russell and for the means of/procuring his escape but was returned to Miss McC after T.R's execution."

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, MAM and Margaret McCracken [Belfast] to Hamilton and James Orr [Dublin], eighth day of an unknown month, following the events of 21 October 1803.

nephew Mr Hamilton, however[,] J.O. has no doubt that should it be  
in any  
way possible to procure her that melancholy satisfaction[,] he will be  
able from  
his very general acquaintance be able to succeed in obtaining her this  
favour[.]  
[H]er situation here appears extremely uncomfortable. She keeps a  
little school[,]  
the income from which cannot do more than barely support her, not  
that  
[sh]e<sup>4</sup> has ever complained but from every appearance J.O is sure this  
must  
be the case. She lodges in the drawing rooms of an house[,] the under  
part of which  
[...tear...]<sup>5</sup> dram shop, it is a pity the Sister of such a noble character  
should not be  
[...]<sup>6</sup> in a manner suitable to her rank, it may be she prefers her  
present

[Fol. 1b] ↵

situation to one which[,] though attended with more comfort[,] she  
might not  
feel so independent – [T]his sircumstance and her situation  
altogether[,] will take  
some time to consider[.] [I]f [there is] any thing in the writer[']s power  
to add to its [...binding...]<sup>7</sup>  
[it] will most willingly be undertaken and no exertion wanting to  
make  
it effectual –

J.O has reciev'd the Miniatures from Mr John McCracken and has been  
recommended by a Miniature painter to put them in deep[,] turned  
black  
Frames rather than the present flat ones as they shew the painting to  
much greater advantage, he wishes to know Mr J MC's opinion

---

<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>5</sup> Most likely, "is a."

<sup>6</sup> Most likely, "situated."

<sup>7</sup> Most likely, "comfort."

whether he would wish the Glass of one[,] which is cracked[,]  
renewed[,]  
he will not do any thing respecting them 'till he receives an answer[.]

83. David Lyons<sup>1</sup> [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 26 January 1804

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D2930/3/2/1

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, tuck and seal letterlocking

London Jan. 26– 1804 [Fol. 1a]

To Miss McCracken

Though I have ^nothing^ to communicate; yet as a tribute to friendship I write these lines. – I hope you and all the family are well. – I saw, announced by the B.N.Letter, the loss of a good member of society and friend to Humanity, in the death of old M<sup>r</sup> McCracken[.]<sup>2</sup> – When I last saw you, I then anticipated what<sup>3</sup> has since been fatally realised. The newspapers furnished me with the most melancholy detail of circumstances. – Since I came here I have lived obscure, thinking it preferable to remain ignorant of events, than risque the safety of any friends. Anxious to hear of ~~any~~ former friends[,] I would have wrote long ere this; but hearing that neither sex was exempted from the vengeance of ferocity, unparalleled in history! – [P]rudence forbid it. –

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<sup>1</sup> David Lyons, Belfast printer and United Irishman involved in the 1803 rising. Also see Letter 136 (TCD MS873/627). In a letter from Francis Dalzell Finlay to RJT, dated 9 April 1827, the journalist and founder of the *Northern Whig* newspaper indicated that he would “be most glad to take Lyons, when he finds it convenient to come into my dubbing office, mainly to oblige that best of women - that ornament to human nature - Miss McCracken.” Francis Dalzell Finlay, Belfast, to RJT, 9 April 1827, Correspondence and Papers of James Tennent, Tennent Papers, PRONI D1748/G/201/1.

<sup>2</sup> Captain John McCracken’s obituary was published in the *Belfast News Letter* of 23 December 1803.

<sup>3</sup> “anticipated, what” [comma omitted (ed.)].

I was not without hope until<sup>4</sup> I heard of the arrest  
of the Martyr to virtue, R<sup>5</sup> at whose instance, I  
certainly would have committed my life, had <sup>^I^</sup> conceived it  
an hundred times more valuable than I do – In my  
mind he was justice and wisdom personified – But  
sad reverse! [T]hose very Characters <sup>^whose virtues^</sup> ~~that~~ would  
have illumin<sup>d</sup>  
the hopes of human history, are held out as the images of

of scorn to<sup>6</sup> a credulous multitude, by the malignant hand [Fol. 1b]  
of power. These are evils which can be morally and  
physically accounted <sup>^for,^</sup> without arraiging the Supreme Ruler  
of events – As the eternal laws of nature are just, vice  
shall not always triumph. –

The virtuous rejoice in their own integrity, and have  
consolation, even, in the sacrafice [sic] of their dearest friends  
to the sacred principles of justice[.]

– “What tho’ no pious marble marks the spot

Where Erin’s Martyrs lie –

Yet, there the Patriots’ tears are shed

The poor Man’s blessings given

Those consecrate the virtuous dead

These waft their Souls to Heaven.”<sup>7</sup>

I should like to hear how the female<sup>8</sup> in Dublin is situated  
since that unhappy [...], to whom your friendly exertions were  
extended. – I believe I mentioned that half a Guinea had been  
rec<sup>d</sup> from a friend in Ballymena, by a person who promised to  
add another with it when called on, but who, <sup>^I understand,^</sup> was  
shortly after

---

<sup>4</sup> “hope, until” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> TR.

<sup>6</sup> “scorn, to” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> This appears to be a poem of Lyons’ own composition.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Russell.

that, arrested – [F]riend McCabe<sup>9</sup> ~~from~~ expected 2 or 3 Guineas[.] I have had little account of the situation of those who were willing to serve this country and have been involved. It would afford me much satisfaction to hear of them.

I hope you will favour me with [---] such information [Fol. 2a] as you ~~deem~~^may judge^ most interesting – [P]articularly, I wish to know

who are principally charged in the co<sup>s</sup> of Down & Antrim, also who are the prosecutors – How Witherspoon is, and if the McCeelough who [---] escaped from D. jail<sup>10</sup> be his Brother-in-law - – [O]f Midcalf, Hamil, &c – These I would wish to hear as soon as convenient to you – J. Smyth<sup>11</sup> will let you know my address – [O]r[,] if you send the letter to him[,] he will forward it – [F]rom your good wishes to Humanity[,] I deem any apology unnecessary –

I am with the utmost respect

David Lyons.

P.S. The Books, I hope you received – Shaw[']s Dictionary<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>/<sub>9</sub> British – Sacred Scriptures <sup>30</sup>/<sub>6</sub> do – The balanc[e]<sup>13</sup>

I will pay you when I return – [I]f that be not soo[n,]<sup>14</sup>

I'll order Smyth to pay you[.]

Adieu

---

<sup>9</sup> William Putnam McCabe (c.1775–6 January 1821), United Irishman, master of disguise and mimicry. In May 1798, he was arrested when acting as Lord Edward Fitzgerald's bodyguard in Dublin. He was released after convincing the Scotch soldiers who held him that he was an unwitting fellow Scot. After involvement in the Humbert campaign, he fled to Wales, then to France in 1801. Under the Banishment Act he was arrested upon his return to Ireland in 1814 and deported to Portugal. A further attempt in 1817 led to his imprisonment in Kilmainham Gaol for 18 months. He was then imprisoned in Scotland, before returning to France.

<sup>10</sup> Downpatrick gaol.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Smyth, United Irishman, Belfast printer and publisher in business with S. Lyons between 1803 and 1810.

<sup>12</sup> Reverent William Shaw, *A Gaelic and English dictionary: containing all the words in the Scotch and Irish dialects of the Celtic that could be collected from the voice, and old books and mss* (London: Printed for the Author, by W. and A. Strahan, 1780).

<sup>13</sup> Partially obstructed by the seal.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

David Lyons

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]  
Miss M. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Rosemary Lane  
Belfast

84. Grace “Grizzel” Joy [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 2 July 1804

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/678

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, torn off corner and black wax seal on Fol. 2a/b, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, circular date stamp, postal charge, tuck and seal letterlocking

My dear Mary

[Fol. 1a]

<sup>1</sup>It was not until yesterday that Harry could find an opportunity of speaking to the Attorney Gen<sup>l</sup> on Miss Russell[']s business,<sup>2</sup> and I am happy to say his application is likely to be attended with considerable success – The Attorney Gen<sup>l</sup> told him, if it could be found out who the person was, who got possession of the 100 <sup>£</sup> he would make him refund it, and he had little doubt that gov<sup>t</sup> would allow it to be given up to Miss Russell –<sup>3</sup> You must therefore make the necessary inquiry on this point, and let Harry know as soon as possible, as he will leave town to go on circuit about the 26<sup>th</sup> of this month – The Attorney Gen<sup>l</sup> also promised to inquire about M<sup>r</sup> Russell[']s book. Harry said every thing he could urge on the occasion, and

---

<sup>1</sup> <sup>£</sup> [Unknown ed., ink].

<sup>2</sup> Prior to this letter, MAM had written to Grizzel's brother, Counsellor Henry Joy, who had acted as TR's counsel during his trial, requesting that the £100 be given to Miss Russell, that TR's remains be reinterred in the family plot in Dublin and that his manuscripts be found and published, with the profits going to Miss Russell. See Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692).

<sup>3</sup> <sup>£</sup> [Unknown ed., ink]. It is likely that the square brackets were inserted by Madden as the bracketed text is quoted in Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 240. Despite Letter 69 having confirmed that TR did in fact receive the money, the government claimed that Smith had taken it to Dublin Castle. Madden therefore concluded that “the letter of Baron Joy's sister,” (Letter 84) “can leave no doubt that the government was a party to this base proceeding.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 248.

I think it highly probable the book will be restored  
to Miss Russell – Harry did not mention the other

papers, as he feared if too much was asked, nothing  
would be granted, and as he conceived the Book  
was what Miss Russell was most anxious to possess –  
We sail today at four o'clock for Wales, so you may  
suppose I write in a hurry; will you have the goodness  
to tell my two Belfast correspondents, Ellen Tomb, & Mary  
Holmes, that Harry will have a frank for us every  
day, and if they direct their letters to Temple Street,  
he will forward them to me –<sup>4</sup> [O]ur most affectionate  
love to my Aunt and Peggy,<sup>5</sup> and believe me Dear Mary[,]  
Ever yours  
G. Joy

[Fol. 1b]

Temple Street  
July 2<sup>d</sup> —

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>6</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Postal charge]<sup>7</sup>

[Superscription]

To  
Miss Mary A. McCracken  
Belfast

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Grizzel's elder sisters.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret McCracken.

<sup>6</sup> "from Grizzy Joy/ respecting her/ brother[']s applica/tion to the Attor-/ney  
General about/Miss Russell/ of the £100/ &/ M<sup>r</sup> Russell's book."

<sup>7</sup> "6."

<sup>8</sup> Illegible text.

**85. James Orr [Dublin] to Margaret and Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 17 August 1808

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/691

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper patch covering a tear caused by breaking of red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, blue paper binding along Fol. 2b, circular date stamp, sketch, postal charge, tuck and seal letterlocking

**Missing attachment:** Bank note

Dublin 17<sup>th</sup> August 1808

[Fol. 1a]

Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cracken & C<sup>o</sup>

Ladies

The last remittance which I have acknowledged was on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst[,] am<sup>t</sup> £198.3.4 1/2[,] since which I was afor<sup>d</sup> with the following[:]

13<sup>th</sup> – £513.7.10 1/2

15 – 601.3. –

17 – 538.12.10 1/2

I have also receiv'd the box of Muslins only this day and as I am just commenced an improvement in my rooms in the Hall[,] I must defer opening it for a day or two –

I saw M<sup>r</sup> Mason the day after I returned here and after some conversation[,] shew'd him his letter as I could not help hinting at the ap[p]arent difference there was between the subject of this letter and his late account of the transaction[.]<sup>1</sup> [H]e got very warm[,] said much as to the impossibility of any circumstance making him swerve from the path which he felt it his duty to follow, but I fear his own opinion of his attitude is higher than it should be[.] I have however[,] got ^him^ to promise that he

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<sup>1</sup> St. John William Mason, a barrister who attended Trinity College Dublin with his first cousin, Robert Emmet. He was arrested on 7 August 1803 and was TR's fellow prisoner in Kilmainham Gaol before his release on 19 September 1805. See Elliott, *Robert Emmet*, 109.

will only say what he knows of the money[,] which is that  
it was given to him and he returned it, but from its never

[Fol. 1b]

having been returned by the person he delivered it to[,] he was con- ↵  
vinced there was a fraud committed –<sup>2</sup> [H]e says he was since  
told that M<sup>r</sup> R<sup>3</sup> had given it as a bribe after he receiv'd it  
back, but I entreated him not to be so ready to give belief to  
what was an impossibility[,] for surely where double the sum was  
offered & refused[,] no man would be so mad as to expect the  
half would have better success – I will[,] before M<sup>r</sup> Joy[']s return[,]  
write a memorial stating the sircumstances in what appears to  
me the most favourable light to put it in & consult M<sup>r</sup> Joy  
as to his opinion of it – I remain Ladies[,]

Your sincere friend  
James Orr

[T]he enclosed note is wrong halves[.] [S]hould you not know  
from whom you got it[,] you can return it but ^6^ it will  
have to lye in the [...] untill the other halves appear[.] [I]t is best  
for you to return it to the person you got it from[.]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Superscription]  
Miss Marg<sup>t</sup> McCracken  
Belfast

[Fol. 2b]

[Postal charge]<sup>4</sup>

<[Sketch, pencil]><sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick Smith, a convict and assistant to the turnkey George Dunn. See "Copy of a Letter from Mr St. John Mason to the Right Hon. William Wickham," dated 14 October 1803, within Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 245.

<sup>3</sup> TR.

<sup>4</sup> "3.2.6."

<sup>5</sup> Faint sketch of a man's face.

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>6</sup>

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "17AU/ [...]."

<sup>7</sup> "Dublin 17 aug 1808/ James Orr/ acknowledgement/ of."

**86. Edward Bunting [approx. Belcoo] to Mary Ann McCracken  
[Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 218–19

**Date:** 30 August 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

BELFAST,<sup>1</sup> 30th Aug., 1808.

The old mare performed her part to my great satisfaction never refused except at Lurgan,<sup>2</sup> where in passing the old inn which is not kept at present she wanted of all things to turn into the gateway; however, she behaved herself as well, if not better, than almost any beast.<sup>3</sup> I intend setting off for Sligo to-morrow, and would have gone to-day, but the mare's neck was a little rubbed, and I wished to make some alteration in the collar etc., that she may not suffer pain.<sup>4</sup> I found the old lady in Dungannon.<sup>5</sup> She appears to be a very fine specimen of the ancient gentlewoman. She has the poem descriptive of a battle, and the song. The battle is Aughrim and the tune is something like

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the place of composition being given as “Belfast,” the letter’s contents suggests otherwise as Bunting mentions passing through Lurgan, Dungannon, Augher and Enniskillen on his journey to Sligo. Bunting’s intention to reach Sligo by the following day was fulfilled, as confirmed in Letter 87, suggesting that this letter was written somewhere between Enniskillen and Sligo. There is a possibility therefore, that he composed the letter in Belcoo (a small village on the road between Enniskillen and Sligo) and accidentally wrote “Belfast.” Alternatively, Fox may have made a transcription error. Indeed, in Fox’s introductory paragraph to this letter, she acknowledges that Bunting was, “on a mission” to collect Irish airs at the time of composition, indicating that he was not in Belfast.

<sup>2</sup> Lurgan, a town in County Armagh.

<sup>3</sup> Fox suggests this horse was, “likely owned by the McCracken family, and accustomed to go on regular journeys in connection with their business.” Fox, *Annals*, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Fox explains that this reference to the horse’s collar indicates that Bunting “did not ride, but drove some sort of vehicle.” Fox, *Annals*, 218.

<sup>5</sup> Dungannon, a town in County Tyrone.

what I have heard the women sing after the dead bodies in the County of Armagh; the poem, I think, is the composition of some of up-country bards as they were called, that is, the Kerry gentry, of whom we have some specimens.<sup>6</sup> I rather think this poem and tune will not be worth the trouble of sending a person to write it down, but when I come home we must have a consultation on the subject. The old lady was much gratified at the idea of being of so much consequence, and her daughters were indeed very civil; they asked me to drink tea with them, which I thought was kind of them as I had no introduction. I had a letter from Mr Joy to Mr M'Dowel, of Augher;<sup>7</sup> but I passed through that place so early that I could not deliver it myself; but another letter of his to Mr Irwin, of Enniskillen,<sup>8</sup> I gave in person, and he expressed many kind wishes for my success. It will depend on what I hear from Thady Conlan, whether I shall go to Limerick, as I think it likely he will be found fully competent to do all we shall require from an Irish scholar.<sup>9</sup> I have made every inquiry relative to Irish manuscripts, and saw one in the possession of an old woman, who, when asked whether she would dispose of it, answered, 'I'll never part with it till I die,' and with some difficulty was persuaded to allow it to be copied, provided the person appointed to do so 'were well recommended.'

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<sup>6</sup> The Battle of Aughrim, fought near the village of Aughrim in County Galway on 22 July 1691.

<sup>7</sup> Augher, a village in County Tyrone.

<sup>8</sup> Enniskillen, a town in County Fermanagh.

<sup>9</sup> Thady Connellan (1780 – 1854), of Skreen, County Sligo, teacher, scribe, bard, historian, translator and an editor of songbooks.

## 87. Edward Bunting [Sligo] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 221

**Date:** 1 September 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

SLIGO, September 1st, '08.

I am to dine to-day with Mr Everard, Jun.,<sup>1</sup> who has kindly promised to call on the celebrated Dr O'Connor,<sup>2</sup> who is now preparing for publication the 'Annals of the Four Masters'<sup>3</sup> and the 'Book of Ballymote'<sup>4</sup> two old Irish MSS. He should be written to. Perhaps it might be found that he had met with something relative to my work. He had been collecting for some time poems, and Irish MSS. for the Marquis of Buckingham. It is probable he could assist me. Please let Mr Joy know this, to whom I would write but that I hope you will let him read this, which will answer the same purpose. I find that your friend (to whom I am indebted for many favours), Mr Alfred Blest, has put all the 'irons in the fire' for me.<sup>5</sup> When I inquire whether in this part of the country, any one has any knowledge of a collection of Irish tunes, the answer is, 'Oh, Mr Blest is making a collection -he's

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<sup>1</sup> It is unclear which Mr Everard Junior Bunting is referring to as Ignatius Everard had three sons, Patrick, Richard and Brian.

<sup>2</sup> Charles O'Connor (1764–29 July 1828), priest, scribe and librarian to the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe. He published his grandfather's memoirs entitled, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the late Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, Esq., M.R.I.A.*, only to subsequently suppress them. O'Connor was excommunicated after publishing *Columbanus ad Hibernos* and spent some time in an asylum.

<sup>3</sup> *Annals of the Four Masters*, medieval manuscripts chronicling Irish history. The volumes are dispersed across NLI, RIA, TCD and UCD. O'Connor's edition is considered seriously defective.

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Ballymote*, a fourteenth century Irish manuscript written at Ballymote Castle, Co. Sligo. O'Connor transcribed a portion of the book. It has been held at RIA since 1785.

<sup>5</sup> Albert Blest (25 April 1755–1837), Methodist pastor who established around 100 schools in Sligo for the London Hibernian Society. See Reverent Maiben Cunningham Motherwell, *A memoir of the late Albert Blest* (Dublin: William Curry Jun. & Co., 1843).

the man.' I feel much indebted to him for his kindness. Mr Everard, the elder,<sup>6</sup> is an excellent judge of the Irish language, and he has asked Mr Thady Conlan to dine with him on Sunday next, when he will question him, and will, from his knowledge of the Irish language, be enabled to inform me whether he will answer my purpose. I fear, from what Mr E- says, that I shall be obliged to go to Limerick to see Mr Elligott.<sup>7</sup> I shall see Mr Blest to-morrow, and shall tell you of any information I may obtain from him.

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<sup>6</sup> Ignatius Everard (d. 26 December 1823), Sligo merchant, landowner and former United Irishman. He sat on the General Committee of the Catholics of Ireland and was also chairman of the Sligo Catholic Association.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Pierce McElligott (1756–18 April 1818), Irish scholar, United Irishman and hedge school master. See John Curtin, "Richard Pierce McElligott," *The Old Limerick Journal* 34 (Summer 1998), 37. Fox suggests that Mr Elligott "is probably one Mac Elligott, a scholar whom Lynch and Bunting met in Limerick, in 1802. A letter from him couched in very stilted English is among our manuscripts." Fox, *Annals*, 211.

## 88. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 221–222

**Date:** 10 September 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

DUBLIN, Sept. 10, 1808.

I am glad to find that Sir J. Sinclair has sent the tunes.<sup>1</sup> I am to dine with Stokes on Monday, and he will introduce me to all whom I wish to be acquainted with here.<sup>2</sup> I leave this for Limerick on Tuesday. I find that Dr Beaufort is now on the tour for the purpose of collecting information respecting the parishes in the South of Ireland best adapted for the placing of Irish masters in.<sup>3</sup> I shall meet with him if possible, and I have no doubt but that he will give me all the assistance in his power. I got some curious airs from the people in the neighbourhood of Sligo during my visit to Mr Blest; but I met with very few tunes indeed, that I had not before. Those you mention as taken down by Mr Broadwood, I have already but am nevertheless much obliged to him.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster (10 May 1754–21 December 1835), First Baronet, Scottish author, politician, financier and economist.

<sup>2</sup> Whitley Stokes (28 February 1830–13 April 1909), Irish philologist and lawyer. Fox's footnote reads, "Whitley Stokes, who was present with Wolfe Tone at the meeting of harpers in Belfast 1792." Fox, *Annals*, 221.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Daniel Augustus Beaufort (1 October 1739–1821), Anglican priest, rector of Navan, amateur architect, a founder of RIA, an instigator of Sunday schools, geographer and creator of the 1792 *Memoir of a Map of Ireland*.

<sup>4</sup> Fox makes the following footnote, "Miss Lucy Broadwood states it was her great-uncle, Robert, who was Bunting's friend, and also Anthony Bunting was representative in Dublin for the Broadwood pianofortes." See Fox, *Annals*, 222.

## 89. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 211

**Date:** 14 September 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

DUBLIN,

Wednesday, Sept. 14th 1808.

I had commenced a letter to you yesterday, but was called away by Mr O'Flanagan, Professor of Irish to the College, whom I intend employing to translate the songs.<sup>1</sup> He is preparing for the press translations of several old Irish MSS., under the direction of the Gaelic Society.<sup>2</sup> I searched the College Library for 'Galileo Galelie' but it is not there;<sup>3</sup> and will you tell Mr Joy there are no drawings of harps in Norden.<sup>4</sup> Dr Burney was right certainly, in refusing me any information respecting musical rhythm, as he is engaged already in writing on that subject for another.<sup>5</sup> As to Mr Ledwich, he has published all he knew on the subject.<sup>6</sup> My business lately has been looking after Irish and Welsh scholars. I have been examining Brian

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<sup>1</sup> Theophilus O'Flanagan (c. 1760–4 January 1814), school teacher, elected the first secretary of the Gaelic Society in 1806 and Royal Irish Academy committee member.

<sup>2</sup> The Gaelic Society, founded on 19 January 1807.

<sup>3</sup> Galileo Galilei (15 February 1544–8 January 1642), Italian scientist, mathematician and astronomer. His discoveries and publications were central to the Scientific Revolution.

<sup>4</sup> Norden, the Nordic countries.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Burney (7 April 1726–12 April 1814), English composer, musician and historian of music.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Ledwich (1738–1823), of Dublin, Anglican priest, antiquary, geographer and Irish historian whose 1790 *Antiquities of Ireland* was discredited.

Borhoim's harp,<sup>7</sup> and find Vallancey's description to have been inaccurate.<sup>8</sup> I purpose measuring it to-morrow, I have got some addition to my stock of airs.

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<sup>7</sup> The 'Brian Boru Harp', or the 'Trinity College Harp' held at TCD. According to legend, the harp belonged to the High King of Ireland, Brian Boru (c.94–23 April 1014). However, it has been dated to either the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The harp stands as a national symbol for Ireland.

<sup>8</sup> Lieut. Col. Charles Vallancey (6 April 1731–8 August 1812), a British General who remained in Ireland after a military expedition. His histories of Ireland were widely discredited at the time. A copy of Vallancey's, *A Grammar of the Iberno-Celtic, or Irish Language* (1781), found within Belfast's Saint Malachy's Church archive, is inscribed "Mary Ann McCracken" across both the top and bottom of the frontispiece.

90. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 222

**Date:** 16 September 1808

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** Unknown

DUBLIN, Sept. 16, 1808.

I shall not forget Harry Joy's message to Mr Ledwich, but do not like putting that gentleman to any trouble, particularly as there is a copy of Cambrensis in the College to which we can refer.<sup>1</sup> Will you tell Mr Joy that I am sitting with O'Flanagan who is making out, much to my satisfaction, the twenty-four measures of music, which are pure Irish. O'Flanagan is also to make out the roots of the different technical terms, etc. I have got another march called 'The Cavalcade of the O'Neils' (a curious air), with the words; so you may perceive I am not idle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis or Gerald of Wales (c.1146 – c.1223), archdeacon and historian whose *Topographia Hibernica* of 1188 gives an account of his travels through Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> *The Cavalcade of the O'Neills* or *March of the O'Neills*. It is unclear whether the bracketed text was written by Bunting or inserted by Fox.

**91. Edward Bunting [Drogheda] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 222

**Date:** 18 September 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

DROGHEDA, Sept. 18, 1808.

I have written to Counsellor Fenton<sup>1</sup> in Pembrokeshire<sup>2</sup> for a translation of the twenty-four measures of music which I mentioned in a former letter,<sup>3</sup> not being quite satisfied with Mr O'Flanagan's assertion that they were pure Irish. If they are Irish, or should prove to be Cornish, which is a dialect of the Celtic, it will be a great matter for me. I came down here to see my brother,<sup>4</sup> but purpose going back tomorrow to meet O'Flanagan, Cody,<sup>5</sup> a piper, and a woman from the County Mayo whom I accidentally heard singing in the streets.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Fenton (1746 – 1821), Welsh geographer, historian and poet.

<sup>2</sup> Pembrokeshire, a county of Wales.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 90.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Bunting (29 November 1765–1851), of Dublin, organist, cellist, music teacher and agent for piano sales.

<sup>5</sup> James Cody, secretary to Edward Bunting and Irish tutor to the Belfast Harp Society from 1808 until 1813.

## 92. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 222–23

**Date:** 21 September 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

DUBLIN, Sept. 21, 1808.

I am employed in watching O'Flanagan while he translates some of the songs. I have got three tunes, one of which Cody, the piper, calls 'O'More, King of Leix's March,'<sup>1</sup> and two others, viz.: 'The Cavalcade of the O'Neils,' and 'The March of Owen Roe O'Neil.'<sup>2</sup> I am anxious to have everything done in the best manner. I have gone too far to recede, otherwise I should, from the difficulty of the undertaking, give it up altogether. I think Miss Balfour's 'Fairy Queen' very good.<sup>3</sup> The 'Fairy Queen' of Carolan, however, was not intended by him for words, but as a piece of music for the harp; therefore, it would not answer to have it now set with words.<sup>4</sup> These some days past I have been running after an old woman named Betty Walsh, whom I have seen once before, and heard her play. It is possible I may pick up some airs from her. I have been making every exertion to find out her residence. I intend setting off for Limerick to-morrow eve, and shall leave my Irish affairs in such a train that I can depend on the business being executed as well as if I were on the spot; at any rate, I

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<sup>1</sup> *Rory O'Moor: King of Leix's March*, traditional Irish march associated with the sixteenth century Irish lord of Laois and notorious rebel, Rory O'Moor (c.1600–16 February 1655).

<sup>2</sup> *Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill*, traditional Irish lament attributed by Bunting, among other authorities, to Turlough O'Carolan. However, this was disputed by Gratten Flood who claimed the lament was composed shortly after O'Neill's death in 1649. Owen Roe O'Neill (c.1585–6 November 1649), soldier and Commander of the Ulster Army who led a victory at the Battle of Benburb in 1646.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Balfour (24 January 1778–1819), of Limavady, schoolteacher, author, poet, playwright and Irish scholar, employed by Bunting to translate his collected Irish airs into English. In 1808, she sat on the Belfast Harp Society committee.

<sup>4</sup> Turlough Carolan (1670–25 March 1738), blind Irish harper, composer and singer to whom *The Fairy Queen* has been attributed.

have got one material part finished, that of the technical terms, etc., with their roots and translations, which we could not do without for the memoir.

93. Edward Bunting [Drogheda] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 223

**Date:** 29 September 1808

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** Unknown

DROGHEDA, Sept. 29, 1808.

I am so far on my way home. I have got in Limerick what I think will turn out well; and from Walker,<sup>1</sup> the Highland airs, and also a book from him on the bagpipe principally.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Cooper Walker (c.1762–12 April 1810), Irish historian and author of *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786).

94. James Hope<sup>1</sup> [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Young, *Old Belfast*, 276

**Date:** 28 November 1808

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

[Endorsement, MAM's hand]<sup>2</sup>

Nov 28th 1808.

DEAR MISS MARY,

I wished to have called on you this some time past, but never had time when you would be at Leisure, and now write to tell you that on Saturday Evening I was obliged to tell Mr. John<sup>3</sup> that I must Leave his Employment for want of wages, not being able Longer to support my family out of my small salery; and now, in Consequence of the interest you have allwise in my wellfare, I will Describe to you what has Been the nature of my situation since I went to my present place. For the first year I was treated by Mr. Plunket (whom I Consider to be a blunt, honest man) with the Greatest Rigor, under the Idea that, having been an old Sufferer, I was what he Calls a follower of your family, and might be Corrupt Enough (as he had observed several others) to take improper Liberty. However, by a subordination that Required some strength both of Body and mind, I Conquered his prejudice, and completely secured his friendship and Confidence. But as to Mr. John although he never Checked me much, he allwise treated me (when Ever I spoke to him about my own Situation) with a silence which in another I would have taken for Contempt; but imputing it to

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<sup>1</sup> James "Jemmy" Hope (25 August 1764 –10 February 1847), linen weaver, egalitarian, a leading United Irishman who took part in the Battle of Antrim and who was later involved in Emmet's rising of 1803. His memoir can be found within Madden, *United Irishmen*, Series 3, vol. 1, 218–295 and Madden, *Antrim and Down in '98*, 86–154.

<sup>2</sup> "from Jas. Hope." This endorsement is stated by Young within a short sentence preceding the letter's transcription.

<sup>3</sup> John McCracken Junior.

his natural temper and press of business, and Coniceous of never having given any Cause for it, I over Looked it as a thing for which I Could not fully account, and which time Certainly would. I have at Lingth, through all the bustle and inconvenience of the place in which I was obleeged to do business, acquired such improvement in the practice of writing and Keeping accounts as will Enable me to a considerable Share of Business in any office where I may hereafter find Employment. This last assercion is the only one that I would Expect Mr. John to Contradict; unless he would considder that if he was me and I somebody else, he Could not at all times answer for his own Correctness. As to my future views, there is but one Employment at present in my Reach, which is to apply to the men who Conduct the Cart Business for Belfast and Dublin to Employ me as Guard, which, although it will aford me a Considerable salary, is a Long Road to Either Ease or Credit, and an Employment as different from my Inclination as many others I have thought of, but if I could stand it for one year, I hope I am still possessed of Resolution to save what money will Discharge a few small accounts which I ow, and Enable me again to Join my Little family with the fair Chance of another tradesman, without being troublesome to any one whom I call friend; and this being at present my highest ambition, I will Risk the power of my Constitution to attain it. One thing more I mention, and I hope it will not hurt your feelings. I thought between winding and warping to have paid what I am indebted to you, which, although I know you do not think of it, does not make me forget. I think my word is entitled to some Credit, and I can assure you that the piece that was warped in our house was finished and taken off the mill by my own hand, and if I was on my oath could freely disclose that it is my Belief there was not a broken or Latched End in it Leaving our house, what Ever may have been said to the Contrary. Let no friend of mine grieve at my situation; it is a Little hard, but does not discourage me. I am determined to deserve success. D<sup>r</sup> Miss Mary, your Much Obliged Well-wisher,

JAMES HOOPE (*sic*)

95. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 8 March 1809

**Archive:** LHL

**Reference code:** Beath MSS., Box 1, Letter 1

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tear caused by breaking of a red wafer seal on Fol. 2a, circular date stamp, tuck and seal letterlocking

London March 8<sup>th</sup> 1809

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Mary

I received your letter and shall take care to have the paper enclosed ^which you sent^ inserted in its proper place relative to the Brass Trumpets, &<sup>cc</sup>1 I have been these two days with Mr Campbell and am just returned to town.<sup>2</sup> Mr Cam<sup>l</sup> approves very much of the Treatise &<sup>cc</sup>. ^which he says is very ingenious^ but wishes to make some alterations in the Language, &<sup>cc</sup>[,] not being in some places sufficiently explicit and clear, there are also of y<sup>e3</sup> notes[,] some that he thinks might be left out, but however, before these changes take place in the Dissertation I shall inform our friend Harry, he has read the Treatise with so much attention that his time has been taken up with it intirely [sic] so that he has had no leisure to look at the poetry, but in order to Expedite the business[,] I brought him into London with me this day and this Eve<sup>s</sup> we intend to begin our selection of songs –<sup>4</sup> I can assure you dear Mary that I have not the least intention of jilting my time with nonsense in London but am determined to exert any

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], February or March 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Campbell (27 July 1777–15 June 1844), Scottish poet.

<sup>3</sup> your.

<sup>4</sup> Harry being Counsellor Henry Joy.

little abilities I may have in the line of my profession  
with all the energy and industry in my power so  
as to bring out my tedious work (heretofore) in the  
least possible time – [A]ltho' I am almost petrified at  
the expense (as I am informed) of the Letter press but  
it must now be done at all events[,] [H]as Mr Joy got  
Stevenson[']s Songs yet from Mr Sloan so as to outwise [sic] them?

[Fol. 1b]←↓

I would wish he should do that[,] [---] ^in that case^ he might [---]  
^have^

^occasion^ to alter the note at the Bottom of [the] 1<sup>st</sup> page of the  
Edition preface &<sup>cc</sup>. I shall write to him ~~the next letter~~  
however[,] more fully respecting the publication when I  
have Campbell[']s opinion of the whole literary part of  
the work[,] which I shall ^have^ on Friday – I cannot  
help observing that what Ware was repeating from Mr  
Power[,]<sup>5</sup> Stevenson[']s<sup>6</sup> publisher, that I must be indeed  
almost void of feeling[,] [C]ould I go into a person's  
shop[,] connected as Power is in the success of a  
work decidedly stolen from what I have been for  
so many years laboring to produce and which I  
look on as my undoubted property, without quarrel  
with him[?] [H]e endeavours to persuade every one that  
goes into his shop that Moore[']s & mine do not  
clash –<sup>7</sup> [T]his is[,] to be sure[,] exactly what he ought to do  
to sell his work, but only think what a Lyar [sic] he is[,]  
certainly they do clash[,] unfortunately for me, as I  
should indeed have possibly made something of it  
had it not been for their cursed clashing –  
Power sent the same message when I was last in  
Dublin to me[,] which that poor old fool Ware  
has repeated to you and which I did not take any

---

<sup>5</sup> William Power, Dublin based publisher.

<sup>6</sup> Sir John Andrew Stevenson (1761–14 September 1833), Irish composer and organist who arranged Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Moore (28 May 1779–25 February 1852), Irish composer, author, poet and political satirist. Moore's *Irish Melodies*, published between 1808 and 1834, proved vastly more popular than Bunting's *Ancient Irish Music*. His biography, *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* was published in 1831 and is referenced in Letter 117.

notice of (I hope you will think very properly) as I must be entirely divested of pride had I asked Power to take in subscriptions for me – I would see him

d-m'd<sup>8</sup> first – [T]his is giving too much ^paper^ to the Thieves – I shall write you what Cambell thinks of Miss B.[']s<sup>9</sup> songs by tomorrow as I know you will not think <sup>1/6</sup> ill spent to know his opinion &c.  
So farewell[.] I am yours sincerely  
E Bunting

[Fol. 2a]

[Circular date stamp]<sup>10</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]  
Miss Mary McCracken  
Waring Street  
Belfast

[Address, pencil]<sup>11</sup>  
[Numerical calculations]

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<sup>8</sup> "damned."

<sup>9</sup> Mary Balfour.

<sup>10</sup> "MR/ 8/ 1809."

<sup>11</sup> "R M Young Rathvara/ Belfast."

96. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 224

**Date:** 15 March 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON March 15, 1809

I have so far discharged Cody, that I mentioned I had nothing farther for him to do, unless he could procure me some tunes, words, etc., in the southern parts of the counties Derry, Antrim, and Donegal. I have already amply remunerated him for his visit to the North on my business. All my friends here approve highly of my intention respecting the literary part of the work. I expect to have an interview with Dr Burney in a few days. I am at present hard at work studying the obsolete notation in the Welsh Archaeology, and expect to make something out of it for Mr Joy. I purpose calling on Mr Jones<sup>1</sup> (who published the Welsh music) in a few days.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Jones (March 1752–18 April 1824), Welsh harpist, composer and antiquarian.

<sup>2</sup> It is unclear whether the bracketed text was written by Bunting or inserted by Fox.

97. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 224–25

**Date:** 12 April 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON, April 12, 1809

I have not got the words from Campbell yet. I am vexed when I think of all the time and money which I have expended in the prosecution of my work with so little prospect of remuneration, as I have computed the cost of getting out the first volume alone at not less than from £750 to £800 for 1000 copies.<sup>1</sup> I do not expect to reap from the publication what will pay me expenses...I send you an engraving of the harp.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a break down of the costings, see section 5.1.2.

98. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 225

**Date:** 5 May 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON, May 5, 1809

I have altered my determination with respect to the Treatise, etc., and shall now have the letterpress the full size of the music, viz.: folio. I hope to have the work out in the course of three months. I have now as many tunes as will compose a third volume. Let Mr Joy know this resolution of mine. I have received the poetry, and shall make use of some of the songs.

## 99. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source 1:** Young, "Edward Bunting's Irish music and the M'Cracken family," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1898): 176.

**Source 2:** Fox, *Annals*, 225

**Date:** 24 May 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

### Source 1: Young's transcription

DEAR MARY, –

I really forget whether I answered your last letter or not relative to Miss Balfour's Question,<sup>1</sup> whether I have any objection to her publishing the songs she has been kind enough to give me for my work before they appear in it. My opinion is that for her own sake she might let them make their appearance in my publication because it will advertise her work.<sup>2</sup>

### Source 2: Fox's transcription

LONDON, May 24, 1809

Campbell begins to take an interest in the business now and I expect shortly to have his part quite ready. I am certain I shall not make anything by all my trouble and expense. I would be obliged by your sending Miss Balfour's 'Pretty Girl milking her Cow.' I received 'The Dawning of the Day.' I wish much to get the drawing from John, its not being sent keeps me back.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], c. May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Young prefaces this letter, "He writes on May 24 1809:–"

<sup>3</sup> John McCracken Junior. Fox comments that this drawing was, "most probably a sketch portrait of Arthur O'Neill, the harper. An engraving of it appears in the second volume, and the original is among our manuscripts." Fox, *Annals*, 225.

## 100. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 225

**Date:** 1 September 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON, Sept. 1, 1809.

I received your letter and am obliged for the song.<sup>1</sup> I have got a very pretty song from a Mr Smythe, of Cambridge, a professor.<sup>2</sup> I shall adapt it to the 'Girl I left behind me.'<sup>3</sup> Campbell also has written a song, which he calls 'The March of the Men of Erin,' and it will answer the only specimen I have of the war-song of the Irish, which is, 'At the Foot of a Rath.' I expect soon to be able to inform you of an end to my labours, at least for a time, as I am determined to have the second volume out if possible in Spring. Give my respects to Mrs Connor.<sup>4</sup> I have set her little air, 'M'Farlane's Lamentation,' to the original words, which are well adapted to it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Edward Bunting [London], c. August 1809.

<sup>2</sup> William Smyth (1765–24 June 1849), Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University and poet.

<sup>3</sup> Traditional Irish folk song dating from the late eighteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Connor, of Belfast, collector and singer of Irish folksongs.

101. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 225–6

**Date:** 2 October 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON, Oct. 2, 1809

I have finished with Campbell, at least for the present; and he has promised to exert himself to the utmost for my next volume. I have copied out from my papers nearly 100 pages of poetry, so you may perceive how much my songs have accumulated. I am far from being well at present, and this proceeds perhaps from my great anxiety about this work.<sup>1</sup> For, as I must have during my long absence lost my business in Belfast, I have nothing to depend on but the sale of this work, for some time at least.

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Bunting, *A General collection of the ancient music of Ireland, arranged for the piano forte; some of the most admired melodies are adapted for the voice, to poetry chiefly translated from the original Irish songs, by Thomas Campbell and other eminent poets: to which is prefixed a historical & critical dissertation on the Egyptian, British and Irish harp* (London: Clementi & comp., 1809).

102. Edward Bunting [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 226

**Date:** 7 October 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

LONDON, Oct. 7, 1809

I am sorry to hear of Cody's intended departure from Belfast, as he may have some airs which I have not heard. Will you try and keep him in Belfast till my return? I begin to print the music next week. I think my book will have something to recommend it, as all the airs contained in it, with the exception of fifteen, have never appeared in any previous publication. I see by the papers that Paddy Quin is at present in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> This is in my favour. I have been exceedingly vexed by Stevenson's having taken my tunes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Quin (b. 1745), of Portadown, blind harpist and participant at the Belfast Harpist' Festival of 1792. In 1809, author John Bernard Trotter (26 December 1775–29 September 1818) brought him to Dublin where he became a tutor at a charitable harp school.

**103. Edward Bunting [Manchester] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 226

**Date:** 24 November 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

MANCHESTER Nov. 24, 1809

I arrived here last night, and have brought with me 100 copies of my book. I will make all possible dispatch in getting home, as I require a little rest, but cannot afford to indulge long, as it is my intention to publish my second volume directly.

#### 104. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 193

**Date:** c. 1815<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Unknown

**Material features:** Unknown

MY DEAR MRS. \_\_\_, –

I hope you do not impute my silence and seeming neglect to unkindness or indifference. I have, indeed, been daily thinking of you, and reproaching myself for not writing to you these several months past; but my time has been so entirely occupied, and my mind so perplexed in winding up our affairs, that we may quit a business in which all who have been engaged these two years past have lost heavily, that I could not command a tranquil half-hour in the four-and-twenty, and now that we are getting clear by degrees, I trust that the little which we got by my dear mother will enable us to pay all we owe, which is a great comfort, even if we should have nothing left. Doubtless, if riches would have contributed to our ultimate happiness, they would have been bestowed on us; and while Providence is pleased to bless us with health and a capacity for industry, we should be thankful and contented; but the sphere of a woman's industry is so confined, and so few roads lie open to her, and those so thorny, it is difficult to fix on any...

---

<sup>1</sup> Although no date is provided, the contents suggests that MAM was in the process of wrapping up the business, which occurred sometime during 1815.

**105. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 193

**Date:** c. 1815<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

MY DEAR \_\_\_, –

Ever since I received yours of 7th<sup>2</sup> I have daily intended writing to you, but was obliged to delay it from day to day owing to want of time. I have allowed my out-of-door avocations to increase so much, that I have less command of time now than when I was occupied with business. I am not sure whether that is quite right or not. I fear that undertaking too many things prevents me from doing anything as it ought to be; but somehow one gets entangled unawares, and cannot draw back, particularly if they think that they are usefully employed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Although no date is provided, the contents suggests it was written sometime following the collapse of the McCracken sisters' business in 1815.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Unknown to MAM [Belfast], 7 [...] c. 1815.

106. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Robert Tennent [Belfast]<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** 23 January 1819

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/C/1/125/1

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, red wafer seal on Fol. 2b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Robert Tennent's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Sir

I have made a general search for the papers you wished to see but to no purpose & I fear it has been irrecoverably lost during our removal – [H]owever[,] it could not[,] I think[,] be of much use as the names were not written by the parties themselves & as so many years have since elapsed[,] they have all no doubt entirely forgotten that they had ever made such an engagement, besides[,] the most of these men have been since unfortunate & could not now be called on. However[,] it would[,] no doubt[,] be sufficient to inform those who had been the particular friends of M<sup>r</sup> Russell[,] of his

sister[']s present situation[,] who would not surely grudge a trifle to supply her immediate necessities, & from all accounts[,] she cannot long require any thing[.]

[Fol. 1b]

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Tennent (9 August 1765–9 January 1837), philanthropist, sugar merchant, evangelical Presbyterian and a founding member of the Belfast Harp Society.

<sup>2</sup> "Gave Miss M.A. McCracken £5 -/ for the use of Miss Russell – 25. Jan<sup>y</sup> 1819/ R.T -."

I do not know her present residence  
but any thing addressed to the care of  
W<sup>m</sup> Hamilton (~~with whom she lives~~) N<sup>o</sup>  
11 Trinity Street (~~with whom she lives~~)  
would reach her in safety –<sup>3</sup> Robert  
Joy sets out for Dublin on Tuesday at  
four o[']clock & would willingly take charge  
of a letter for her but I fear this in-  
telligence comes too late & I did not  
think of it sooner – I know it is unneces-  
sary to urge you on the subject & shall  
therefore add no more but remain  
dear Sir

Yours very respectfully  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Saturday Evening 23 Jan 1818 ^19^

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, Robert Tennent's hand]<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

[Superscription]

To  
Doctor Tennent  
Belfast

---

<sup>3</sup> William Henry Hamilton (d. 1825), of Enniskillen, lawyer, soldier and United Irishman who married TR's niece Mary Ann Russell in 1794, after which the couple moved to London. Following a series of arrests in 1798, Hamilton and his family fled to France where he aligned himself with Tone. He played a prominent role in Emmet's rebellion of 1803, for which he was imprisoned until 1806. Upon release, he became an editor for the *Dublin Evening Post* but was later dismissed for supporting John Devereux's South American campaign. Subsequently, he moved to Baltimore where he edited a newspaper alongside Devereux. He died upon landing in Bogotá in South America. See Chapter 5.4.1.

<sup>4</sup> "Mary Anne McCracken – 23 Jan. 1819/ Distress of the sister of Thomas Russell." Subsequently, Robert Tennent wrote to his son in Dublin, urging him to visit Margaret Russell and assess her situation. If she was indeed in "great distress," he was to approach any former United Irishmen who may be willing to assist their former comrade's sister. See Robert Tennent, Belfast, to Robert James Tennent, Dublin, 14 February 1821, Correspondence of Dr Robert Tennent, Tennant Papers, PRONI D1748/G/667/11.

## 107. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 65

**Date:** 29 December 1820<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** Unknown

We cannot live for ourselves alone and I hope I shall grow better every day, at least as to those notions of propriety which all sensible folks practise and which I never did, to my shame be it spoken, till now. I for the first time received the Sacrament at Patrick's Cathedral on Christmas Day with my lady.<sup>2</sup> She seems happy now to what she did during her mother's superintendence of the household, in consequence of my altered behaviour perhaps. My little darling son, she and I take the greatest delight in.<sup>3</sup> He is grown handsome. All the people are delighted with him. I intend to be in Belfast on Thursday per day mail so I shall soon see you all once more, hearty and well.<sup>4</sup> I am with true affection ever yours sincerely,

E. BUNTING

---

<sup>1</sup> Fox prefaces this letter, "It is dated 29th December, 1820."

<sup>2</sup> Mary Anne Bunting née Chapman (1791–27 May 1863), married Edward Bunting on 25 September 1819.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Bunting (c.1820–10 July 1849), engineer and only son of Edward and Mary Anne Bunting.

<sup>4</sup> Thursday 4 January 1821.

## 108. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 191–92

**Date:** 1826<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Unknown

...Frank had got Tone's book a few days before I heard from you, and is in great delight with it.<sup>2</sup> We only got looking over a little of it, as he lent the 1st vol. as soon as he had finished it, and is deep in the 2nd. There are various opinions respecting the work; some consider it trifling, and others find fault with the author for being so great an egotist, and so vain, without considering that it was not intended for the world, but for his wife and children, to whom nothing would appear trifling that respected one so dear to them; and what could he have written about that would have interested them half so much as what concerned himself?

---

<sup>1</sup> Although no date is provided, the letter's contents suggests it was written in 1826 as it deals with the initial reception of Tone's "Life" which was first published in this year.

<sup>2</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, ed. William Theobald Wolfe Tone, 2 vols. (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1826).

**109. Andrew Leitch<sup>1</sup> [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 7 July 1827

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material Features:** 2 folios, water damage, small tears throughout first folio

Charlottesville July 7 1827 [Fol. 1a]

Miss Mary Ann McCracken

Madam, It becomes my painfull duty  
(although an entire stranger to you) at this time[,] to address you[.]  
It is to announce to you the death of a friend and correspondent of  
yours[,]  
the late John Neilson of this place.<sup>2</sup> Circumstances have made it  
necessary[,]  
in consequence of his death[,] that I should write to you, and I hope  
they  
will be a sufficient apology for my doing so, as I must be entirely un=  
known to you – From M<sup>r</sup> Neilson's Will you and I are placed in sit=  
uations that makes correspondence necessary between us, myself as

---

<sup>1</sup> Captain Andrew Leitch (10 July 1801–9 March 1855), of Albemarle, Charlottesville, Irish immigrant, lawyer and executor of John Neilson's last will and testament. Leitch's death notice can be found in the Virginia newspaper, *Daily Dispatch*, Volume 7, Number 60, 12 March 1855, 1.

<sup>2</sup> John Neilson (c.1770–24 June 1827), United Irishman of Ballycarry. He and his brother Samuel (not to be confused with Samuel Neilson the proprietor of the *Northern Star*), were exiled from Ireland to the West Indies after their involvement in the 1798 rebellion. Samuel died en route but John managed to escape and fled to America where he became an eminent architect, working on the properties of President Jefferson and President Madison. MAM's account of the Neilson family can be found in section 5.3.3. Madden partially edited this biographical narrative for publication. See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 475–78. The account reveals that MAM was in contact with Neilson's mother who was a school teacher and one of his sisters who lived in Island Magee.

Executor and you as agent, and as th[is]<sup>3</sup> letter is to be entirely one of business, I shall[,] in a measure[,] decline giving you any detailed accoun[t]<sup>4</sup>

of our friend[']s death. It is necessary I should say something. I will of course be brief – About last Christmas, during intense cold weather, he went out to his farm for a few days, and returned with a violent cold which produced[,] at the time[,] but a short confinement, however

he never completely recovered from it, and dated it as the forerunner of

his death – Shortly afterwards he received the melancholy tidings of the death of his daughter, which I think had an effect on his spirits.<sup>5</sup>

In March he was taken with the yellow jaundice, which changed to a dropsy and finally terminated in mortification of the intestines.

After a painfull illness of upwards of three months[,] he closed his mortal career on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June at 1 O'Clock in the afternoon.

I can assure you it was not for want of the best medical aid and [---] attendance, that his disease had a fatal tendency

as the advice [o]<sup>6</sup> the most skillfull Physicians was resisted to from the beginning, but Doctor Dungleison<sup>7</sup> of the University pronounced his case hopeless from the commencement –

I mention the above merely to quiet any apprehension his relative[s]<sup>8</sup> might have on that score – I will now pass on to the subject

matter of my letter – In the early part of his confinement, a conversation passed between us on the situation of his affairs[,]

during which I hinted to him the propriety of settling his trans= actions, he directed me to make an outline of his intentions, and

---

<sup>3</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably, his daughter died at Loughmorne in Carrickfergus where her mother Mary Neilson remained until her own death.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>7</sup> Professor Robley Dungleison (4 January 1798–1 April 1869), English physician who moved to Virginia to work at the university. There, he became Thomas Jefferson's personal physician, published several medical works including two medical dictionaries and later became Dean of Jefferson Medical College. His headstone declares him to be "Father of American Physiology."

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

gave the sketch to his attorney[,] M<sup>r</sup> Southall[,] to put into legal form.<sup>9</sup> He[,] at the same time[,] mentioned that he became a citizen of the United States on Sept 1804 in Philadelphia –<sup>10</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Dinsmore and myself attended to getting forwarded a copy of the certificate of naturalization[,] as without it he could not will his real estate to any person[,] as a law of Virginia declares the real estate of Aliens to be forfeited to the Commonwealth on their demise[.]<sup>11</sup> [T]he certificate is now in my possession[.] I will now proceed to give you a Copy of the Will[.]

[Fol. 1b]↵

I[,] John Neilson, a native of Ireland[,] now a citizen of the United States[,]

residing in the County of Albemarle and State of Va, do make and declare

this my last Will & Testament –

First. I desire that my Executor, hereafter named, shall convert all my estate whatsoever and wheresoever, both real and personal, including

Bonds, Accts &c.[,] into ready money (except such articles as I may hereafter by a codicil to this[,] my Will[,] otherwise dispose of[.])

[T]he amt of my estate so converted into Cash, together with what money I may have on hand at my death, I dispose of as follows[.]

Second. To my wife Mary Neilson<sup>12</sup> of Loughmorne,<sup>13</sup> of the county and town

of carrickfergus, Ireland, I give one fourth of my estate[.]

Third. To my Sister Isabella's children[,] Island Magee, County of Antrim[,]

Ireland, I give one fourth of my estate, to be divided in equal portions between them, and if any of them are <sup>^</sup>be<sup>^</sup> under age, their shares [are] to be vested for their use and benefit as herein after directed –

---

<sup>9</sup> Judge Valentine Wood Southall (c. 1793–22 August, 1861) John Neilson's lawyer.

<sup>10</sup> 28 September 1804.

<sup>11</sup> James Dinsmore (c.1771 – 1830), Irish joiner.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Neilson (d. mid 1830s), buried in Loughmorne Presbyterian churchyard alongside her daughter.

<sup>13</sup> Loughmorne, a townland in Carrickfergus.

Fourth. To my brother Jackson Neilson of Island Magee[,] County of Antrim[,]

Ireland, I give one eighth of my estate[.]

Fifth. To Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken of Belfast, Ireland, the friend of my family, and Sister to Henry Joy M<sup>c</sup>Cracken[,]

I give one eighth of my estate. –

Sixth. To my Sister Sarah & children of Island Magee[,] County of Antrim[,]

Ireland, I give one fourth and <sup>^the^</sup> remainder of my estate[,]

to be divided in equ[al]<sup>14</sup> portion among them, and if any of them be under age, their shares [are] to be vested for their use and benefit as herein after directed[.]

Seventh. Prior to the payment of any of the above legacies, I desire that

all my just debts be paid –

Eighth. I hereby constitute and appoint the said Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken[,]

the agent of my exe[cu]tors,<sup>15</sup> for the purpose of receiving and distributing

the above legacies, with authority at her death by deed or Will

to appoint another agent for the like purpose, as receipt to my

Executor by the said Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken or her successor

appointed as above, or by their agent in Virginia, appointed

to receive and remit said legacies in whole or in part (the

authority to do which being hereby invested in the said Mary

Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken or her successor) shall operate as a full

acquittal to my executor of all liability or responsibility for so much

paid[.]

Ninth. I desire that the said Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken or her <sup>^said^</sup> successor[,]

shall manage to the best advantage the portions I have left to my

Sister Isabell's children and my sister Sarah's children

untill the minors become of age, by placing the same at interest

and the profits therefrom to be applied annually to their main=

tainance and education untill the[y] shall arrive at age[,]

when their respective shares be paid them –

---

<sup>14</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Tenth. I desire that the portion of my estate to my wife shall [Fol. 2a] be paid to her, before the payment of any part of the other legacies[.]

Eleventh. I hereby appoint John Kelly<sup>16</sup> and Andrew Leitch executors of

this[,] my last Will & Testament, revoking all others hereafter made and I hereby invest in the said executors[,] the full & absolute title in and to my estate, both real and personal, necessary to effectuate this[,] my last Will & testament.

In Witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand & affixed my seal this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, in the year One thousand and eight hundred and twenty Seven[.] John Neilson JN

Signed, Sealed, published and declared as and for the last Will and testament of the

said John Neilson before us, we subscribing our names in the presence of the said Testator[,]

C P McKern via

V W Southall

NB. The codicil above alluded to was never added –

Although I am appointed to act in conjunction with M<sup>r</sup> Kelly of this place as Executor, yet when he was informed of it he declined[,] acting in consequence of which[,] the law of V<sup>a</sup> in that subject required me to act alone or renounce altogether. I agreed to act and last Albemarle Courts I qualified[,] giving bond and Security in the sum of Twenty five thousand dollars as he had not released his executors in his Will by specifying that he req<sup>d</sup> no security from them – But the laws of V<sup>a</sup> say that if an Ex<sup>r</sup> or Adm<sup>r</sup> pay ^off the debts^ as far as he knows, and distribute the legacies

that if afterwards a just claim came against the estate, that he did not know of formerly, or if he sells real estate and the title turns out afterwards to be bad, then the law requires the Executor or Adm<sup>r</sup> with their securities to make good to the individuals the amt or value of the property so sold or the debt so paid but in consideration of the hardships attending an Ex<sup>r</sup> or Adm<sup>r</sup> in such cases, the laws require the legates to give refunding bonds to indemnify the Ex<sup>r</sup> or Adm<sup>r</sup>. The following is an extract from Tate[']s digest of laws of V<sup>a</sup>[:]

---

<sup>16</sup> John Kelly, elder of the Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville.

Nor shall an Adm<sup>r</sup>[,] Adm<sup>x</sup>[,] Ex<sup>r</sup> or Ex<sup>x</sup>[,] or other person to whom an estate shall have been committed for administration, be compelled to make distribution at any time untill bond and security be given[,] by the person entitled to distribution, to refund due proportions of any debts or demands which may afterwards appear against the intestate or testator, and the costs attending the recovery of such debts but such bond shall be valid and sufficient if executed by any responsible person with security, though the party entitled to distribution be not an Obligor[.]<sup>17</sup> [End]

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph Tate, *A Digest of the Laws of Virginia: Which are of a Permanent Character and General Operation; illustrated by Judicial Decisions: to which is added, Index of the Names of the Cases in the Virginia Reporters* (Richmond: Shepherd and Pollard, 1823), 244–45.

**110. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 65–6

**Date:** 27 December 1827

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

Dec. 27 1827.

28, UPPER BAGGOT ST.

I received an unsought letter from the Trustees of George's Church (where a new organ price £1000 has been put up lately) to be their organist with a salary of from £90 to £100 a year, for which situation above twenty candidates started and canvassed the Parish.<sup>1</sup> My appointment is dated 1st December and the duty is twice per week, Wednesday and Fridays and Sundays also. They would not allow me a deputy at present so that I could not go to Belfast to you.<sup>2</sup>

I am indebted for this place to the Attorney-General,<sup>3</sup> who sent for me and spoke to me so kindly and friendly, that I was nearly overpowered with all my old recollections of the Joy tribe, from your dear, dear, departed mother, till the present time, they have been an honour to Ireland from their first introduction into it, and friendly beyond my deserts have they been to me one and all of them since I was twelve years of age, now a period of 40 years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Saint George's Church, Hardwicke Place, Dublin. It was designed by Francis Johnston and completed in 1813.

<sup>2</sup> Fox comments that "his allusion to Belfast would lead us to think that previous to this he went up north at intervals and continued to give sets of lessons." Fox, *Annals*, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Counsellor Henry Joy.

**111. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 4 February 1828

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 folios, small circular tears, water damage and mold throughout

Charlottesville February 4 1828 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

I received your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Aug last<sup>1</sup> about the 1<sup>st</sup> November, to which I would have immediately replied but expected to be enabled since to obviate some of the difficulties that must necessarily occur to you and the other legates in giving refunding bonds – Unfortunately[,] it has not been in my favor to devise any plan that would relieve me from the weight of responsibility which I mentioned in a former letter as being very considerable – From the remarks made in your letter on that subject[,] I discover a total misapprehension of my meaning in the manner by which the security should be given – I will be now more explicit – It is necessary that the bonds should be given to me[,] for at least the estate administered on was approved to by some person if residing not in the county Albemarle at least in the state of Virginia with security to these bonds residing in the state also – [Y]ou will at once perceive the difficulty, as I suppose you have but few acquaintances in this state that would be willing to incur said responsibility[.] I am willing however[,] whenever a plan is agreed on between us[,] to remit some money for M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson[']s use without reference to these bonds but then I must stop until some further arrangement can be made[.]

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<sup>1</sup> Two missing letters from MAM [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], first dated 27 August 1827 and second dated 31 August 1827.

After the expirations of four years, I shall be a better judge of the claims that be broug[ht]<sup>2</sup> [...] the estate. – [I]n the mean time[,] use your exertions to procure the refunding bonds – Mr Neilson[']s estate will not fetch as much as I at first supposed – I have already paid away all the money I have received which is about \$1500 – in small debts and land claim – I have made a disposal of the real and personal property on credit as I mentioned formerly that a grea[t]<sup>3</sup> sacrifice would be made if sol[d]<sup>4</sup> for cash. The real estate I sold on credits of One mo. & 3 years so that very little money will come into my h[ands]<sup>5</sup> for sometime – If you cannot give the refunding bonds [...mould...] to direct me how I am to apply the money remaining in my possession after the discharge of the debts[,] if you require the [mo]ney<sup>6</sup> to be put out at interest and whether you require landed and personal security – I would not wish the latter in my own responsibility as the person might turn out in some debt or other insolvent – I have ha[d]<sup>7</sup> two letters from the young man Mr Tho<sup>s</sup> Neilson whom you were desirous I should aid with money if his situation required it –<sup>8</sup> The first letter was addressed to his Uncle[,] not knowing of his death[,] in answer to which I explained to him that the will put it out of my power to aid him, in his reply he said he was [...tear...] but was going to work at his trade – His friends need apprehend no difficulty on that score[,] unless he should have a spell of sickness[,] as a tradesman can obtain employment in the United States anywhere if he conducts himself with steadiness and sobriety[.]

[Fol. 1b] ↵

He also mentioned his intention of coming on here & he thinks proper

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<sup>2</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Neilson, John Neilson's nephew.

to do so, he shall cheerfully have the benefit of my [...mould...] experience

in the way of counsel or advice, but as to adva[n]cing<sup>9</sup> him money[,] you will perceive he has no authority whatever to appeal to me for a Cent – [I]ndeed, I am in hopes the young man will not require any – As respects the manner by which money can be drawn from one and receipts given by the persons authorised to do so[,] the will provides 8<sup>th</sup> Section to which I refer you two ways – First[,] by your own individual receipt as agent for the legates or by an agent in Virginia[,] properly constituted by the laws of Great Britain & Irela[nd]<sup>10</sup>

with powers of attorney attested by a notary public with testimonies from the proper offices of the city county incorpo[rated]<sup>11</sup> wherein such notary public resides[,] or the great seal of Great Britain & Ireland - Now if you cannot give the refunding bonds immediately, and wish to obtain some money for M<sup>r</sup> Nei[ls]o[n]'s<sup>12</sup> use, you

need not be anxious to establish an agency yet (I can not approve of Doctor White as he does not reside in this state). I would welcome you to send on a blank receipt properly attested as above to one confidential person here, who could draw the money from m[e]<sup>13</sup> fill up the blank

and [...] to you. Now I do not know of your being acquainted with any

person in this neighbourhood[,] unless M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Steele of the adjoining

County[,] to whom it might occasion some trouble and give delay – I would suggest myself[,] M<sup>r</sup> James Dinsmore of this place, an old and very intimate acquaintance of the late M<sup>r</sup> Neilson – They were partners frequently and lived in this part of the world together for upwards of 20 years – M<sup>r</sup> Dinsmore is a very upright gentleman and told me to day that he would undertake the trouble if you chose

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<sup>9</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>11</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>13</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

to confide in him – In your answer to me[,] if you adopt this plan[,] you can enclose the blank [re]ceipt<sup>14</sup> and direct the letter to Mr Dinsmore[.]

[W]hen I pay him what money I then can [...mould...] he will fill up the blank – [H]e can procure the bill if [...mould...] and forward it[.] I will ap[p]oint him myself in doing so – I w[oul]d<sup>15</sup> prefer the matter than the very unlimited confidence which you thought proper to place in me, by investing me with the part for which I tender you my gratefull thanks – I also name Mr Dinsmore for another reason[,] Viz[,] he would not charge any compensation for his trouble– I wish to avoid expense as much as possible – It is unnecessary at present to trouble you with the form of the bonds already mentioned[,] as they require to be given in Virginia. You made an enquiry respecting the children that might hereafter be born by Mr Neilson’s Sisters as coming in for a share in the division of the estate – I have not been able[,] as yet[,] to [...mould...] terms [...mould...] in the matter

but the laws are the same in bo[th]<sup>16</sup> countries on that point[,] hereafter I may satisfy you more fully – I am confident

[Fol. 2a]

that the idea of posthumous ligates, if I may use the expression[,] ↵ never occurred to him[,] otherwise it is quite probable he would have mentioned

them – I think myself the will positively alludes to those only who were

born previous to his death – Knowing nothing more at present to inform

you of Madam - I will subscribe myself[,]

Your Obedient servant

Andrew Leitch

To Miss Mary Ann  
M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, Belfast.

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<sup>14</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Partially obstructed by mould.

**112. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 11 July 1828

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, small tears throughout, sketch

**Attachment to final manuscript:** A bill of exchange

Charlottesville July 11 1828

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

Enclosed you have Joseph Marx & Sons<sup>1</sup> bill of Exchange in Gowan & Marx London<sup>2</sup> for £101.11.8<sup>o</sup> Sterling[,] your favor[,] payable to your order only, exactly making the sum of Five hundred Dollars of this Country Currency[,] which sum is filled up in the clark receipt you sent M<sup>r</sup> Dinsmore[.] It is about a month or five weeks since M<sup>r</sup> Dinsmore received yours of 12<sup>th</sup> April –<sup>3</sup> A longer time has elapsed since than is usually taken up in negotiating such matters, but want of safe[,] private conveyance was the cause – You will please excuse the haste and brevity of this letter[.] As I am anxious to forward to you as soon as possible and time being not at my command, I will defer writing to you on the subject of the refunding bonds, and other parts of your letter requiring an answer untill the next time I write (which will be shortly) – When I will enclose the duplicate bill and wait your answer – My best respects to yourself and such of M<sup>r</sup> Neilson's friends as you are in

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Marx (1772–12 July 1840), prominent Jewish merchant and friend of Thomas Jefferson. Samuel Marx (4 March 1796–7 December 1860), business partner with his father and later, president of the Bank of Virginia.

<sup>2</sup> Gowan & Marx, London bank.

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to James Dinsmore [Charlottesville, Virginia], 12 April 1828.

the habit of seeing – [H]oping this will arrive in safety  
& in proper time for Mr Neilson[']s use[.]

I will Subscribe myself Madam[,]

Yours Ob<sup>t</sup> Servant

And<sup>w</sup> Leitch

<[Sketch]><sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>4</sup> Leitch's sketch of a man in a top hat and scarf.

**113. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 2 September 1828

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, small circular tears throughout

**Attachment to final manuscript:** A bill of exchange

Charlottesville Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 1828 [Fol. 1a]

Miss Mary Ann McCracken

Madam, I have deferred writing you longer than I intended which was in consequence of having mislaid the bill of exchange – I enclosed you the first[,] early in July[,] which I hope has gone safe to hand[.] [I]n this[,] you will receive the second bill for the same amt of \$500 I wd send you a certificate by gentlemen of this place as to the amt your blank receipt was filled for, but it is unnecessary as this confession of its amt, of its being \$500[,] is amply sufficient. For if it were filled for more[,] this letter would be sufficient evidence to reduce it to that sum – I have had a settlement of my past years executorship up to the 1st July last[,] at which time there was a balance due the Est in my hands of \$612.08[,] as will appear on enquiry in the Clerk[']s office of the County Court of Albemante – I have extricated and filed vouchers for the payment of \$2181..61 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> since the estate has come to my hands – You are fully aware, I have no doubt[,] from my past letters that I sold the property on time. As the will left it discretionary with me and knowing the legatees would at least be gainers by it[,] to the amt of 25 per cent on the sales more than if sold for cash. – I used the discretionary power with which I was invested for their benefit[.]

[T]he farm[,] in consequence of a number of Liens, similar to your mortgages, under which the property was purchased by the deceased (without being fully aware of their extent)[,] together with an old marriage settlement of half a century's standing[,] has prevented me from making a complete sale[,] unless these Liens &c shall be cleared off to the satisfaction of the purchaser – The property[,] I may say[,] was all sold in a Credit[,] the personal at six months, and the rest at 1, 2 & 3 years, so that the money arising will not come into my hands as soon as you might possibly wish it – I am going from town for a few weeks and am so desirous of enclosing the second bill that I cannot think of deferring sending this one any longer – My lawyer has been so busy for the la[s]t<sup>1</sup> few days that he could not spare me to draw a refunding bond in due form but he explained it to me in such a manner that I can give you the substance –

You perceive the obligation would be valid and binding forever, that it binds heirs, executors &c – The wording of it would be somewhat different, but it would amount in substance to the same – I have before me a letter of yours received a few days ago<sup>2</sup> mentioning your empowering Mr Arthur Harper of Philadelphia as your agent[.]<sup>3</sup> I have no doubt but he would be a very prudent one but is not authorised by the Will for the purpose of remitting the money paid by me to you, as the person must be a resident of Virginia – I would not however advise you suddenly to withdraw your power of attorney untill some plan will be adopted with regard to the agency that will suit all parties – I intended in this letter[,] if it met with your approbation[,] to suggest your forwarding another blank receipt[,] [a]s I

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 1828.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Harper, listed as a “gentleman” residing at 264 Walnut Street in the *Philadelphia Directory* for 1824.

might have it in my power during the winter to send you another bill – As I supposed (although you are the best judge of the matter whether you could give refunding bonds) that it would perhaps suit present exigencies as I am willing to remit part without them for the accommodation of all parties. As no doubt money is very much a wanting among the legatees. – If you are desirous of obtaining more money for M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson's or the uses of the other legatees, you can by enclosing to M<sup>r</sup> Dinsmore as heretofore, a blank and during the winter it may be in my power to send you more than I did before – I am disposed to remit part without incurring much liability, and I discover more difficulties in the way of the bonds than you are aware of – You know that I must be indemnified to at least the amt of the estate – In consequence of which[,] I would require persons possessed of real estate as securities – [D]o not think I am disposed to throw any obstacles in the way of your getting the money, but I would as soon incur the whole responsibility by remitting it all myself as to take indifferent security. I am in hopes that in a few years, I will be enabled to have the Est cleared of its encumbrances, however[,] you can be looking out for the securities in the mean time and I will do what is in my power not to incur too much risk – My best respects Madam to yourself[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson & M<sup>r</sup> Neilson's relations that you are in the habit of seeing[.]

While I Remain  
your Ob<sup>t</sup> Servant  
Andrew Leitch

**114. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch  
[Charlottesville, Virginia]<sup>1</sup>**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 191

**Date:** 1 December 1829

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Unknown

1st Dec., 1829.

DEAR SIR, –

Rec<sup>d</sup>. £349 15s. 0d. from \_\_\_\_\_. The remittance is come in very good time for some of the legatees who would otherwise have been much distressed, as[,] from a new regulation adopted by some of the landlords here, the poor tenants are obliged to pay the half-yearly rent in less than a month after it falls due, which very few of them are prepared for. Of course[,] they have become very impatient...

M.A.M.

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<sup>1</sup> Clearly, Andrew Leitch was MAM's intended recipient as Leitch's drafts (Letters 109, 111–13 and 115) would suggest.

**115. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 20 April 1830

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final version was hand delivered by Mrs Roseanna Gorman

**Material features:** 1 folio, small tears throughout

**Attachment to final manuscript:** A letter to Mrs Neilson (see section 5.2.3 below)

Charlottesville April 20 1830

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

An opportunity by M<sup>rs</sup> Gorman[,] a resident of this place and a native of Ireland[,] on her return to her country[,] will take the trouble to deliver you this —<sup>1</sup> I have been but a week from Philadelphia where I saw M<sup>r</sup> Grimshaw and paid into his hands for the benefit of the Est [of] John Neilson[,] the sum of One thousand dollars —<sup>2</sup> You may expect[,] in the month of July or August[,] the further sum of Twenty five hundred as I have made a negociation [sic] for a bill of exchange for that amount — I had not the pleasure of seeing M<sup>r</sup> Harper[,]<sup>3</sup> although I understood he was well and in his usual health. I placed in M<sup>r</sup> Grimshaw's hands my estimate of what yet remained due

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<sup>1</sup> Roseanna Gorman, widow of John Gorman, a stonemason at the University of Virginia. Both were Irish immigrants living at Lynchburg.

<sup>2</sup> William Grimshaw (22 November 1782–8 January 1852), immigrated with his family from Carnmoney, County Antrim to Philadelphia in 1815, historian and author of numerous school textbooks and dictionaries. He was the uncle of James Grimshaw, John Templeton's son-in-law. As a close friend of the Templeton family, MAM must have been able to utilise this connection, if indeed, she was not already known to William Grimshaw.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Harper's will, which was written in 1829 and probated in 1832, bequeathes money and property to the children of William Grimshaw. Indeed, one of Grimshaw's sons, Arthur Harper Grimshaw, appears to have been named for him.

to the ~~Est~~ legatees which he said was for your satisfaction unless I have overestimated the debts – I think you have yet to receive about \$9500 – The reason why I say overestimate is that there are three cases which involve large sums that are not yet finally settled – I may be too sanguine in my opinion and hope that if I am[,] you will not be too much disappointed – My utmost endeavours for some time past have been to bring them to a close, and hope that I can effect it during the summer – I have written to M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson also, and send her by the same opportunity[,] a profile of the late M<sup>r</sup> John Neilson[,] her husband – [T]he letter is directed to your care –<sup>4</sup> You will also be so good as to receive the likeness for her and present it as soon as convenient. Excuse me for the trouble I put you to and accept assurances of my respect and esteem[,]

While I Remain

Yours &c–

Andrew Leitch

Miss Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Belfast

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>4</sup> See section 5.2.3.

**116. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Robert Tennent [Belfast]**

**Date:** 21 May 1831

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/C/1/125/2

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Hand delivered within the Poor House

**Material features:** 1 folio

Dear Sir

[Fol. 1a]

I wish particularly to have a few  
minutes conversation with you before you  
leave the house as I never know when to find  
you at home[.]<sup>1</sup> I may be found in the girls['] school room[.]

Saturday 21 May 1831 M.A. McCracken

[Superscription]

[Fol. 1b]

Doctor Tennent

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<sup>1</sup> "The house" referring to the Poor House.

117. Sophia McAdam<sup>1</sup> [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 31 August 1831

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/534

**Letter form:** A copy, in Mary Ann's hand, of two original manuscripts (made for Madden). Both original letters were written by McAdam to Mary Ann. The first was a draft letter from Sophia McAdam to Dr MacNeven. The second was a note to Mary Ann requesting her advice on the draft letter

**Delivery status:** The copy was presumably a postal delivery to Madden

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast August 31<sup>st</sup> 1831

To Doctor Macnevin<sup>3</sup>

Sir

In calling your attention to a late publication viz. the "Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald[,]"<sup>4</sup> an extract from which you will find in the news[-] paper that accompany's [sic] this letter, allow me to hope you will find an excuse for my intruding on your time, in the natural anxiety of a daughter ~~anxious~~ ^eager^ to repel the calumny and

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<sup>1</sup> Sophia McAdam née Neilson (5 August 1790–5 February 1872), second daughter of Samuel Neilson. She married John McAdam of Belfast on 5 March 1811.

<sup>2</sup> "Copy from Neilson[']s daughter to Mr McNeven."

<sup>3</sup> William James MacNeven (21 March 1763–12 July 1841), physician, Free Mason, United Irishman and scientist. He was arrested on 12 March 1798 and imprisoned at Kilmainham Gaol, before being moved to Fort George in February 1799. Upon his release in 1802, MacNeven was exiled and eventually settled in New York.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, (Glasgow: Cameron, Ferguson & Co., 1831).

shield a father's memory from so unjust  
and abominable insinuation –

In thinking over the different  
Patriots who were contemporaries of my  
father, my attentions turned to you as  
being his kind friend and physician,  
a fellow prisoner both in Dublin and  
Fort George, residing in another country  
and entirely unconnected with his family –

May I therefore take the liberty of requesting  
that you will rescue an old friend's memory  
from so foul a charge, by stating your  
own knowledge of my father's character and  
principles either in the American or  
Irish press, or perhaps you would take  
the trouble of writing to M<sup>r</sup> Moore  
on the subject as he must have been  
grossly misinformed, I fear by some  
evil minded person –

[Fol. 1b]

'Tis hard indeed after  
sacrificing property, Liberty and life in  
the cause, to have so foul a stain cast  
on his memory by an Irish Catholic –  
His four daughters are still living, all  
married, and with families <sup>X</sup> <sup>5</sup> [H]is only  
son found an early grave in Jamaica  
where he unfortunately went in his  
anxious struggle after independence –<sup>6</sup>

I trust you will Sir excuse the  
liberty I have taken in consideration for  
the deeply wounded feelings of Sam<sup>l</sup> Neilson's children[.]

Yours respectfully

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<sup>5</sup> When copying out the letter, MAM overlooked four lines of text which, when she realised her error, she copied onto Fol. 2a, indicating its original position by way of linking X-marks.

<sup>6</sup> William Bryson Neilson (17 May 1793–7 February 1817), fourth child and only son of Samuel Neilson, apprentice at Belfast's Martin & Co. counting-house and President of the Belfast Historic Society. In November 1816, he emigrated to Jamaica to establish a business but died three months later after contracting yellow fever.

Sophia McAdam

X tis very hard that after such a lapse of [Fol. 2a]  
years they should thus be deprived  
of the only patrimony he could  
leave them – an unspotted name[.]

My dear Mary, [Fol. 2b]

I hope this will meet with  
your approbation[.] I am of [the] opinion one  
always does their own business best  
[but] as I do not know Dr McNeven so well as  
you do, I send you two papers[;] say what  
you think of the different aspects – Hope's  
I did not see, it was something very  
short I understand but was a flat contra-  
diction to the insinuation about his mind  
from personal ^and close^ interaction.<sup>7</sup> Hope asserted such  
a thing was utterly untrue and signed his  
name –

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to Thomas Moore's assertion that Samuel Neilson's "general character of mind bordered closely...on insanity." Moore, *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, 183.

<sup>8</sup> "[...] [...] from / Mrs McAdam to Dr McNevin / 31 Aug 1831."

## 118. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Date:** May 1832

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 192

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Unknown

May, 1832

...Only think of the Reform Bill being lost after all, when every one was sure of it being passed!<sup>1</sup> It is confidently affirmed that Wellington<sup>2</sup> is to be made Minister in place of Lord Grey,<sup>3</sup> whose party have all resigned, and that there is to be a reform notwithstanding (no doubt a partial one). One can hardly wish (much as reform is to be desired) that Wellington should have the credit of it yet. As Harry used to say – 'If the good be done, it is no matter who gets the credit of it.'<sup>4</sup>

The people here are much more interested in the matter than I expected they would be – nothing to what they are in England; but all, I hope, will in the end turn out for the best.

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<sup>1</sup> The Reform Bill, intended to reform the electoral system of the United Kingdom, endured a long uphill struggle. Political upheaval and public violence erupted in the "Days of May." The Reform Act was finally passed in June 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington (1 May 1769–14 September 1852), Field Marshal, member of the Tory party who served as Prime Minister between 1828 and 1830 and again in 1834 for 23 days.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (13 March 1764–17 July 1845), Whig Prime Minister between November 1830 and July 1834.

<sup>4</sup> HJM.

## 119. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 192

**Date:** 28 October 1835

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Tear

**Attachment:** *The Northern Whig*, No. 920 (26 October 1835)

28th Oct., 1835.

MY DEAR \_\_\_\_\_, –

I send you with this the Whig<sup>1</sup> of Monday,<sup>2</sup> that you may see an account of the Lord Lieutenant's<sup>3</sup> visit to Belfast. . . . All present seemed quite delighted with all they saw and heard, with very few, if any, exceptions. Some indeed complained of the smell of the meat, others of being hungry; but I was too much gratified with the present to feel any annoyance – not merely with the gaiety of the scene, but in looking forty years back, and in thinking, too, of those who were gone, and how delighted they would have been at the political changes that have taken place – which could not possibly, in their day, have been anticipated by peaceable means – and of the improved prospects of their country, now that the English in general, and particularly the present Ministry, have such just feelings towards Ireland and Irish people. . . . [*paper torn*] about a year later the last to assist in its completion, and even five years after, Russell was still confident of its ultimate success. . . . It was a pity that Paine's Age of

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<sup>1</sup> *Northern Whig* (1824–1863), a liberal unionist newspaper, published in Belfast.

<sup>2</sup> Monday 26 October 1835.

<sup>3</sup> Constantine Phipps, 1st Marquess of Normanby (15 May 1797–28 July 1863) author, member of the Whig Party, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1835 and 1839.

Reason<sup>4</sup> had so soon succeeded his Rights of Man,<sup>5</sup> as notwithstanding the latter had much effect on many of natural good understandings, but not in the two last-mentioned, and many who had been led astray by the infidel publication recovered from their delusion.

And now a better day has dawned. The old prophecy – ‘That these countries should never be well ruled until a virgin queen should come to the throne’ – seems to be realised, as there have been greater improvements in the law since she came to the throne than for a much longer period before; and she is so truly amiable and feminine that she is universally beloved.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* (Paris: Barrois, 1794).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution* (London: J. S. Jordan, 1791).

<sup>6</sup> This final paragraph must have been taken from a later letter as Queen Victoria's reign did not begin until 20 June 1837.

## 120. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Unknown

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 194–95

**Date:** 1838<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Unknown

MY DEAR SIR, –

I delayed replying to the message you left for me with my niece<sup>2</sup> until I should have an opportunity of reading your sermon, which I procured on my return from Bangor,<sup>3</sup> and have perused twice very carefully; and I regret to find, that although there are many parts of your sermon in which I perfectly agree with you, yet there are others which appear in such a very different point of view to you from what they do to me that I could not conscientiously undertake to disseminate the work. A variety of circumstances contribute to the formation of our opinions, and when they become matured and confirmed for a number of years they are not easily overturned. There are some things, however, in which, though we disagree, our opinions lead nearly to the same results. Believing, as I do, in the immediate superintendence of an infinitely wise and good Providence, I must so far acknowledge that monarchs reign by Divine appointment so long as they are permitted to reign; and though I think that there are many evils under which we live, I do not think we are thereby authorised to take up arms against the Government, but consider it a duty to wait with patience till the great Ruler of all events shall bring about a change through the progress of public opinion.

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<sup>1</sup> McCleery prefaces this letter, "The following, written in 1838, tells of her long connection with another Institution, and also gives her ideas on a much-disputed question." McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 194.

<sup>2</sup> Maria McCracken.

<sup>3</sup> In his diary, James Black recorded that "Miss Mary Ann Magee and Miss McCracken" were visiting Miss Eliza Templeton at her Bangor residence on 22 July 1838 and had departed by 24 July. See James Black, personal diary, November 1837–October 1844, McKisack deposited genealogical papers, PRONI, D1725/18. This would suggest that this letter was composed shortly following 24 July 1838.

I have been visiting the Lancasterian School for the last twenty-five years, generally once a-week, and I find the children taught there for the last two or three years much better acquainted with the Scriptures than the scholars of any former period.<sup>4</sup> The master is certainly a very superior man, whose heart and soul is devoted to the business; and so well is the school conducted, that, although they have enough of Catholic Bibles and Testaments, yet the Catholic children, when sent to the press to take books for themselves, generally take the Protestant translation of their own accord, and there never is a word of disagreement among them. The extracts they read at the schools, should they see no more of the Scriptures there, would tend to excite their curiosity to read the whole. Those whose parents and guardians permit, have access to the entire volume; and I remember when pious Protestants would have considered it a profanation of the sacred volume to see it made a common school-book of, and our religious feelings were quite shocked to hear it all read and half the words spelled. It was required to be read in a serious and solemn manner, as if felt and understood.

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<sup>4</sup> The Sunday and Lancasterian School was established on Belfast's Frederick Street in 1812. It was a "liberal," non-denominational school, attended by 700 children. See Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'Natural Leaders' and Their World* (Liverpool: LUP, 2012), 227–28.

**121. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 6 January 1839

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio

Charlottesville Jan<sup>y</sup> 6 1839

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

I have delayed upwards of a month since the rec<sup>t</sup> of your last letter dated Sept 16<sup>th</sup> in order to give you as satis[-]factory an answer to your queries as the importance of the subject required, and I hope it will be deemed sufficiently explicit to enable you to settle and divide the Est [of] John Neilson among the several legatees without much difficulty.<sup>1</sup> As respects the late M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson's share[;] her heirs &c. are undoubtedly entitled to interest on any residue not paid her out of the first monies you received[,] amt<sup>s</sup> to her share. The Tenth clause of the late John Neilson's Will says &cc.[,] "I desire that the portion of my Est given to my wife shall be paid to her before the payment of any part of the other legacies" – Of the intentions of the Testator there can be no doubt, and therefore to ascertain her share[,] add together the several sums rec<sup>d</sup> by you on Acct of the Est and divide the Amt by 4. This will give you the sum which ought to have been paid her out of the first sums received by you but as you could not at the time ascertain it[,] of course you were perfectly justifiable [sic] in distributing part of it among the others.

On this sum[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson[']s Heirs are entitled to receive interest or so much of it as was not paid her out of the first monies rec<sup>d</sup>[.]

On looking over my books, if she had rec<sup>d</sup> her legacy here, she would

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter MAM to Leitch, 16 September 1838.

have been entitled to the whole of the first payment for \$500 [on] April 12<sup>th</sup> 1828[,] do [sic]<sup>2</sup> sec<sup>d</sup> April 1.29 for \$1000 and do Oct 7.29 for \$1800[,] leaving \$50 to be taken out of the next payment of \$1000 Ap<sup>l</sup> 3.30 but as the rate of exchange between this country and yours is varia[-] ble, the above would not be exact, and is merely stated in order that you may the more readily comprehend me.<sup>3</sup> Now after taking the difference in Int out of the residue[,] Viz the  $\frac{3}{4}$ , this sum then divided among the legatees in due proportion according to the terms of the Will ought to give the Principal of each legatees['] share and the more readily to comprehend me, I will take it for granted that M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson received the <sup>3</sup> first payments which were in full, then you know that the following sums as you see them would be appropriated in the following manner, Viz  $\frac{2}{3}$  to the sisters['] children of the Testator,  $\frac{1}{6}$  to yourself and  $\frac{1}{6}$  to Jackson Neilson. The first legacy of  $\frac{1}{4}$  having been paid, and this manner of distribution would be invariable throughout the [...] of the Est [...] those sums which would <sup>be</sup> successively put out at interest by you as trustee as they came to hand for the benefit of the children of Sarah & Isabella[,] ought to constitute the P<sup>l</sup> of their Leg<sup>s</sup> as contemplated by the Will when added together, and the Int on those sums successively put out would constitute the fund from which you are to pay for the maintenance and education of the children – And the Will does not authorize you to pay more –

[Fol. 1b]

As the ninth clause limits you in that respect, stating positively ↙ that you are not to pay more, and I would advice you to adhere to it[,] for if you had found that you had paid more previously[,] you should pay less afterwards, in order that what [sic]<sup>5</sup> the minors arrived at age you would not be put to any trouble on that score[.]

There is a method here by which a part of the P<sup>l</sup> might be

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<sup>2</sup> Misspelling of “due.”

<sup>3</sup> The second payment was due on 1 April 1829, the third on 7 October 1829 and the fourth on 3 April 1830.

<sup>4</sup> Principal.

<sup>5</sup> This should be “when.”

applied for the uses of minors, but which can only be obtained by [a] motion to the court of Chancery for leave, but if that course were deemed adviseable [sic] by you[,] you would have to take the necessary steps in one of your courts, and in which I am unable to advise you but the easiest way is to abide by the Will, and that which[,] in the end[,] will give most satisfaction. As I do not comprehend you in one part as fully as I would wish, I will endeavour to give you[,] as clearly as I can[,] my opinions to what it relates. It is in that part to which you refer to the Parents of the minors – [N]ow[,] it is perfectly clear that the duties prescribed by the Will for you to perform in the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Clauses alludes to the keeping and disbursement of the money that comes into your hands, and what do those clauses say “That you shall only appropriate the Int and profits of the shares of Sarah’s and Isabella’s children for their maintenance and education during their minority” and also that M<sup>rs</sup> Neilson’s share is to be paid first – [W]ith regard to the Parents[,] they will certainly be remunerated by their children if they are as dutiful as they should be, when they come of age[,] for any additional Trouble and expense their Parents may have to encounter during their childhood – It is quite clear to me that the testator never contemplated under any circumstances, that Int was to take place at any time whilst the money was in my hands in the shares of Sarah’s & Isabella’s children, because how could they apply to you for any part of the Int, when perhaps you had rec<sup>d</sup> no part of the principal – As a case like this might have arisen, although Int on their shares was accumulating here, it would not deprive the 9<sup>th</sup> clause of the Will of the positive and explicit duties prescribed for you to perform – As I have given you my opinion as to the division of the Est in its general features, I will now be more explicit as to the division among the minors members. They are[,] you know[,] to share alike, viz the children of Sarah are each to share alike. Isabella’s likewise. They are to have the same sum in principal commencing at the same date and of course in Int likewise[,] only as they become of age, they will be paid off in full[,] giving the proper receipts. If any Int remains they will be paid it likewise, and if you should have encroached on their Pr<sup>l</sup> I hope they will be liberal enough to [...] it[,] if it were for no other reason than the high esteem in which you were held by their dec<sup>d</sup> uncle, and besides they ought to be grateful on their own part for any act of [End]

**122. Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 19 March 1839

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered, the final version being a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio

Charlottesville March 19<sup>th</sup> 1839 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

Your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> of last month<sup>1</sup> came to hand yesterday evening, and am much surprised to learn that you had not received my letter dated early in January<sup>2</sup> in reply to yours of November

previous,<sup>3</sup> however as mail routes in new countries are liable to delay,

I am

in hopes my letter has reached you before this. Those two are all that I have

received from you[.] I cannot imagine what has become of the third[.]<sup>4</sup>

I was in hopes when I received your letter dated Nov<sup>r</sup> last[,] that Mr Neilson

might have been compelled to stay longer[,] at the place where the public Lands

were to be sold either in Iowa or Michigan[,] than he expected and consequently

had not time to reach you, but it seems from your preasant [sic] Letter that all

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter: MAM [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 15 February 1839.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 121 (UVA MSS 9200).

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter: MAM [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], November 1838.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter: MAM [Belfast] to Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia], 1839.

hopes now[,] with regard to his return[,] are entirely at an end. I cannot myself know what opinion to form[,] w[h]ether he intended to abandon his family, or weather [sic] he may not have met with some accident on his way home[.] [T]hose are nearly [sic] conjectures[,] w[h]ether he designed it before he left here or was the result of circumstances afterwards, it is now fruitless to give any opinion[.] All that I can inform you of[,] is what occurred previous to his departure from hence. He came here I understand about the 1<sup>st</sup> of Sept<sup>r</sup>[,] I returned home three weeks afterwards and he remained about a week after my return. He expressed in my preasance [sic] great anxiety on ac<sup>t</sup> of his absance [sic] from Home and hurried as much as possible on ac<sup>t</sup> of Land Sales which I have alluded to above, in order to reach them in time. Those were his expressions in my preas=  
=ance[.] He said[,] unless he could take One Thousand dollars with him to those Sales it would be useless for him to go – [D]uring the short time he remained here[,] after my return from the North[,] I got the Master Commissioner to enter into a long settlement of what he supposed M<sup>r</sup> Neilson's ^claim^ was worth[.] [H]e fixed it at \$1306, this was necessary in order to enable M<sup>r</sup> Neilson to ascertain [sic] ^its value^ as he said he would sell it before his departure. I understood he tried to sell it but could not get what his claim was worth[.] He proposed me to take it, which I repeatedly declined[.] [A]t last I told him I should prefer him[,] in case I bought it[,] to have the value affixed by referees, he assented and although they did not consider under any circumstances that it was worth more

than \$1000, yet in order to enable him to have the \$1000, or near it to spare[,] I gave him \$50 more than the referees allowed[.] [T]hese were the conditions of the contract besides in case the share which belonged to him exceeded on a final settlement by \$100, more than the Commissioner computed it to be worth then the residue [sic] after that would be coming [sic] to him or his heirs or representatives, now I cannot perceive that this can take place at all as I am positive that the share will not net [sic] \$1306. If you chose to be more particular on this subject[,] I would refer you to Mr Andrew Sample or Mr Joseph Watson<sup>5</sup> who are two of the subscribing witnesses to the contract to which I have alluded[.] I am exceedingly sorry to learn that he has not returned but I can assure you that he started from here on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September last. When Mr Neilson was here there was a considerable portion of the Est [Fol. 1b] Uncollected, part of which was not due, and besides[,] as he could ↵ give no refunding Bonds which the Law requires[,] the referees were of [the] opinion that a High price was given for his Interest[.] \$800 was as much as could be ^have been^ obtained through any other source. I write thus full to show you that ample and more than an ample was given for his Interest – [N]o executor or administrator in this state is required by Law to pay one cent of any Legacy to any party claiming until that party give Bond and security in the country in which said Ex<sup>r</sup> or Adm<sup>r</sup> resides[,] to indemnify him afterwards against any Losses he may sustain by the Est. As I have written you verry [sic] fully and am in hopes you may receive this[,] I will not extend this any farther than to express my regret that Mr Neilson should not have returned[.] I am really sorry for your situation but it is totally out of my power to do any thing in this matter

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Watson (c. 1790) Irish immigrant and father-in-law to Andrew Leitch.

farther than on a settlement. If the Balance on settlement should  
overgo the sum supposed to be comeing [sic] viz \$1306, by \$100, then  
all over  
the sum of \$1406 goes to the Heirs or Representatives of M<sup>r</sup> Neilson[.]  
Give my Respects to Miss Hanna[,] Your Uncle Sam<sup>l</sup> & Son just left  
here  
a few days before I received your first letter[.] I settled with him in  
full[.]  
His son was married some time during the last year[.] I will write him  
your situation,<sup>6</sup>

With my Best Respects  
I Remain  
Yours Sincerely  
Andrew Leitch

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<sup>6</sup> This final sentence seems to be addressed to a "Miss Hanna" to whom Leitch wanted MAM to pass on his regards. The remarks appear to answer a letter from Miss Hanna, suggesting that MAM was to pass on the information to her.

123. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 302–03

**Date:** 15 December 1839

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

**Attachment:** A newspaper

15 Dec. 1839.

DEAR MARY, –

I sent you a newspaper to put you in mind of your old friend, my work is now over, thank God, nearly put out of my hand and my poor wife's also, who has had a weary time of it; indeed, I may safely say for the last twelve months, the pen has never been out of her hand, copying, copying, back and forward, until both her heart and fingers were broken.<sup>1</sup> As for me between the various annoyances, and other distressing things I have met, surely no one would believe how I have surmounted them, in my weakness of both mind and body without a single one to help me with their advice, except my own wise woman, and as but for her I could have done nothing, she has indeed been a good fortune to me – having to struggle with every wayward appearance of ill-health, and what was, I believe, worse on her than all, the extreme irritability of my temper, not improved by the many crosses and jostlings I met with in the publication of this herculean task, and a most dreadful task it has been to me all the time; but now it begins to lighten. The entire of the letterpress is finished by Ferguson, and right well he has done it.<sup>2</sup> There is a life and spirit about it now which makes it interesting, as it is itself most entertaining to read. O'Neill's book written by Tom Hughes, has furnished the most delightful stories, which Ferguson has with

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for the Piano Forte* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840).

<sup>2</sup> Sir Samuel Ferguson (10 March 1810–9 August 1886), Irish barrister, poet and antiquarian.

singular dexterity turned and manufactured into a beautiful narrative, altogether novel and simple and racy in a high degree.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sometime around 1810, Thomas Hughes (Bunting's secretary) compiled Arthur O'Neill's memoir.

124. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 303

**Date:** 10 January 1840

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

45 UPPER BAGGOTT ST.,  
Jan. 10, 1840.

Since I wrote you I have found out another main article in Irish music, namely, the extraordinary coincidence between the modulation as described in 1172 by Cambrensis and that now found out by your humble servant, being the identical same as appears in our tunes this day, giving an antiquity to them of nearly seven hundred years. This new discovery followed the one found out in your house, and was consequent on it, so that everything relative to Irish music is known, and the musical people may by this new light shown to them, compose away as much as they please in the Irish style without fear of going wrong. Poor Henry Joy, how he would delight in all this if alive; he comes into my thoughts with many of my old friends very often.<sup>1</sup> How many we have lost within the last twenty years.

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<sup>1</sup> In a footnote, Fox recalls how, "Henry Joy had contributed largely to the literary matter introductory to the 1809 volume." Fox, *Annals*, 303.

**125. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 303–04

**Date:** 25 March 1840

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

March 25th, 1840.

I am better these last few days since I last wrote, and as the prospect brightens of getting my work out soon, I think my health and spirits will improve accordingly. It has indeed been a heavy concern on my mind for two years, and on my wife's also, as she says, and truly, the pen has never been out of her hand for the last two twelve months. However in giving this book to the public my mind is discharged of a weight pressing on it for nearly fifty years; but as to making anything out of it, I have given up the idea, as the cost of getting it out will amount to close on £1000. The book I hope will be published some time in May at furthest.

**126. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 304

**Date:** 9 April 1840

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

April 9th, 1840.

I may make a little fame but no money I fear, and the trouble of bringing out the book to poor Mamma and me has been immense.<sup>1</sup> No one would believe it, and the knowledge of it sets my brain awondering how we accomplished such a mass of downright hard work. It is certain without her active assistance it could never have been done.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mamma" being Mrs Bunting.

127. Edward Bunting [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Fox, *Annals*, 304–05

**Date:** 9 May 1840

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

May 9th, 1840.

My labour at the Irish music is all but closed, which I am sure you are pleased to hear. My very last sheet is now printing off, and we expect to be able to publish in the course of a fortnight to the world. I begin to fear for the sale of it at last, for hitherto I never doubted, but at least we should sell as many in the course of six months as would pay the cost of publication. It now admits of doubt for many reasons; first, the taste for Irish music is on the wane, or rather weaned; and secondly, the price which we must make at £1, 10s. each book, stands much in the way of selling a great number. There are a few ardent lovers of their country whom I think will buy it, but, unfortunately, they are indeed few. We must hope the best, notwithstanding, but the work itself will remain a monument of my unwearied perseverance and industry for nearly fifty years, and I have the satisfaction of reflecting farther, that it could not at any period of the last thirty years have come out half so well, and with so much interest to both the antiquarian and the musician as at present. My discovery of the structure of Irish music, etc., in your house stamps the work with no common interest, which discovery makes the book invaluable. As a celebrated antiquarian here said, now any one may compose Irish tunes.

I have no hopes of its being of benefit to me or my family, the only remuneration I expect is a sort of introduction for Anthony, as the son of a man who toiled so long at the expense of both money, labour, and health. This last I add as I truly think it has in some degree shortened my stay in this world, in trying to restore (as poor Henry Joy said) a page in the history of man. What will that serve me when I shall be asleep in the grave, and very possibly be there before the fatiguing business appears. I may never see it.

**128. Unknown close male friend to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]<sup>1</sup>**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 197

**Date:** 1841

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

We had a good laugh at your expense in reading that part of your epistle where you say 'we middle-aged women.'<sup>2</sup> This for an old lady of 70 years is pretty well (meaning yourself). Indeed, you are so strong and healthy, I don't wonder at your claiming the title of middle aged, though the years on your head are against the assumption.

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<sup>1</sup> McCleery prefaces this letter, "An old and intimate friend rallied her on this subject [of age] in one of his letters in 1841." McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 197.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to unknown male, c. 1841.

129. Dr Madden [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 13 May 1842

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/159

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final manuscript was presumably a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, missing envelope

London  
2 Great Scotland Yard  
Charing Cross  
13 May 1842

[Fol. 1a]

My dear Madam

I rec<sup>d</sup> from my wife the kind letter you were good enough to address to me at Dublin, and beg to return you my best thanks for the information contained in it.<sup>1</sup> The painful subject I have undertaken to throw some light on, I am indebted to at least for one pleasurable feeling[,] that of making the acquaintance of some persons, amongst the most estimable I have met with[.] [T]he tender feelings of affection for your poor brother, which have so long outlived the object of it, those amiable qualities ^which^ are indications of so much singleness of heart[,] gentleness of mind and benevolence of disposition[,] shrinking[,] as it were[,] from the display of that noble spirit of heroism and faithful attachment to that dear[,] dear ~~and~~ brother and his unfortunate friend[,] so strikingly exhibited in the

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Madden [Dublin], April/May 1842.

last sad offices of friendship to  
both, these have indeed made on  
me a deep impression.

[A]nd perhaps to one who has seen  
much of mankind, and mingled  
with those whose natures were

too much "of this earth earthly,"  
the rare encounter of other qualities  
of a noble kind which deems to  
realise the day dreams of one[']s  
earlier years[,] that ~~feminine~~  
excellent ^of dispositions[,]^ devoid of all selfishness[,]  
devoted to all goodness, capable of all  
sacrifices, and constant in all  
trials[,] that shakes not in adversity  
and becomes insensible to fear  
in the cause of friends and kindred  
in the time of trouble – [P]erhaps  
these combinations in one whose only  
study ~~seems to be~~ ^is^ to do good  
and who seems to be unconscious of it[,]  
~~of so doing~~ may appear singularly  
worthy of admiration and respect  
and such in truth are the  
~~sentiments I entertain for~~  
~~which the character~~  
~~of Mary McCracken has~~  
~~left. Has impressed me with.~~  
sentiments which in my mind  
are associated with the name  
of Mary McCracken [End]

[Fol. 1b]

### 130. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 19 May 1842

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/692

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, crossed letter, missing envelope, possible missing folios

**Attachment 1:** A letter addressed to John Shaw of Belfast purporting to come from the French vessel, the Augereau bringing help to the rebels (see section 5.2.1)

**Attachment 2:** A poem by Dr Drennan in Mary Ann's hand (see section 5.2.4 below)

**Missing attachment:** A handbill of Doctor Reynolds

[Fol. 1a]

On reading Mr Russell[']s speech you will observe that ↵  
he mentions a book which he had been engaged in  
writing for some time, the subject was the Revelations  
and which he requested three days to complete – This  
book ^requesting it should be given to his sister^ he gave[,] before his  
death[,] to the Rev<sup>d</sup> Taylor Trevor  
who was I think, Inspector of the Prisons at that time[.]  
[T]he book was accompanied by a letter, the book she  
never received, and I heard about a year or two ago  
that it had[,] by some means[,] fallen into the hands of  
a Mr Dubourdieu[,]<sup>1</sup> whose father<sup>2</sup> some fifty, or sixty  
years ago kept a classical school in Lisburn[,] at which  
the sons of the late[,] respected Luke Teeling were  
educated, ^and^ whose address Mr Charles Teeling can  
give you, no doubt [you] have met with him[,] he lives

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<sup>1</sup> Reverend John Dubourdieu (c.1755–1839), Rector of Annahilt, topographer and author. His books include, *Statistical survey of the county of Down* (1802) and *Statistical survey of the county of Antrim* (1812).

<sup>2</sup> Reverend Saumarez Dubourdeiu (1716–14 December 1812), clergyman of the Parish Church of Lisburn, Minister of the French Protestant Church of Lisburn, Vicar of the Parish of Glenavy and Master of Classical School of Lisburn.

some place in the neighbourhood of Dublin —<sup>3</sup> I wrote shortly after Mr Russell[']s death to Mr Joy making three requests,<sup>4</sup> one was that the £100 which St John Mason had given to the Turnkey should be given to Miss Russell (that is, that he should endeavour to have done) also that he would procure leave for the fulfilment of Mr Russell's wish to have his remains

removed to Dublin and lastly, that he would procure the pa [Fol. 1b]  
-pers principally consisting of copies of letters, written to different friends, and a journal which he had kept while in India, which I thought[,] with the book and such a history of his life as these[,] with ~~his sister~~^the^ information that his sister could give[,] might be published to raise ^a fund^ for Miss Russell[']s support, but did not succeed. I understood from the answer I got, that the publication of his life would no[t]<sup>5</sup> be encouraged or sanctioned, that the removal of his remains might be allowed after some time, but not then, and that when he spoke to Mr Mason on the subject of the money[,] that he said he believed it had been intended as ^for^ a bribe; which however[,] did not entitle those at the head of affairs to use it as if it had been their own[.] I had a letter (and think it is some place among my pa[-] pers as I never destroy any) which Miss Russell gave to Mr Ramsey, from Mr Mason to her, saying that he ^was^ bound to her for the payments of an hundred pounds should ~~that~~ ^it^ not be recovered, this however he never did pay, he ~~was~~ afterwards became insolvent & is long

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<sup>3</sup> The absence of punctuation in this sentence led Madden to believe that Mr Dubourdiou lived in Dublin, when in fact MAM was referring to CHT. See: Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 274.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter from MAM to Counsellor Henry Joy, post 21 October 1803. Grizzel Joy's letter to MAM reports on her brother's progress with these requests. See Letter 84 (TCD MS873/678).

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

since dead[.]<sup>6</sup> [A]s to the removal of his body[,] M<sup>r</sup> Ramsey  
told me that he did not expect it to be done until the  
country was free, [for] which both he & my brother Harry died[.]  
[Fol. 1a, crossed]<sup>7</sup> ↵  
afterwards send you details of those parts that you may wish to  
publish –  
Miss Teeling has a likeness[,] a miniature of her brother Barth<sup>8</sup>  
who suffered in Dublin in '98 & M<sup>r</sup> Finlay<sup>9</sup> of the Whig told me that  
there is a M<sup>rs</sup> Rushwood of Downpatrick, I think she keeps the Inn  
there[,]  
at least her Mother did[,] who has a likeness of Thomas Addis  
Emmet[.]<sup>10</sup>  
I send you another fragment of the french letter[,] signed commander  
of the Augereau Luggier[,] of which I gave you a part[.]<sup>11</sup> [A]lso a  
handbill  
of Doctor Reynolds[,]<sup>12</sup> who afterwards made his escape to America &  
came

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<sup>6</sup> This is incorrect as Madden wrote to St. John Mason on the matter and received a reply from him at Bath, dated, 7 June 1843 (TCD MS873/572). Madden makes reference to this correspondence within *United Irishmen*, beginning a sentence relating to the matter, "Mr St. John Mason recently informed me." Madden *United Irishmen* Third Series, vol 2, 240.

<sup>7</sup> This cross-written folio opens mid-sentence, suggesting that there are folios missing.

<sup>8</sup> Bartholomew Teeling.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Dalzell Finlay (12 July 1793–10 September 1857), Irish journalist, founder and proprietor of Belfast's *Northern Whig* newspaper.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet (24 April 1764–14 November 1827), elder brother of Robert Emmet, United Irishman, Irish barrister, American politician and New York State Attorney General from August 1812 until February 1813.

<sup>11</sup> See section 5.2.1.

<sup>12</sup> Doctor James Reynolds (c. 1765–1808), physician and United Irishman who fled to America in 1794 where he continued to practice medicine and became an anti-Federalist journalist.

by Belfast and the lines of Drennan's<sup>13</sup> which you wished for[,] which  
I think

I forgot to send with my last –<sup>14</sup> I forgot to mention that Mr Russell w<sup>d</sup>  
not have allowed counsel to have him engaged on his behalf but that  
he

hoped ~~that~~ it might be useful to the other prisoners[,] his own life he  
knew was forfeited by returning to the country – I am most anxious  
to know if you have found Mr Stevenson & whether the papers are  
likely

to be recovered, also if I can do any ~~also~~ ^thing more^ likely to elicit  
truth – J. Hope is

busy preparing his account, his truth may be depended on –

I have been tediously minute but I wished [to] make you thoroughly  
acquain[-]

ted with all circumstances[.] I have waited till now in vain for  
information

[Fol. 1b, crossed] ↙

about the burying ground[,] perhaps I may yet obtain it & if I do shall  
forward it without delay and remain dear Sir

Yours Respectfully

Mary Ann McCracken

19<sup>th</sup> May 1842

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<sup>13</sup> Doctor William Drennan (23 May 1754–5 February 1820) of Belfast, physician, poet, a founding member of the United Irishmen, editor of the *Belfast Monthly Magazine* and a founder of Belfast Academical Institution. See Jean Agnew and Maria Luddy, ed., *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, (3 vols, Dublin, Women's History Project in association with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1998–1999).

<sup>14</sup> See section 5.2.4.

131. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 6 and 7 January 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/94

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

**Missing attachment 1:** An unspecified edition of the *Northern Star* newspaper

**Missing attachment 2:** A section of an unspecified edition of *The Belfast New Letter*

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 6<sup>th</sup> January 1843

80 Donegall Street

My Dear Sir

I should ere this have thanked you for your very kind letter of 29<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup><sup>2</sup> but that the well meant attention of friends has left me very little time at my own disposal and ^I^ beg to assure you that I feel much indebted for your sympathy[,] expressed in such flattering terms –<sup>3</sup> There is a mutual attraction in a similarity of tastes and feelings, that frequently renders long acquaintance unnecessary in forming a firm friendship, and thus I feel happy in being allowed to rank a gentleman I esteem so highly among the number of my valued friends – In addition to the kind sympathy of friends[,] we enjoy the highest consolation our loss admits of, and that is, the certainty that ~~he~~ ^whom^ we lament was perfectly prepared for the awful event, and quite resigned, resting on the sure anchor of hope that we can never fail; so that, ~~so that~~ ^we^ feel assured

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<sup>1</sup> "Acc<sup>t</sup> of Death of Francis McCracken."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], 29 September 1842.

<sup>3</sup> Francis McCracken died on 22 December 1842.

that our loss is his great gain – After you left Belfast[,] his strength declined slowly, but visibly, but his patience and gentleness continued till the last, about ten days <sup>^or less^</sup> before, his sailmaking apprentices asked permission to visit him which was granted, they came in a body, he

received them cordially, shook hands with them all, and ordered each ~~of them~~ a new pair of trousers of his best manufacture – On friday 16 Dec<sup>r</sup> he wrote a note on business, also a certificate on the back of one of his apprentice's indentures, both without spectacles, but had suffered for some days from extreme exhaustion which rendered him restless, but not fretful[.] [O]n sunday 18<sup>th</sup> he suffered much from difficulty of breathing and at one time the phglem [sic] had nearly choked him, the two following nights he breathed quite freely[.] [M]onday 19<sup>th</sup> was the last day he came to the drawing room, on that day[,] after being dressed, he was obliged to lie down in bed for three or four hours before he could come farther – On Wednesday night he breathed with much difficulty, and in the morning wished to rise in the hope of finding ease, he was accordingly raised, wrapped in a blanket and placed in his easy chair until his bed was made, to which he was glad to return; he complained no more, but seemed to breath with somewhat less difficulty[.] [H]is last words were in prayer[,] about an hour it might be[,] before he breathed his last – [H]e still appeared sensible and on the bedclothes being raised off his chest, lest the pressure might be painful, he drew in his hands[,] crossing them on his breast and closing his lips and eyes, ceased to breath without a struggle – [S]uch a peaceful transition from this to another (and I trust a better) world[,] robs death of half its terrors, filling the mind with a sacred awe that raises it above the triffling concerns of this world to fix

[Fol. 2a]

it on that which has no end – Another cause of thankfulness on the present occasion is that my dear Maria's health has not suffered by her long attendance and want of rest, as I feared ~~she~~ it would, particularly as for the last few nights she never went to bed, and exerted herself beyond her strength[,] as I thought, in assisting her uncle as his weakness increased, her quickness of thought and action leaving nothing for another to do, but she

said her strength increased with the necessity for making use of it, and while she is spared to me I possess a treasure for which I can hardly be sufficiently thankful – In all the various trials I have experienced[,] I have always been sensible that I still had ^many^ blessings demanding ^my utmost^ gratitude to the Great

Dispenser of events, and

I trust I have been and still am grateful –

I saw our worthy friend James Hope two days ago, he is extremely anxious about your forthcoming volumes respecting the North, lest

there should be any inaccuracy, or any thing admitting of misrepresentation,

there is something of the latter[,] he said[,] respecting Newell's

death[,] he said[,] which a man of his acquaintance misunderstood

until he explained it. He therefore wishes he were beside you

and would have you in the Dublin Steamer for that purpose had

this season of the year been favourable but as he cannot[,] he

wishes you could let him have either the proof sheets or manuscript

to look over[,] previous to being published – The Northern

Star which you wished for[,] I found among the rejected papers and

shall send it you together with a part of a Belfast News Letter of

an old date containing a good article signed[,] Common Sense[,]

which

marks the spirit of time in which it was published – I hope in

eight or ten days I shall have leisure to make a more thorough

search among my old papers to see if I can find any thing [Fol. 2b]

interesting and shall give you all I can recollect of Russell's

letters and conversation, to make you acquainted with his character –

Saturday 7 – I this morning received the Morning Register<sup>4</sup>

which you were so kind as to send and am inexpressibly surprized

at the extraordinary and inexplicable treatment you have experienced

from the present Government. I hope however[,] you will

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<sup>4</sup> *Dublin Morning Register* (1824 – 43), daily Whig newspaper founded by Michael Staunton.

meet with justice when the matter is brought before Parliament[.]<sup>5</sup>  
With best wishes for your welfare and happiness[,] in which  
my niece Maria unites[.] I remain dear sir[,]

Your much obliged friend  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

I forgot to mention a trifling inaccuracy in the  
Proprietors of the Northern Star[;] both the Simms's  
are still living tho' W<sup>m</sup>[,] the youngest[,] is now in  
a state of dotage[.] M<sup>c</sup>Nairn should have been  
M<sup>c</sup>Ilveen; and M<sup>c</sup>Cleering, M<sup>c</sup>Cleery[.]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In 1840, British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, appointed Madden to investigate slave related activities on the West Coast of Africa. Madden's ensuing *West African Report*, exposed links between British commerce and the slave trade. The report was presented to parliament in 1842 by which time the government had changed from Whig to Conservative. This new government set up a Select Committee to investigate the report with the West African merchant, Matthew Forster as chair. Forster attacked Madden both publicly and privately and disregarded the report. See Richard Robert Madden, *The Memoirs (chiefly autobiographical) from 1798–1886, of Richard Robert Madden*, ed. Thomas More Madden (London: Ward & Downey, 1891), 113–16.

<sup>6</sup> "Death of Fran<sup>s</sup>/ M<sup>c</sup>Cracken."

132. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 1 April 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/666

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a, missing envelope

Belfast 1<sup>st</sup> Ap 1843  
80 Donegall St

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Sir

Thursday's post brought me a parcel from Cap<sup>t</sup> Russell for you, which he sent this way to save time, expecting you would be in Belfast by this to receive it –<sup>1</sup> [T]his parcel contained minia-  
tures of his grandfather Russ-  
ell,<sup>2</sup> and his Uncle Ambrose;<sup>3</sup>  
also a watercolour likeness of himself which is neither a striking, nor a pleasing resem-  
-blance – [T]here is also a picture which he got from you, which I cannot think had ever been

intended for T. Russell, as it has not the most distant re-  
semblance to him; no two faces

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> JAR.

<sup>2</sup> Captain John Russell (c. 1720 – December 1792), TR's father, British army lieutenant and a captain of invalids at Kilmainham's Royal Hospital.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Ambrose Russell (c. 1756 – 1793), TR's elder brother and captain in the 52nd Regiment.

could be more entirely unlike,  
both in features and expression.  
I saw a likeness of Sir Sydney  
Smith, some years ago, which ap-  
peared to me at the time, to  
have a considerable resem-  
blance to Mr Russell's profile[.]<sup>4</sup>  
Capt<sup>n</sup> Russell is apprehen-  
sive that you may not under-  
stand what he means in re-  
questing you to avoid family  
matters, in your account of ~~your~~ <sup>his</sup>  
uncle, he says "tho' no two bro-  
thers could love each other more  
truly, his father never agreed  
with T.R" in his Irish political

views, nor of the part he took there<sup>5</sup>  
in, and that there can be no use,  
or good, in entering into family  
history, either of his father or  
his aunt Margaret, as they  
had nothing to do with T.R  
politically, their private his-  
tory, or family circumstances  
can be of no public interest,  
& therefore it is, that he stipu-  
lated with you, that you should  
avoid entering into them, & as

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith (21 June 1764 – 26 May 1840), British naval officer who fought in the American Revolutionary War, the French revolutionary wars and served in the Royal Swedish Navy against Russia. Between 1802 and 1806, he was MP for the Admiralty borough of Rochester and later campaigned against slavery. See: Edward Howard and Williams Sidney Smith, *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, K. C. B., &c.: In Two Volumes* (London: Bentley, 1839).

<sup>5</sup> Captain John Russell (c.1748–c.1812), TR's brother and JAR's father. Poet, playwright and literary translator who left Ireland in 1792 to pursue a writing career in London after the failure of his first marriage. There he was involved in radical politics and was subsequently arrested in connection with Emmet's failed rising of 1803 but was later released as no evidence could be found against him. See James Quinn, "Thomas Russell," in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, vol. 8, 664.

you are a man of honour, he  
knows you will abstain – [B]esides[,]  
the mentioning his father's  
name, or affairs in such a work  
might be prejudicial to him,  
but more of this when we meet  
which I hope will be soon –  
You will[,] I am sure[,] be glad

to learn that our affairs are winding  
up much better than was expect-  
ed, we have got the Ropewalk let  
so as to produce us a comfortable  
independence, & tho I could not  
but regret, when it was going out  
of the family, that it did not pass  
into the hands of the liberal par-  
ty, yet the gentleman<sup>6</sup> who has taken  
it, is highly esteemed by all who  
know him[,] whatever may be their  
politics, & he has acted liberally,  
kindly, & even generously to us;  
you see I look on you as a friend  
who takes an interest in our wel-  
fare – We are to leave Donegall St  
& expect to be fixed in ~~fixed in~~ our  
new habitation N<sup>o</sup>7 Queen St, be-  
fore the end of the present month,  
but whether ^there^ or here, we shall be  
most happy to see you, and would be  
glad to know when we may ex-  
pect that pleasure – Joined by Maria  
in kind regards[,] I remain dear Sir[,]  
yours most truly

M. A. McCracken

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> Mr Abbot.

**133. John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 15 April 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/658

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

Carlisle<sup>1</sup> 15 Ap<sup>l</sup> 43

[Fol. 1a]

My dear Miss M'Cracken

Mary<sup>2</sup> & myself were truly grieved to find by your letter of 9 Feb that you had lost your good & dear Brother —<sup>3</sup> [I]n cases of the sort, words can afford no consolation, therefore I shall only say Mary & myself sympathize with you & Miss Maria in your feelings most sincerely & are glad to find that you both now enjoy good health & long may you continue to do so — By this morning's

post I received a letter from the Rev<sup>d</sup> Joseph D'Arcy Sirr, dated from, Kilcoleman Parsonage[,] Claremorris —<sup>4</sup> [He] stated he had

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Carlisle, England.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Russell, JAR's wife.

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to JAR [Carlisle], 9 February 1843. This letter contained the news of Francis McCracken's death.

<sup>4</sup> Reverend Joseph D'Arcy Sirr (1794–5 April 1868), eldest son of Major Henry Charles Sirr, educated at TCD, rector of Kilcolman parish, Claremorris in County Mayo, Vicar of Yoxford, Suffolk, rector of Morestead in Winchester and author.

only just received my letter &  
regretted it was not in his  
power to gratify my affection  
by restoring the portrait of J.R.  
or even by furnishing any clue  
which might lead to the recovery  
of it, & says, ["I am sorry for your  
sake to be obliged to inform you  
that to the best of my belief it never  
was in my dear Father's possession,  
certainly not in his private cus-  
tody"- [H]e then refers me to a Mr  
Michael Farrell[,] 12. Upp<sup>r</sup> Camden

Street[,] Dublin, who was Chief Police  
Officer at the time I referred to -<sup>5</sup>  
[T]he time was 1813-14 & if I remem[-]  
ber, Collier<sup>6</sup> was the name of the  
Leader of the Band \_\_\_\_\_" -  
He [---] may be likely to retain  
some recollection on the sub[-]  
ject -  
He then says that he has  
a great number of legal papers  
which seem to have belonged to  
T. R. "as they were thrown aside  
with a heap of other documents, now  
the property of the College - These I  
have kept in order to restore to any  
relative of his whom I should  
be able to find - [T]hey are in themselves[,]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Farrell, Chief Constable of Dublin from c.1812 to 1841/42, who later emigrated to Australia with his family.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Collier (1780-13 August 1849), notorious Irish highwayman who, in 1812, held up the "Newry Fly" coach, robbing Mrs Mary Ann Hamilton (JAR's half sister), of a portrait of her uncle TR. Collier was subsequently arrested and transported to Australia. However, he was released on the condition that he join the British army and after promotion, was discharged allowing him to return to Ireland, allegedly a changed man. He settled in Navan and is said to have sheltered men on the run. Other reports tell of him running a pub in County Meath. It was posthumously discovered that he had worked as a spy in the Secret Service of Dublin Castle.

I should judge[,] of no value, cer<sup>y</sup>  
not be worth the cost of transmission  
but I will take some opportunity

of sending them to any friend in  
Dublin to whom you may direct  
me[.] “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” a friend of mine[,] whom  
I regret to say is an admirer  
of your poor father’s political  
principles[,] purposes to become  
his biographer.<sup>7</sup> I will direct  
him to communicate with  
you.” [H]e calls him my  
Father in another part of the  
letter which I have nearly trans[-]  
cribed – [N]ow who can this friend  
of his be – [D]oes he mean  
Dr Madden? I fancy not –  
Now I will write to him &  
direct him to send these  
papers to my Tailor, who [End]

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>7</sup> Reverend Sirr is referring to Sir John Gray (13 July 1815–9 April 1875), who was born in Sirr’s parish of Claremorris. He was a doctor, proprietor of the *Freeman’s Journal*, Chairman of the Dublin Corporation Water Works Committee, Liberal MP for Kilkenny City in 1865 and was involved in O’Connell’s Repeal Association.

**134. John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 23 April 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/662

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** Watermark, missing envelope

**Attachment 1:** A letter from Dr Gray [Dublin] to John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] (See section 5.2.5 below)

**Attachment 2:** A letter of reply from Russell [Carlisle] to Dr Gray [Dublin] (See section 5.2.6 below)

Carlisle 23 April

[Fol. 1a]

My dear Miss M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Enclosed you will find a letter from a Doctor Gray of Dublin to me <sup>-1</sup> My answer, if you think proper[,] you can shew both to D<sup>r</sup> Madden, for I have used his name in my an[-]swer <sup>-2</sup> If the sole object of both these gentlemen is[,] as it must be[,] to obtain every information in their power, relative to the Political history of Tho<sup>s</sup> R., it seems to me that<sup>3</sup> much might be gained if this M<sup>r</sup> Gray would send me all the

papers & documents with the view of my communicating the

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> See section 5.2.5.

<sup>2</sup> See section 5.2.6.

<sup>3</sup> "me, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

public parts of them to D<sup>r</sup> Madden  
& also if these gentlemen could  
become acquainted, as then  
some more interesting circumstances  
might be elicited –

I have written to M<sup>r</sup> Sirr & sent  
the address of a person in Dublin  
to whom he can forward the  
papers he holds – & I hope  
soon to receive them –

When you have read the  
letters you can return them  
at your convenience –<sup>4</sup>

Mary joins me in kind

wishes & regards to yourself  
& Miss Maria & with our  
best wishes, believe me to be[,]  
my dear Miss M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Ever yours truly

John A. Russell

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> MAM evidently forwarded these letters to Madden however, they were not returned to JAR.

135. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** Prior to and including 5 October 1843<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/693

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a, missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

<sup>3</sup>Should I fall and my country deem my services of any moment, I request my debts may be paid ~~from up~~ amounting to between four<sup>4</sup> and five<sup>5</sup> hundred pounds[,] principally incurred for it, and that my body may be laid in <sup>^the^</sup> same ground<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Letter 131 (TCD MS873/94), dated 6 January 1843, MAM tells Madden, "I hope in eight or ten days I shall have leisure to make a more thorough search among my old papers to see if I can find any thing interesting and shall give you all I can recollect of Russell's letters and conversation, to make you acquainted with his character." Although this letter was written, in part, on 5 October (as indicated on Fol. 2b), it is evidently a follow up to this intention, albeit, nine months later from originally planned. See also section 5.4.2, in which MAM recounts the same TR letters to Madden from her memory.

<sup>2</sup> "Thomas Russell ~~from Miss McCracken/~~ The following <sup>^lines^</sup> were written by T.R at the period of his embarking in the insurrection/ of 1803 and were ~~carried about by him~~ <sup>^found among the papers he left^</sup> when he went on his last unfortunate expedition/ in the north. These papers came into the possession of his faithful friend Miss McCracken/ they remained in her hands for many years but <sup>^several of them^</sup> were stolen from her/ ~~intended to be found in the pocket of Russell/~~ by a dishonest servant some years ago. Such portions of the <sup>^of[f] cast^</sup> documents as she/ ~~should he fall in the field -/~~ has a perfect recollection of - she was good enough to communicate to me. [T]he following extract is given by her from memory - from the first paper referred to."

<sup>3</sup> <sup>^^</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> ~~four~~ <sup>^three^</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>5</sup> ~~five~~ <sup>^four^</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>6</sup> ~~ground~~ <sup>^grave^</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

where<sup>7</sup> my parents are laid<sup>8</sup> (I forget the name of the place but I think it is mentioned in his speech in<sup>9</sup> Dublin, and I think he added)<sup>10</sup> I may have committed faults for which I beg<sup>11</sup> pardon<sup>12</sup>, but I did all for the best.<sup>13</sup> I cannot recollect whether his name was added in only the initials but I suppose his name was in full –<sup>14</sup>

The following<sup>15</sup> I received by a man going<sup>16</sup> to Dublin for instructions; it was written in blue<sup>17</sup> apparently such as is used in doing up linen[.]<sup>18</sup>

<sup>19</sup>I hope your spirits are not depressed by a temporary damp, in consequence of the recent failure. Of this I beg you to be assured that of ultimate success I am still certain<sup>20</sup> & the cause I will<sup>21</sup> more relinquish – [W]ill you give the

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<sup>7</sup> ~~where~~ ^in which^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>8</sup> ~~laid~~ ^buried^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>9</sup> ^I believe it was^ ~~but I think it is mentioned in his speech/ in~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>10</sup> Bracketed text is MAM's own comment.

<sup>11</sup> ^to be^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>12</sup> ^ed^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>13</sup> ^^ [Madden ed., ink]. The text placed within quotation marks is quoted by Madden within *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 224–25.

<sup>14</sup> ~~I cannot recollect whether his/ name was added in only the initials but I suppose/ his name was in full-~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>15</sup> ^note Miss McCracken says^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>16</sup> ~~man going~~ ^messenger of his who passed thro Belfast on his way^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>17</sup> ^dissolved in water^ [Madden ed., ink]. Blue, later known as 'laundry blue,' was a starch used for whitening cloth.

<sup>18</sup> ~~doing up linen~~ ^washing.^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>19</sup> ^^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>20</sup> ~~eer/~~ ^cer^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>21</sup> ^never^ [Madden ed., ink].

bearer two guineas & either write to[,] or draw on \_\_\_ & he<sup>22</sup>  
will pay you – ~~with some of the causes of the~~ [D]o not shew  
this to any creature but your sister – With some of the

causes of the failure I am still ignorant, others I [Fol. 1b]  
know and shall inform you of them<sup>23</sup> when we meet  
if that pleasure be reserved for me – Burn this  
when you have read it –<sup>24</sup> I did so after having<sup>25</sup>  
read it several times so as to imprint it on  
my memory – I was much gratified ~~at~~ by his de-  
licacy & propriety in joining my<sup>26</sup> sister & me  
together,<sup>27</sup> it shewed<sup>28</sup> knowledge of our characters  
& feelings – [H]is last letter to his sister Miss  
Margaret Russell[,] who I think must have been  
~~I should think~~ about fifteen years older than him<sup>29</sup>  
or perhaps more<sup>30</sup> and when he described in a letter  
to a friend ~~to a friend~~ ^to whom he recommended her^ when leaving  
Fort George  
as “having always<sup>31</sup> trained him in the paths of  
religion & virtue” commenced thus[:]<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> ~~& he~~ / ^who^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>23</sup> ^,^ ~~them~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>24</sup> See Letter 66.

<sup>25</sup> ^^ ^ ~~I did so after having~~ ^Miss McCracken observes “I did so as he desired with  
this note, having^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>26</sup> ~~in joining my~~ ^in the mention made of my^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>27</sup> ~~& me~~ / together [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>28</sup> ^some^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>29</sup> ~~him~~ ^he was^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>30</sup> ~~or perhaps more~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>31</sup> always [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>32</sup> ~~commenced thus~~ ^was unfortunately among the lost letters, it commenced/ in  
these terms:^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>33</sup>My Ever Dear Sister

I write this on the day [...]

on which I am to die.<sup>34</sup> [H]e then went on exhorting<sup>35</sup> her to bear the affecting desperation like a christian in language the most tenderly<sup>36</sup> affectionate, ^the^ most piously consoling,<sup>37</sup> directing her for comfort to the hopes & promises of the

gospel and encouraging<sup>38</sup> to look forward to their meeting in a better world where God would wipe all tears from their eyes – I shall never cease to regret the loss of this letter,<sup>39</sup> it was at once edifying and affecting[,] shewing the character of an affectionate relative, an ardent patriot & a devoted christian[.] ^[H]e concluded with a prayer for her happiness^ – [H]is letter to myself<sup>40</sup> was ~~some~~ in a similar style, it began thus, “To<sup>41</sup> the more than friendship I owe to you & to you and to your sister[,] it is impossible to be sufficiently grateful. In regard to what you have sent, I had more than enough as Mr Ramsey can tell –<sup>42</sup> I remember no more

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>33</sup> ^^^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>34</sup> ^^^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>35</sup> [~~H]e then went on exhort/ ing~~ ^The tenor of it says M<sup>c</sup>Cracken was to exhort^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>36</sup> [tender]ty ^and^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>37</sup> ^and pious,^ ~~the most piously consoling,~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>38</sup> ^her^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>39</sup> Missing letter, TR [Downpatrick Gaol] to Margaret Russell [Belfast], 21 October 1803.

<sup>40</sup> See Letter 76 (TCD MS873/642).

<sup>41</sup> ~~To~~ ^For^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>42</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

but, a that,<sup>43</sup> It may be satisfactory to know that I was not betrayed, accident alone led to my apprehension.<sup>44</sup> And at the conclusion he said, I<sup>45</sup> need not recommended my sister to you.<sup>46</sup> [H]e could not have recommended her in stronger terms and<sup>47</sup> I had the high gratification of being serviceable to the good old Lady who was truly deserving of all that could be done for her. [H]is letter concluded<sup>48</sup>with his blessing –

I think I gave you a copy of ^a note^ the few lines<sup>49</sup> he wrote [Fol. 2b]<sup>50</sup>in court addressed to M<sup>r</sup> Cole relative to his funeral<sup>51</sup> “Should M<sup>r</sup> Ramsey be too much engaged to attend my funeral & M<sup>r</sup> Cole be in town[,] may I beg he will undertake that office & either of them inform my sister of the event” – [P]erhaps I gave you copies of these before -<sup>52</sup> [D]id I give you copies of the lines that were written on the death of Elizabeth Gray by

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<sup>43</sup> ~~that~~, ^these words - “^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>44</sup> ^^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>45</sup> I/ ^^I^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>46</sup> ^^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>47</sup> and [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>48</sup> ^to me^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>49</sup> ~~I think I gave you a copy of ^a note^ the few lines~~ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>50</sup> ^a note^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>51</sup> ~~funeral~~ ^funeral/ in these words^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>52</sup> See section 5.4.2.

Doctor Drummond<sup>53</sup> & also by Miss Balfour –<sup>54</sup>  
 In M<sup>r</sup> Russell's last letter to myself he said[,] in  
 reference to the wish & intention which my sister &  
 I had of going to see him, that "he was glad we did  
 not<sup>55</sup> as it might injure us, & could not benefit him[.]"  
 [W]e thought it might gratify his sister[.]  
 Oct<sup>r</sup> 5 – I have got the letters from M<sup>rs</sup> Templeton[,]<sup>56</sup>  
 that is[,] the correspondence between M<sup>r</sup> Russell &  
 M<sup>r</sup> Templeton which she gives you free liberty  
 to make any use of you think proper[,] only to re-  
 turn them safely when you have done with them[.]  
 M<sup>rs</sup> Templeton will make a further search  
 & if she can find any more of T.R. letters they  
 shall be forwarded Doctor Madden [End]

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<sup>53</sup> William Hamilton Drummond (August 1778–16 October 1865), non-subscribing Presbyterian minister, poet, author and controversialist who married MAM's second cousin Barbara Joy on 28 February 1801.

<sup>54</sup> ~~perhaps I gave you/ copies of these before – [D]id I give you copies of the/ -lines that were written on the death of Elizabeth Gray by/ Doctor Drummond & also by Miss Balfour –~~ [Madden ed., ink].

Mary Balfour's poem "Nancy of the Branching Tresses," on the subject of Elizabeth Gray's death, is cited within Siobhán Kilfeather, "Mary Balfour (1780–1819)," in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* 5, ed. Angela Bourke *et al* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 828.

<sup>55</sup> ^come^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>56</sup> Katherine Templeton née Johnstone (1773–28 December 1868), wife of John Templeton.

136. Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 18 November 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/627

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, ruled paper, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 1b,<sup>1</sup> missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Ballysallagh Nov 18<sup>th</sup> 1843

Dear Madam

I received your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> and shall be happy to give you any information that is in my power but indeed[,] it is little that you are not already acquainted with[.]<sup>3</sup> Captain Russel[1] was brought to our house by a young tradesman[,] then working in Belfast[,] a distant relation of mine and who knew well the integrity of my husband[,] his name was Martin[.] I cannot tell whither he is at present alive or dead[,] nor do I know under what circumstances he found the captain[.] [T]hey were accompanied by two ~~other~~ other gentlemen, one[,] a stranger whose name I have forgot[,] the

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<sup>1</sup> Although the binding does cover some words and characters, the paper is transparent enough to be able to discern them.

<sup>2</sup> "In the following interesting letter of Mrs Rabb to Miss McCracken/ many particulars will be found which dispose of portion of the/ mass of fabrications concerning Russell's Movements in the North, in M<sup>c</sup>Skimmin's/ Statement."

<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh], 11 November 1843.

other[,] David Lyons[.]<sup>4</sup> [T]hey were all very much fatigued[;] it was  
very late[.] [M]y  
husband got up and let them in[,] gave them bread and cheese and left  
them[.]  
[H]ow they spent the night I cannot tell[;] they had only one bed for  
the four[.]  
[A]fter a late breakfast next day[,] the other three went across the  
country to Holly=  
=wood[,] walked into Belfast and no notice was taken of them[.]  
Russel[l] remained  
and under the circumstances[,] appeared wonderfully contented[.]  
[A]ll who knew Russel[l]  
knew him to be enthusiastic in the cause in which he had embarked  
but few know  
so well as I did[,] how incredulous he was as to the hopelessness of it  
at that time. [A]t first  
he would not believe any of the communications he got from Belfast[,]  
he said it  
was impossible but when he was assured from the Newspaper that  
Emmet was a  
prisoner[,] he was convinced[.] [H]e immediately resolved on going to  
Dublin as he said  
he was certain[,] if there[,] he would find means to release him[.] [W]e  
all know how this  
ended[,] you yourself provided the money ^that^ took him there[.]  
[M]y husband got two men in  
Bangor named Campbel that he could depend upon to take him  
round in an open

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

Boat[;] he gave them five guineas[.] I was very much surprised to hear  
that he  
had given himself up so quietly to Mayor Sirr[.] [O]ne night[,] in our  
house[,] this  
suspicious character passed the window[;] had you seen the stern  
Majesty with which

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<sup>4</sup> David Lyons. See Letter 83 (PRONI D2930/3/2/1).

<sup>5</sup> "from Mrs Rabb."

he got up Pistol in hand to receive him[,] you would have thought it  
 strange indeed  
 that he gave himself up without resistance to any man – [W]hen so  
 high a reward  
 was published for his apprehension and posted on every corner  
 around us[,] he said it  
 was neither safe for him nor us[,] his being with us any longer[,] [H]e  
 asked had we no  
 friend that we could trust who would shelter him a few days till the  
 Boat would be  
 ready[,] James M<sup>c</sup>Cutcheon of Craigavad[,] whose first wife was sister  
 to my husband[,]  
 was such a friend[,]<sup>6</sup> [H]e went there for a few days[,] I mention this  
 as M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cutcheon is  
 alive[,] is an intelegent [sic] man and could perhaps give some traits of  
 character better  
 ^than I can.^ [H]e left his Military coat with us[,] we took it down  
 the night that he sailed and  
 bid him farewell as he step[p]ed onto the Boat – [H]e told me that[,]  
 since his last  
 arrival in Ireland[,] he had been through the principal part of it in  
 disguise and had  
 ascertained that there was only eighteen thousand regular troops in  
 it[,] I reminded  
 ^him^ of the Militia and yeomen & he said[,] were they not  
 Irishmen[?] [L]et us once gain a  
 Battle and they will soon fly to our standard[,] [T]he yeomen might  
 have proved  
 good friends but they were admitted[,] on all hands[,] to be bad  
 enemies – [H]e said he had  
 travelled a day in a stage coach while in disguise with a Lady from  
 Belfast with whom  
 he had often danced and she did not know him...[F]rom my son[,]  
 yesterday[,] you will  
 learn that I have lost my husband[,] [I]ndeed[,] I now feel as if alone in  
 the world[,] [I]f we live to<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> James M<sup>c</sup>Cutcheon of Craigavad.

<sup>7</sup> “Y<sup>rs</sup> truly / Nelly Rabb” [Madden ed., ink insert].

Summer I should be very much gratified if you and your niece would  
take a drive down to see  
me[,] we could then talk over old times[.] I am very much pleased  
with your kindness in sending  
me Doctor Madden[']s history[.] Ireland owes him a debt of gratitude  
for rescuing from oblivion  
and[,] I may say[,] obliging the memory of some of her best and  
Bravest sons – [W]hen I send this  
volume home[,] I hope you will send me the remainder[;] altho' left in  
independent circumstances  
for my station in life[,] they are not such as to authorize my laying out  
money in Books[.]  
Yours truly  
Nelly Robb<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <sup>^(end Chap<sup>r</sup> 7)^</sup>[Madden ed., ink insert]. Each memoir within Madden's *United Irishmen*, Series 3, vol. 2, is divided into chapters. This letter is cited within Chapter 7 of the "Memoir of Thomas Russell." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Series 3, vol. 2, 137–283.

**137. James Dowsett Rose Cleland<sup>1</sup> [Rathgael House, Bangor] to  
Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Date:** 18 and 20 November 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/626

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material Features:** 1 folio, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 1b, missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Rath Gael House, Bangor  
Nov<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1843 (& Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>)

My dear Madam,

It would have given me much pleasure to furnish you with a copy of Mr Russell's speech, but I never had it. I was one of the Jury that found him guilty on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1803, and during the trial took notes of the evidence, but as the evidence was correctly printed in the Belfast Newspaper, I did not preserve them,<sup>3</sup> and did not take any notes of his speech, for he spoke rapidly, and I am a slow writer, but sometime afterwards I wrote a memorandum (from recollection) of one particular passage, as follows Viz.[,] "The trial of General Tho<sup>s</sup> Russell took place "at Downpatrick on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1803, from the number of witnesses examined[, ] it occupied the whole day.

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<sup>1</sup> James Dowsett Rose Cleland (24 March 1767–25 September 1852), land proprietor of the Clealand estates in County Down, naturalist, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenant for County Down and founder of the second Sunday School in Ireland in 1788. See R. MacDonald and N. McMillan, "James Dowsett Rose Cleland (Cleland): A Forgotten Irish Naturalist," *The Irish Naturalists' Journal* 13, no. 3 (July 1959): 70–72 and R. MacDonald and N. McMillan, "James Dowsett Rose Cleland (1767–1852): Some Further Notes," *The Irish Naturalists' Journal* 18, no. 2 (April 1974): 30–32.

<sup>2</sup> "In Re: Thomas Russell/ Letter of Jas ^D.^ Rose Cleland to Miss Mary McCracken."

<sup>3</sup> ^[^ [Madden ed., ink].

“The petty Jury (of whom I was one) were all Gentlemen of landed property. Mr John Crawford of Crawfordsburn,<sup>4</sup> and Mr Eldred Pottinger,<sup>5</sup> were on the Grand Jury. The General was convicted on the clearest evidence[.] [O]n his being asked what he had to say, why sentence of death should not be pronounced against him, he made a long speech, professing highly honourable and religious principles, and also observed that he could not but feel surprised to see Gentlemen on the Jury, (looking at the Grand Jury Box) who had often expressed and advocated political opinions similar<sup>6</sup> to those on which he acted, and by which he had forfeited his life, for the sentiments publicly [sic] delivered by them had assisted to influence his conduct, having formed a high opinion of their honor, integrity, judgement, and ability.” ([I]t was supposed that he alluded to Mr Crawford and Eldred Pottinger). “He afterwards told Captain Gordon, six of the Jury were United Irishmen.<sup>7</sup> (There were many conjectures who they were, but it included probably persons on<sup>8</sup> both Grand and Petty Juries) – The Judge[,]<sup>9</sup> on passing sentence, said that he was sorry and surprised that a Gentleman of education could so pervert his understanding, as to imagine that he was acting either honourably, or religiously, when he asserted to his

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<sup>4</sup> John Crawford (c.1744–1827), who inherited the estates of Crawfordsburn in County Down and Rademon in Downpatrick. He was an original member of the Northern Whig Club and a supporter of the United Irishmen (being a close friend of the McTier family). However, he was also a member of the Grand Jury which convicted TR.

<sup>5</sup> Eldred Pottinger (d. 1814), of Mount Pottinger, an original member of the Northern Whig Club.

<sup>6</sup> “opinions, similar” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> David Gordon (1759–1847), who inherited the estates of Florida and Delamont in County Down. He was a banker, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenant for County Down, High Sheriff and magistrate at TR’s trial.

<sup>8</sup> “persons, on” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>9</sup> Denis George (c.1751–1821), Irish Judge and Baron of the Court of Exchequer for Ireland.

“ignorant followers what he knew was untrue, namely, that the French were landed in great force at Ballywalter, an untruth deliberately uttered for the purpose of deceiving poor ignorant men, and inducing them to join in acts of rebellion, by which they had forfeited their lives –

The above is the only memorandum that<sup>10</sup> I have of Mr Russell’s trial –

<sup>11</sup> I have to apologize for not

[Fol. 1b]←

immediately answering your letter, but just after I had written a few lines, I was interrupted by persons on business – The only papers Miss Templeton lent me were<sup>12</sup> Mr Russell’s, “Address to Caledonia,” some verses by Emmet &c.[,] all which I returned after copying some of them. I never saw any of Mr Russell’s letters, or ever heard Miss Templeton mention them.

Believe me,

My dear Madam,

Yours respectfully

Jas. D. Rose Cleland.

To Miss McCrackan  
Belfast

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<sup>10</sup> “memorandum, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>11</sup> ^]^[Madden ed., ink].

<sup>12</sup> “me, were” [comma omitted (ed.)].

138. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Lisbon]<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** 29 February 1844

**Archive:** Royal Irish Academy, Dublin

**Reference code:** 24 O 10/ 22 (iv)

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, torn off corner caused by breaking of a black wafer seal on Fol. 2a/b, burns, postal stamps, tuck and seal letterlocking

Belfast 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 1844  
7 Queen Street

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of receiving your letters of 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Instant,<sup>2</sup> which in a great measure relieved me from much anxiety on your account, as from your long silence, & having heard from Mr Getty<sup>3</sup> that you were in Lisbon on account of Mrs Madden's health, I feared that either she, or you, were seriously ill, which I hope is not the case, tho' you say but little on that subject – I am glad to tell you that our worthy old friend Jemmy continues<sup>4</sup> recovering, tho still confined to bed, he was much gratified by your kind wish to supply his wants, but his

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<sup>1</sup> Between November 1843 and 1846, Madden lived in Lisbon where he worked as a journalist for the *Morning Chronicle*.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letters, Madden [Lisbon] to MAM [Belfast], 4 and 11 February 1844.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Getty (1799–1857), Belfast naturalist who was a founding member of the Belfast Natural History Association and the Belfast botanical gardens. He was also an antiquarian, linguist, author, member of the Belfast Literary Society, Ballast master and Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Board.

<sup>4</sup> "Jemmy, continues" [comma omitted (ed.)].

sons[,]<sup>5</sup> he says[,] procure him whatever he requires, and that his daughter[-]in[-]law is as kind as her husband[.] [H]e hopes to be able to get up on Sunday, and tho' he has been confined to bed for more than three months, & during that period his daughter[-]in[-]law gave birth to a son & had a slow recovery, & was obliged to go for

a week or two to the country & he of course ^was^ left much [Fol. 1b] alone, with only two little girls in the house to attend him[.] ^[Y]et^ this singularly vigorous minded man was<sup>6</sup> never in the least degree out of spirits, and never made any complaint; to use his own expression, he was never at all down hearted, his own reflections on the past, and hopeful anticipations of future good, prevent ennui or lowness of spirits[.] As for the picture[,] I am sorry to say that tho' a fine[,] fine face and intelligent countenance[,] it did not recal[l] M<sup>r</sup> Russell to any person's recollection to whom I shewed it, nor[,] even when told[,] could they discover the slightest resemblance to him[.] [A]t the first view both Maria & I saw a likeness to your[-]self for whom[,] before reading your letter[,] I thought it had been intended – M<sup>r</sup> R[']s head was more beautifully rounded, he had a noble forehead – [T]he picture seems to have a fine forehead but is too much concealed by the hair, & if I recollect right[,] he did not wear such large whiskers, his nose was more aquiline and his mouth exceeded in beauty and sweetness of expression any mouth I ever saw, particularly when he smiled[.] [H]is look of confiding affection was so perfectly

trustful as if entirely incapable of deceit or of suspecting deceit in others, and I never saw the same

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> James Hope and his wife Rose (née Mullen) had four children, Luke Mullan Hope (1794–1827), Henry Joy McCracken Hope (1809–72), Robert Emmet Hope (1812–64) and one other child.

<sup>6</sup> "man, was"[comma omitted (ed.)].

degree of dignity and sweetness combined in any other countenance but his own, he was altogether a perfect model of manly beauty & gracefulness[;] this was allowed by all who saw him – Doctor McDonnell spoke of his remarkably gentle & graceful look & manner on looking at the picture but said he was very bad at perceiving resemblances[.] I forgot to say that his eyes were not so large nor so large prominent as those in the picture but were goo[d]<sup>7</sup> dark eyes[,] well set & with a pleasing expression – I have a picture of [...tear...] which I purchased many years ago for [...tear...] [re-]<sup>8</sup> semblance which I perceived in the [...tear...] [esp-]<sup>9</sup> ecially in the nose which if you [...tear...] you with the other papers that is if I [...tear...] other person who knew T.R can [...tear...] likeness – I have found several little [...tear...] respecting him which I will copy & [...tear...] have several notes from Lynch (one of [...tear...] against him) written while he was und[er]<sup>10</sup> granted [...burn...] a state of the greatest trepid[ation]<sup>11</sup>

unfortunate coward[,] the dread of death was too much for his virtue to withstand[.] [H]ow strange that any hum[an]<sup>12</sup> being ~~eould~~ should purchase life at so dear a rate, as the loss of all than<sup>13</sup> renders life valuable, & wish to drag on existence with the sting of perpetual self reproach –

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>7</sup> Partially obscured by a small tear.

<sup>8</sup> Obscured by a large tear.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Partially obscured by the tear.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Obscured by an ink blot.

<sup>13</sup> Possibly, this should read "that."

[Numerical stamp, blue]<sup>14</sup>

[Postal charge, red]<sup>15</sup>

[Paid stamp, red]<sup>16</sup>

[Superscription]  
Doctor R. R. Madden  
Lisbon  
Portugal

[Arch postal stamp, red]<sup>17</sup>

[Square postal stamp, red]<sup>18</sup>

[...tear...] not a vessel going from this in the course  
[...tear...] I will send you all I can collect that he  
[...tear...] to the subject which perhaps M<sup>rs</sup>  
[...tear...]<sup>19</sup> will look over to save your time & select  
[...tear...] your purpose[.] [W]ith kind regards to  
[...tear...]<sup>20</sup> [re]main<sup>21</sup> dear sir[,] yours with much esteem

Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

<Maria desires her kind regards>

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<sup>14</sup> "280."

<sup>15</sup> "1/9" 1 shilling and 9 pence.

<sup>16</sup> "PAID/ AT/ BELFAST."

<sup>17</sup> Obscured by the square postal stamp imprinted on top of it.

<sup>18</sup> "PAID/ MR 4M/ 1844."

<sup>19</sup> Most likely, "Madden."

<sup>20</sup> Most likely, "Mrs Madden, I."

<sup>21</sup> Partially obscured by the tear.

139. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Lisbon]

**Date:** 2 July 1844

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/155

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 watermarked bifolium & 1 folio, various hand stamps, black wax seal on Fol. 2b, white paper binding along the right side of Fol. 2b and 3b and along the left side of Fol. 3a, tuck and seal letterlocking

Belfast 2 July 1844 [Fol. 1a]  
7 Queen Street

My Dear Sir

It is now about nine weeks since I wrote you by post<sup>1</sup> mentioning ^having^ sent you a parcel thro' Mr Getty[,] by the way you had directed, and since that, our worthy old friend J. Hope (who I am happy to tell you is quite recovered from his late illness) has been endeavouring to trace out what grounds there ^were^ (if any) for what Mr Clealand stated had appeared against Mr Russell on his trail, of his having deluded the people by<sup>2</sup> asserting that the French had landed in considerable numbers at Ballywalter —<sup>3</sup> James had never heard this before[,] neither had I[,] that I can recollect, and he enquired of a man now living in Belfast (Ja<sup>s</sup> Douglas) a man of a dauntless spirit and unimpeachable integrity, who had been employed by Mr Russell[,] then at Killinchy[,] to take a message to Loughinisland<sup>4</sup>, and was the only man who had volunteered on the occasion, & he said he had never heard of it before, and was certain it was a falsehood. And as Douglas was high in confidence, had it been the case[,] he no doubt must have known it at the time[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Rabb

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Madden [Lisbon], c. 30 April 1844.

<sup>2</sup> "people, by" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 137 (TCD MS873/626).

<sup>4</sup> Loughinisland, a village between Downpatrick and Ballynahinch.

of Ballysallagh, to whom I wrote on the subject[,]<sup>5</sup> says “I do not believe Mr Russell ever said that<sup>6</sup> the French had landed at Ballywalter, he was too much a man of honour to assert what he knew to be an untruth. Downpatrick

was I think not more than ten miles distance from Ballywal- [Fol. 1b]  
ter, and the circumstances in which he (Mr R) was placed for some time before, rendered all communication with the people out of the question[.]<sup>7</sup> [H]e told me that when he went to the place of rende[z]vous (a Hill near Downpatrick) dressed in his green uniform, & where he expected to find a multitude[,] there were no more than three individuals, one of whom suffered along with him, nor do I think he had any wish for assistance from the French[.] [H]e said Ireland might as well be an English, as a French colony, but even if it was given in evidence[,] I for my part would not believe it” –<sup>8</sup> The person whom she says suffered along with Mr Russell must<sup>9</sup> have been Drake as<sup>10</sup> the other[,] Corry, did not nothing [sic] but procure a map of the County Down – There was a trifling mistake in the history which Mr Teeling began of<sup>11</sup> Mr Russell[']s life in his magazine ~~which~~ ^that^ he published ^in Belfast[.]^<sup>12</sup> [I]t was that<sup>13</sup> the Tone family had spent the evening of the day with<sup>14</sup> us, on

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<sup>5</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh], 1844.

<sup>6</sup> “said, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> There are approximately 22 miles between Ballywalter and Downpatrick.

<sup>8</sup> Extract from a missing letter from Ellen Rabb [Ballysallagh] to MAM [Belfast], 1844.

<sup>9</sup> “Russell, must” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>10</sup> “Drake, as” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>11</sup> “began, of” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>12</sup> James Morgan, “Sketch of Thomas Russell,” *Ulster Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1830): 39–60. CHT was the proprietor and editor of this monthly journal.

<sup>13</sup> “was, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>14</sup> “day, with” [comma omitted (ed.)].

which they had visited Ramsisland & that Mr Bunting had then played “The Parting of Friends” on the Irish harp[.]<sup>15</sup> ~~it was not that day~~ The Tones had not spent that evening with us, but the last day they spent with us was either<sup>16</sup> two or three days before<sup>17</sup> they embarked for America, & it was on the piano & not the Irish harp that Mr Bunting played the parting of friends – I dare say the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Sirr

has handed over Mr Russell’s papers to Maxwell,<sup>18</sup> that they [Fol. 2a] may appear in a garbled state in his villainous publication<sup>19</sup> & no doubt he considers himself an honest & an honourable gentleman in withholding them from Mr Russell[’]s nearest relative & if he has done so for such a purpose[,] it is tenfold worse – [H]ow is it that mankind can become so blinded by passion, & prejudice, as to be incapable of distinguishing good from evil[?] – In case Mr Russell[’]s papers[,] which Mr Teeling allowed Morgan<sup>20</sup> to carry with him to Newry[,] have not been destroyed, do you think it ^might^ possibly lead to a discovery of them were<sup>21</sup> you to notice the circumstance in your book, giving a few lines of some of them, such as can be rem[em]bered, for instance “Should I fall & my country deem my services of any moment &c[.]” I think I gave you what I remembered of that & some other, but I do not think I mentioned that in his letter to Bernard Coile, when preparing to leave Ford George, he said, in recommending his sister to his friends “I

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<sup>15</sup> Ram’s Island, the largest island on Lough Neagh.

<sup>16</sup> “was, either” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>17</sup> “days, before” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>18</sup> William Hamilton Maxwell (30 June 1792–29 December 1850), of Newry, author.

<sup>19</sup> William Hamilton Maxwell, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798 with Memoirs of the Union and Emmet’s Insurrection of 1803* (London: Bally Brothers, 1845). This history was intended as a corrective to Madden’s work.

<sup>20</sup> Reverend James Morgan (15 June 1799–5 August 1873), first minister of Belfast’s Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, a founder of the Ulster Temperance Society, author and editor of *The Orthodox Presbyterian*.

<sup>21</sup> “them, were” [comma omitted (ed.)].

shall not be accused of boasting in saying to you, that had I taken a different course I ^I^ would have been ^living^ in camps or in courts, ^and^ not in prison or in exile[.]” [H]is sister[,] he said “had always trained him in the paths of religion[,] & virtue” & in his last letter[,] either to her or to me (I cannot recollect which) he said we shall meet in a better world where God will wipe all tears from our eyes,<sup>22</sup> these

papers were all contained in a red leather portfolio[,] [Fol. 2b] together with the pencilled profile taken the morning [...binding...]<sup>23</sup> his death by Tom Hughes which was strikingly like [...binding...]<sup>24</sup> [H]e was buried with his boots on, the inscription on h[is]<sup>25</sup> tombstone ^was^ The Grave of Russell – I think I told you that I was informed that the book he was writing at th[e]<sup>26</sup> ~~book he was writing~~ at [sic] the time of his death, & which [...binding...]<sup>27</sup> requested three days to finish, was in the hands of a man[,] Dubourdieu[,] whose father had kept a classical scho[ol]<sup>28</sup> in Lisburn, about sixty years ago - I do not know wher[e]<sup>29</sup> that gentleman lives nor how he came by the book, i[t]<sup>30</sup> was on the Revelations of St John - M<sup>c</sup>Skimmin’s manuscripts have been purchased by a presby[te-]<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “God will wipe of[f] the tears from all eyes.” See Letter 76 (TCD MS873/642).

<sup>23</sup> Most likely, “of.”

<sup>24</sup> Most likely, “him.”

<sup>25</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Most likely, “he.”

<sup>28</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

rian clergyman[,] a liberal who lives in Larne<sup>32</sup> & I [...binding...]<sup>33</sup>  
endeavouring to get them submitted to the inspec[tion]<sup>34</sup>  
& correction of our worthy old friend J-H[.] that all t[he]<sup>35</sup>  
falsehoods & misrepresentations therein contain[ed]<sup>36</sup>  
may not go down to posterity as historical truth. I [...binding...]<sup>37</sup>  
in correspondence with one of the principle members [...binding...]<sup>38</sup>  
his congregation on the subject, by Doctor McDonn[ell's]<sup>39</sup>  
advice, who wishes[,] if possible[,] to obtain the papers  
[...binding...]<sup>40</sup>  
you but James says you have seen them & know wh[at]<sup>41</sup>  
they contain, & that they are not worth much, it is  
more necessary that the truth should be separated from the fals[e].<sup>42</sup>

The following I have copied from one of J Hope[']s papers[:] [Fol. 3a]  
[“]When W<sup>m</sup> Orr was under sentence of death in Carrick-  
fergus, a Belfast man[,] M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Clean[,]<sup>43</sup> a spirit merchant  
who lived in North St, procured keys made from patterns  
taken in putty, ^&^ found means to get into ^the^ Goal, opened every  
lock from the street to<sup>44</sup> Orr's cell, & opening the cell door[,]

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<sup>32</sup> Reverend Classon Emmet Porter (1814–28 February 1885), Presbyterian minister at Larne, historian and author.

<sup>33</sup> Most likely, “am.”

<sup>34</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Most likely, “am.”

<sup>38</sup> Most likely, “of.”

<sup>39</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>40</sup> Most likely, “for.”

<sup>41</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> William McClean (d. 1843), spirit merchant of 188 North Street, Belfast.

<sup>44</sup> “street, to”[comma omitted (ed.)].

Orr refused to follow him[.] [T]he sentinel at the gate ^was in the secret &^ desert-

ed with ^at the^ time & they both escaped[.] I had this from M<sup>c</sup>Clean himself[.] [H]e also told me that a gentleman under sentence for murder in 1803 sent for him & offered him any sum he would name to do ~~the same~~ he for him what he did for Orr – No[.] said he, I would venture my life again for an honest man, but you joined the United Irishmen & turne[d]<sup>45</sup> persecutor – I dare not venture my life to save yours after killing your own uncle. M<sup>c</sup>Clean died last winter[.]

J.H –" I knew M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Clean, he was a very amiable man ^was very handsome^ &

had a most benevolent countenance – I knew a lady who was in Carrickfergus at the time of Orr's death & who paid him much attention, she said he had such a dread of death or was so unwilling to die that many people feared his want of proper firmness[.] [T]his very reluctance to die like poor young Corry in 1803, more strikingly evinced the firmness of his principles – M<sup>r</sup> Getty is to call at M<sup>r</sup> Charley's office tomorrow[.] by whom the parcel was forwarded[.] to make particular inquiry & is to write t[o]<sup>46</sup>

your friend at Southampton on the subject –

[Fol. 3b]

J. Hope desires to be remembered to you & says[.] were you here[.] he would now be able to accompany you to Sleamish & some other memorable places – [T]he old D<sup>r</sup><sup>47</sup> is also ^anxious^ for your work being completed in the most perfect manner, but says you ought not to be in too great a hurry, he desires his kind regards –

<[...binding...]

[...] [...] all he could save the devoted to acts of charity to the catholics, & in the purchase

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<sup>45</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>46</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>47</sup> Dr McDonnell.

of catholic books to distribute to protestants[.]><sup>48</sup>

My niece joins in kind remembrances with[,] dear Sir,  
Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

I was glad to hear this morning from your friend M<sup>r</sup>  
Cogan,<sup>49</sup> that you and M<sup>rs</sup> Madden ~~that you~~ were both well wh[en]<sup>50</sup>  
he heard from you about three weeks ago but that you had not g[ot]<sup>51</sup>  
my parcel when you wrote[.] [P]ray give my best respects to M<sup>rs</sup>  
Mad[den.]<sup>52</sup>

[Superscription]  
Via France  
Doctor R R Madden  
at the Packet Agents Office  
Lisbon

[Circular date stamp, blue]<sup>53</sup>

[Circular date stamp, blue]<sup>54</sup>

[Numerical stamp, blue]<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This sentence is written vertically along the folio's right hand side to accommodate the superscription and so the paper binding is obscuring the entire first line of text.

<sup>49</sup> The Right Honourable William Forde Cogan, P.C., D.L., of Tinode, Co. Wicklow and M.P. for county Kildare. Cogan was Madden's sister Elizabeth's only son. For a full genealogy see Madden, *The Memoirs*, 292–93. Letter 141 (RIA 24 O 10/ 22 (iii) confirms that Mr Cogan was indeed Madden's nephew, wherein MAM stated, "I heard of you thro' your nephew, M<sup>r</sup> Cogan."

<sup>50</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "BELFAST/ JUL 4/ 1844."

<sup>54</sup> "22/ LISBON/ 7."

<sup>55</sup> "720."

[Town name stamp, blue]<sup>56</sup>

[Rectangle paid stamp, red]<sup>57</sup>

[Postal charge, red]<sup>58</sup>

[Circular stamp, red]<sup>59</sup>

[Tombstone paid date stamp, red]<sup>60</sup>

[Square paid date stamp, red]<sup>61</sup>

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> "Arthur Street RH/ Belfast."

<sup>57</sup> "PAID/ AT/ BELFAST."

<sup>58</sup> "5-10= 1.3."

<sup>59</sup> "p.F."

<sup>60</sup> "PAID/ JY 6/ 1844."

<sup>61</sup> "PAID/ JY [...]/ [...]44."

<sup>62</sup> "ANGL. 2 BOULOGNE/ 8/ JUL/ 44."

**140. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Lisbon]**

**Date:** 15 October 1844

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/156

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, white paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a and 2b,<sup>1</sup> crossed letter, missing envelope

Belfast 15<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1844  
7 Queen Street

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Sir

I ought long ere this to have acknowledged the receipt of your welcome letter,<sup>2</sup> announcing the completion of your arduous work, on which I must sincerely congratulate you, and hope that the last series, will at least, make up for the loss you sustained by the two former ones, at all events however, you have the satisfaction to feel that your own country in particular, and mankind in general, are deeply indebted to you for<sup>3</sup> the pains you have taken to give a faithful narrative of an interesting portion of Irish history, affording a useful lesson, both to Rulers, and to people, which at the present juncture, comes with additional force – You have exhibited Ireland when driven to des-

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<sup>1</sup> By adjusting the colour contrast of the document, certain words or characters obstructed by the binding on Fol. 2b have become discernible.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Lisbon] to MAM [Belfast], prior to 15 October 1844.

<sup>3</sup> “you, for” [comma omitted (ed.)].

peration, and madness by<sup>4</sup> oppression, cruelty, and injustice, and  
 O'Connell<sup>5</sup>  
 shews what it may be (or rather[,] I may say[,] what it is) shew and  
 how easily gov[-]  
 erved when treated with kindness, and affection, and hoping for  
 justice,  
 for tho' O'Connell has often ^been^ most tyrannically despotic, and  
 virulently abu[-]  
 sive to those who differed from him in opinion, yet the great moral  
 regene-  
 ration which, with the assistance of Father Mathew,<sup>6</sup> he has effected in  
 the  
 character of the Irish people, cannot be too highly estimated, and  
 entitles  
 him to the lasting gratitude of all true philanthropists, and the same  
 may  
 be said of the Rev<sup>d</sup> gentleman and I hope those now in power will  
 have the  
 wisdom to profit by the lesson, and act accordingly, and that speedily  
 & should  
 O'Connell be spared long enough, and his unparalleled influence over  
 his coun-  
 try men be continued (of which there is little doubt) ^(of the latter I  
 mean)^ and, that his extrordina[-]  
 ry power over their very excitable feelings ^of his countrymen^ be  
 exercised, until they are habitu-  
 ated to self control, they would be the finest nation in the world; but  
 should  
 ^he^ be soon called away, is there another in the world fit<sup>7</sup> to succeed  
 him[?] I mean[,] to

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<sup>4</sup> "madness, by" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> Daniel O'Connell (6 August 1775–15 May 1847), Irish lawyer and politician who campaigned for Catholic Emancipation and a repeal of the Act of Union. O'Connell had joined the Society of United Irishmen in 1797 but did not take part in the rebellion.

<sup>6</sup> Father Theobald Mathew (10 October 1790–8 December 1856), Irish temperance reformer.

<sup>7</sup> "world, fit" [comma omitted (ed.)].

reign with such undivided empire in the affections of the people: I fear  
not,

[Fol. 1b]

and it <sup>^is^</sup> by their affections alone that the Irish will be governed – ↵  
Poor old Doctor M<sup>c</sup>Donnell, and I, wished much for the possession of  
M<sup>c</sup>S-  
kimmon[']s papers, but with different views, he wished for them,  
fearing they  
might contain facts derogatory to the <sup>^Irish^</sup> character[,] ~~of the people~~  
particularly  
regarding the assa[s]sination of informers, which he wished to  
suppress, but he  
was wrong; the reason for <sup>^his^</sup> thinking so was that<sup>8</sup> when M<sup>c</sup>Bride  
was murdered in  
North Street,<sup>9</sup> there were only three people in all that long street who<sup>10</sup>  
would sign  
an offer of reward for<sup>11</sup> the apprehension of the murderer – [T]his was  
no proof whatever  
of the act being approved, but many then, as well as now,  
disapproved of capital  
punishment, and thought it wrong to hold out a temptation to perjury,  
and  
what was still more powerful, it would have been considered an  
infringement of  
the United oath to<sup>12</sup> prosecute any one for<sup>13</sup> what was done in  
pursuance of the ob-  
ject they were bound to promote, however the[y] might disapprove of  
the means

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<sup>8</sup> “was, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>9</sup> William McBride (d. 19 October 1796), of Donegore, cotton spinner and alleged informer who was shot and killed at Saw’s Entry on Belfast’s North Street.

<sup>10</sup> “street, who” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>11</sup> “reward, for” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>12</sup> “oath, to” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>13</sup> “one, for” [comma omitted (ed.)].

adopted – My motive for wishing for the papers was<sup>14</sup> that truth, and  
falsehood  
might be separated while<sup>15</sup> there were living witnesses competent to  
do so. I  
do not think it would be consistent with truth, (the legitimate object of  
history)  
to suppress any well authenticated fact, let the blame rest where it  
may, ~~and~~  
the run of history being to promote ~~the~~ ^a^ knowledge of mankind,  
and the sci-  
ence of governing – I was sorry I did not in time think of sending you  
an old  
letter of my brother W<sup>m</sup>[’s][,] written in Kilmainham 19<sup>th</sup> June 97 –<sup>16</sup>  
[H]e says “I was made to  
believe I would get out on bail as Lord O’Neill had particularly  
requested it, and  
offered to go security for any amount, he was not refused[,], ~~and~~ yet I  
do not ^now^ expect it[,]  
it is so long since that happened, but I fancy the people in office are  
too busy  
to attend to trifles” – [T]his instance of Lord O’Neill’s kind  
interference ~~was~~  
was at Counsellor Joy’s request, he and W<sup>m</sup> having been much  
attached ~~on~~ ^from^ child-  
hood, till the former went to College, and I remember Miss Joy telling  
me that  
it was considered a wonderful exertion in his Lordship, he was so ex-  
tremely indolent, and I was ^of course^ the more grieved at the  
melancholy event  
of his Lordship’s death, no good action should pass unnoticed[.]  
Our worthy old friend Jemmy continues in as good health as most  
people at  
his time of life and tho not so strong as he was before his last illness,  
he is still

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<sup>14</sup> “papers, was” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>15</sup> “separated, while” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>16</sup> Missing letter, William McCracken [Kilmainham Gaol] to MAM [Belfast], 19 June 1797.

able to attend the Repeal meetings and is sometimes in the chair, which could not be filled by a character of greater worth – [H]e stood aloof from the association from conscientious scruples he says, for a long time ^&^ until he

[Fol. 2a]

found there appeared no other means of attaining the object he had ↵ bound himself to persevere in endeavouring to promote. I saw him yesterday when he desired to be remembered ^to you[.]^ [H]e continues most

happy with his daughter[-]in[-]law, on whose countenance he never once saw a frown, even to her little maid, to whom she is only too indulgent, and his little grandson is thriving delightfully and seems very fond of his grandfather, they have removed into a much better & more respectable looking house, and more agreeably situated, being the first house in Lancaster Street turning from York Street –

Tho R.J. Tennent[']s<sup>17</sup> speech[,] which you notice in your letter, was much

admired, yet some considered it very defic<sup>ie</sup>^nt, in as much as that he did

not pledge himself to any thing, ~~to~~ ^but^ kept himself free to ~~act~~ ~~according to~~ act

according to circumstances – [A]s for M<sup>r</sup> Getty[,] he may have been restrained

from coming forward on that occasion by<sup>18</sup> unwillingness to offend many

many [sic] of those thro<sup>19</sup> whom he obtained his present situation, as there is a

variety of opinions on the subject of politics in the town of Belfast, and many sincere and ardent liberals who were violently opposed to the Union,

before it took place, are now as much opposed to Repeal, and certainly it is

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<sup>17</sup> RJT.

<sup>18</sup> “occasion, by” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>19</sup> “those, thro” [comma omitted (ed.)].

a difficult question, on which much may be said on both sides, and  
hard  
to decide on – To view the matter coolly[,] it would be necessary to lay  
aside  
the natural feelings of national pride & ^the love of^ independence,  
which is not  
easily done, in order to consider whether the people of this country  
might not have their liberty and happiness better secured in  
being an integral part of a great & powerful nation, provided  
that ample justice towards Ireland was strictly observed ~~towards~~  
& that Ireland would have a better chance of justice when the  
the [sic] liberals of both countries were united in one parliament,  
than when divided, & if we look back to former history & think  
how little was gained for centuries before, & how often when a  
good measure was carried here, it was negatived in the British  
Parliament, it makes one doubtful of the advantage of Repeal ex-  
cept in lessening absenteeism, one of the great evils of ~~this Country~~  
^Ireland^ as tending

[Fol. 2b]←

to increase the poverty of the country by rack rents & carrying away  
to ano[-]  
ther country what should be spent at home in promoting industry  
among those  
by whom the rents are paid, and how is it possible for people to  
become  
tentent who are in a state of starvation, & in the midst of plenty, surely  
those,  
whose industry is the means under Providence of producing all the  
com-  
forts & luxuries which the idlers enjoy, should at least be enabled to  
obtain  
all the necessaries and some of the comforts of life for themselves &  
their  
families[.] [W]hen that is ^not^ the case[,] something must be  
radically wrong  
which political economists should endeavour to discover the means of  
remedying – I saw a plan of taxation some years ago in the third  
number

of a periodical called the Federalist,<sup>20</sup> which appeared to me an excellent one  
but on too just a principle to be approved of in the present state of soci-  
ety by the very rich – [I]t was to abolish all indirect taxes & to substitute  
an income tax, or property tax, I think it was the former, of only five shillings on the first hundred pounds, ten shilling[s] [...] ^on two [...]^ hundred [...binding...] shillings on ~~the third,~~ ^three hundred^ & so on, of course the tax would be light on those  
of moderate income, but no doubt it would be visionary to expect that this would be approved ^of^ by the rich, until mankind are in a higher  
state of perfection than at present, until they learn to love their neighbour as themselves, but all in good time, the daily improvement that is taking place in other sciences may encourage us to be hopeful that the science of governing may yet rise to a higher state of perfection than it is at present tho' it may not be in our day – If mankind would learn to discuss the ~~different~~ ^various^ subjects on which the[y] hold different  
~~opinions~~ ^opinions^ with candour & good temper, without impugning each others  
motives[,] the truth would surely be elicited at last –  
Your last letter[,] my dear sir[,] was deficient in one respect, you did not mention your own health or ^M<sup>rs</sup>^ Madden[']s[,] nor when you  
purposed returning to your own dear country, and I am sorry to hear from Mr Cogan that M<sup>rs</sup> Madden's health was not good when he last heard from you. I hope it is now better, but I still look forward to the  
pleasure of seeing you both in Belfast, when Maria will be happy to ^accompany^ you & M<sup>rs</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Between 1787 and 1788, a series of anonymous letters calling for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution were published within several New York newspapers. These became known as the Federalist Papers and were written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay. It is most likely that MAM is referring to one of Hamilton's six essays entitled, "Concerning the General Power of Taxation." See Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist 30–36," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, 1961), 188–224.

Madden to the Cavehill & old Jemmy will take us all to the Bowhill<sup>21</sup>  
& Slemish.<sup>22</sup>

All you enquire for are well, Maria unites in kind regards with yours  
truly

M A. McCracken  
[Fol. 1a, crossed]←

I forgot to mention an interesting fact [in] relation to Sir[r] the Orange  
persecutor of the Catholics which I heard lately  
from Miss Teeling which was that after his conversion he lived most  
abstemiously and all he could possi-  
bly save[,] he disposed of in acts of charity to the Catholics[,]  
particularly in purchasing religious catholic  
books & distributing them among the orange party<sup>23</sup> – [P]ray excuse  
the enormous length of this[.]  
Maria unites in best respects to your lady – [A]dieu[.]

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<sup>21</sup> Bohill mountain, located near Tullyrusk, behind Divis and the Black Moutain. MAM refers to this area as “Bowhill moutain” in Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

<sup>22</sup> Their trip to the Cavehill is mentioned in Madden’s 1858 publication, wherein he states, “I visited the spot on the Cave Hill where the same engagement was entered into, accompanied by the daughter of Henry Joy McCracken.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, Second Edition, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Madden gives an account of Major Sirr’s later “conversion” in *United Irishmen*, explaining that, “When the Whigs came into power [...] the major felt it to be the duty of a loyal subject to shape his politics to those of the existing government. When reform began to be talked of at the Castle by gentlemen in office, and it had ceased to be the custom to consider all reformers traitors, the major became a reformer, and was one of those who attended a public meeting in Dublin, on the occasion of the successful issue of the last French Revolution in 1830, and in approval of the principles then triumphant. When Catholic emancipation had made Mr. O’Connell eligible as a candidate for the representation of Dublin, and there was nothing to be got or gained by supporting the ascendancy – or lost by disobliging the decrepid [sic] corporation – the major voted for Mr. O’Connell. Five-and-thirty years had intervened between the pillage of the Catholic leader’s house, and the lodging of its owner in Newgate – and the giving of his vote to send another to the imperial parliament.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, First Series, Second Edition, 480.

**141. James Orr [Dublin] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Francis Joseph Bigger, "Memoirs of the Irish Bards," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 13, no. 2, (1907): 54.

**Date:** 3 January 1845

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

Amongst those friends which death has deprived us of, I am sure you regretted Edward Bunting. His death was awfully sudden. His temper was so singularly disagreeable that the very great intimacy that existed between him and me had ceased, for a length of time previous to his death, so much so that some time had elapsed before I heard he was no more.<sup>1</sup> He has left three very fine children, who are peculiarly blessed in having such a mother as they have.<sup>2</sup> I sometimes meet them in the street; they are all well. But was it not a most extraordinary thing that some friend capable of doing so did not notice his death in such a way as, I am sure, his abilities and wonderful exertion in rescuing the music of his country from, I may say, annihilation, and, as far as such a publication admitted, of giving so valuable a history of ancient Ireland as is contained in his two books; but not one word that I have met with gave reason to think his name was worthy of remembrance, as remembrance, I am sure, with all his imperfections, he deserved.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bunting died on 21 December 1843.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Bunting, Sarah Elizabeth Bunting and Mary Ann Bunting.

<sup>3</sup> Bigger prefaces this letter, "I find the following letter amongst some MacCracken manuscripts. It was written by James Orr to Mary MacCracken, sister of Henry Joy MacCracken, and dated 3 January, 1845, 19 Richmond Place North, Dublin. James Orr had been an agent of the MacCrackens."

142. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Lisbon]

**Date:** 14 May 1845

**Archive:** Royal Irish Academy, Dublin

**Reference code:** 24 O 10/ 22 (iii)

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, intentional damage caused by four puncture marks spaced along the left hand side of Fol. 1a and which follow throughout the other folios, missing envelope

Belfast 14<sup>th</sup> May 1845 [Fol. 1a]  
7 Queen St

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of receiving your welcome letter & felt much gratified by your allowing me to be in any way instrumental in forwarding the publication of your valuable work,<sup>1</sup> the advertisement of which should have appeared in the next day[']s Whig but that I had to wait for advice from M<sup>r</sup> Getty & M<sup>r</sup> Cogan, the former gentleman was in London on town business & before I received his answer[,] M<sup>r</sup> Cogan to whom I had also written[,] forbid me to advertise until further instructions, as he thought it could be published without subscription & had written to you on the subject[.]<sup>2</sup> [N]o doubt it may, but having a sufficient number of subscribers would be the most certain way of avoiding any risk of loss. M<sup>r</sup> Getty is not yet returned from London but he wrote to me saying that two in each of the papers you mentioned would be sufficient, on different

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], c. May 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letters, MAM [Belfast] to Edmund Getty [London], c. May 1845 and MAM [Belfast] to William Forde Cogan, c. May 1845.

^weeks^ alternatively[,]<sup>3</sup> so as to be a month before the public be recommended

Henry Greer as the Belfast Agent,<sup>4</sup> his father having been a State prisoner in 1797 – You have no doubt heard sometime since of the death of the worthy old Doctor M<sup>c</sup>Donnell, his mind gave way a few weeks

before his disease. [H]is granddaughter[,] Miss Armstrong[,]<sup>5</sup> sent me a few

days ago[,] your letter to him of 1<sup>st</sup> April with the accompanying prospectus,<sup>6</sup> as she said you were a friend of mine. I called on her since & en-

quired if her uncles<sup>7</sup> had seen it ^your letter[,]^ she replied, they had not. I reminded

her of the propriety of her sending it to them, in consequence of the information you desired & which the Doctor would most gladly have given ^you[,]^ I think you would do well to write to either of the M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Donnells

on the subject, and you might at the same time[,] introduce another of some interest – [T]he old gentleman was extremely anxious about your forth-

coming publication & always asking about it when I called & I think it [Fol. 1b]

was the last time but one that I saw him[,] when on speaking of you ↵ he said “I kept nothing back from D<sup>r</sup> Madden but Russell’s letters, of which I have a number, one reason for which was that Russell was very careless of his composition ^&^ of course frequently was incorrect[,]”

[Y]ou are aware of a much stronger reason, but he might have depend-

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<sup>3</sup> Missing letter, Edmund Getty [London] to MAM [Belfast], c. May 1845.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Greer, bookseller based on Belfast’s High Street.

<sup>5</sup> A daughter of Katharine Anne Armstrong, née McDonnell and Andrew Armstrong of Kilsharvan, County Meath.

<sup>6</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to Dr McDonnell [Belfast], 1 April 1845.

<sup>7</sup> Dr James McDonnell’s surviving sons, Sir Alexander McDonnell (1794–21 January 1875), commissioner of national education in Ireland and Doctor John McDonnell (11 February 1796–1892), Professor of surgery, Medical Poor Law Commissioner and historian.

ed on you for avoiding any notice of them so as to [not] hurt his feelings

or derogate from his character[.] [A]t that time I thought the work was in the press, & therefore did not write to inform you, but as man's mind is best shewn by the free communication of his thoughts to a friend, in whom he had entire confidence[.] these letters would no doubt be very acceptable to you & might be in time for an appendix to the last volume, and ~~might~~ ^would^ appear

in whole or ~~such [...]~~ ~~from there~~ as in part, as extracts of letters to a friend, without mentioning the old Doctor's name[.] [P]erhaps[.] were you to write & ask these letters from his sons[.] you might obtain them[.] [A]t all events[.] you would lose nothing by the trail, & you may use my name if you please[.] as your authority - I would have written myself about them but thought your application would be more likely to succeed[.]<sup>8</sup> I saw our worthy old friend Hope yesterday[.] he was in bed but had been up[.] he said[.] for twelve hours ~~yesterday~~ the day before[.] [H]e fears he will not live to see your work finished but his mind is unimpaired & his spirits unbroken[.] [H]e still enjoys bright imaginings of the liberty & happiness which ^this country^ is yet to enjoy, but I fear the day is yet far distant & James

a little too visionary[.] [H]e bid me ask you if you had ever seen the *Annals of In^n^isfallen*<sup>9</sup> which he thinks has never been published[.] [H]e knew the man, James Wolfe[.] by whom it was translated ^from the Irish[.]^ [H]e was a fine Irish Scholar & an active citizen in days gone by[.] [T]he original manuscript had been found some place

[Fol. 2a]

on the Continent by one of the forefathers of the O'Gorman family, called the Chevalier,<sup>10</sup> who left Ireland at the time of the ↵

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<sup>8</sup> Madden does not appear to have followed MAM's advice to request these letters as they are not referenced in his works nor can they be found amongst his manuscripts.

<sup>9</sup> *Annals of Inisfallen*, a medieval manuscript chronicling Irish history which is currently held within Oxford's Bodleian Library.

<sup>10</sup> Tomás, Chevalier O'Gorman (1732–1809), Irish soldier and genealogist.

treaty of Limerick –<sup>11</sup> Wolfe had been employed to collect & trans[-] late the inscriptions on old Irish tombstones for which purpose Flood had<sup>12</sup> left a legacy, but the will was broken & the project of course given up, & thus Wolfe[']s abilities became known – I entirely agree with you in all the opinions stated ^expressed^ in your letter[,] except one (you do not say in what you differ from me & I do not recollect what I had written to you)[.] [W]hat I differ from you in, is the grant to Maynooth.<sup>13</sup> I consider it a small instalment of justice & should be accepted as such but not entitled to a receipt in full – James looks on it as a bribe[.]<sup>14</sup> [L]et Sir R Peel's<sup>15</sup> & his supporters['] motives be what they may[,] it is likely the<sup>16</sup> arguments used on the occasion may<sup>17</sup> have an influence even on those ^who^ use them<sup>18</sup> without being fully persuaded at the time of the incorrectness & at all events by calling public attention to the subject, justice ^of thought^ will prevail in some, & spread by degrees, perhaps by very slow degrees[,] certainly not with railway speed, but still there is a step in the right direction & the public mind seems to be progressing in juster feelings than formerly, this was evidenced lately in a very trifling circumstance[,] apparently, at a public meeting which took place here for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the poor – [I]t lasted[,] I think[,] three hours & many fine long speeches made[,] all evi[-]

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<sup>11</sup> The Treaty of Limerick was signed on 3 October 1691, putting an end to the Williamite War in Ireland.

<sup>12</sup> "Flood, had" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>13</sup> St Patrick's College or Maynooth College, a Catholic training seminary which had been established by the British government in 1795. It was at the centre of a major political controversy when, in 1845, Peel's government proposed tripling its annual grant and making it permanent as a way of gaining the respect of Irish Catholics.

<sup>14</sup> Presumably referring to James Hope.

<sup>15</sup> Sir Robert Peel (5 February 1788–2 July 1850), Conservative British Prime Minister between 1834 and 1835 and again from 1841 until his resignation in 1846.

<sup>16</sup> "likely, the" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>17</sup> "occasion, may" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>18</sup> "use, them" [comma omitted (ed.)].

dencing very proper feelings, in which the expression  
Lower Class was never once made use of[.] [H]ow presumpt[-]  
tuous & sinful is the useless drones of the community[.]

[Fol. 2b]

who never endeavour by any exertion to to [sic] promote the pub[-] <sup>l</sup>  
lic good & think of nothing but their own selfish gratifi-  
cation, to despise those whose poverty ~~they create by not~~ ^is caused  
by want^

~~sufficiently remunerating~~ ^of employment or insufficient  
remuneration for^ the labour which [---]

procures the idlers ~~with~~ all the comforts & luxuries of  
life[,] while those who labour cannot obtain common neces-  
saries [sic] in return – I feel quite ashamed of belonging to a sect  
which has made such a clamour against the grant to May-  
nooth & yet many of them are really benevolent & in other res[-]  
pects liberal, & say they would be willing to give ten times  
the amount to<sup>19</sup> the Catholics, but not for the promotion of  
what they consider erroneous religious opinions, all dis[-]  
claim the assumption of infallibility & yet all feel quite  
assured that those are in error who differ from them in  
religion[,] ~~with~~ ^yet^ all acknowledging the scriptures as their  
guide. [W]hat a pity there cannot be ^much^ sectarian zeal without<sup>20</sup>  
a tolerable spice of bigotry, as long as there is a favour[-]  
ed sect ^in this country^ there will be continual bickerings & heart-  
burnings, but all these evils will doubtless work together  
for good in the end, & mankind brought at last to feel  
that the different views which ^the scriptures admit^ some of the best  
& worst

of men ^to^ have taken of some portions of ~~scripture~~ ^it^ were  
allowed to exercise their humility & Christian charity &  
forbearance towards each other, & to ^induce them^ [to] search the  
sacred

records more frequently ~~I receive the scriptures and~~  
~~nothing of such differences occur~~ – [F]orgive me for tres[-]  
passing so long on your time & patience – [Y]ou forgot to say  
any thing of your own health or M<sup>rs</sup> Madden's but I heard of you

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<sup>19</sup> "amount, to" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>20</sup> "zeal, without" [comma omitted (ed.)].

thro' your nephew[,] Mr Cogan[.] [B]est respects to Mrs M – Yours  
truly

M A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

143. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Tennent<sup>1</sup> [Belfast]

**Date:** 30 March 1846

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** DH1748/H/29/1A

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, black edged mourning paper. Envelope: DH1748/H/29/1B, black edging, black wax seal

My Dear Eliza

[Fol. 1a]

I should have sooner thanked you for your kind & elegant present<sup>2</sup> (for which I am much obliged) but wanted to look over some of the poetry which is much in accordance with the spirit of the old times which I thought had been nearly extinguished, but I hope we are progressing to better times when the voice of truth & justice will effect what phisical [sic] force vainly attempted but I doubt much if the same progress would have been made were it not for the recollection of former scenes & the apprehension of similar consequences ensuing ensuing from a recurrence to the old system of persecution, which I trust we shall never see repeated. Old prejudi-

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<sup>1</sup> Eliza Tennent née McCracken (14 May 1804–20 May 1850), daughter of John McCracken Junior, she married RJT on 21 June 1830 and had five children. See Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, "Love, loss and learning in late Georgian Belfast: the case of Eliza McCracken," in *Ourselves alone?: religion, society and politics in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland: essays presented to S.J. Connolly*, ed. D.W. Hayton and Andrew R. Holmes (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), 169–191 and Lisa Townsend, "The Intellectual and Cultural Interests of Women in Ireland, c.1740–c.1840," PhD diss.,(QUB, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> James Duffy, ed., *The Spirit of the Nation, By the writers of the Nation Newspaper*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Dublin: James Duffy, 1844). See Eliza Tennent's endorsement written upon Envelope, Fol. 1a.

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are dying away, tho' less rapidly than we could wish, and from the wonderful improvements which have taken place in my memory, and the extraordinary discovery in other sciences, we may hope[,] thro' time, to see similar improvements in the science of governing, & tho I may not live to see it, ~~but~~ I can enjoy the pleasure by anticipation – [T]hose who died for their country at the period I allude to, fully enjoyed the same hope to the last moment of their existence, tho expecting it to be accomplished by different means, they would have been delighted could they have hoped that moral force could have been more effectual than physical force but this I hope will yet be realized – I hope your health is improving & that your little ones are all well & am my dear Eliza

[Fol. 1b]

Yours affectionately  
Mary Ann McCracken

Monday night 30<sup>th</sup> March 7 Queen St

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Fol. 2b, blank]

[Endorsement, Eliza Tennent's hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1a]

[Superscription]  
Mrs Tennent  
Hercules Place

[Envelope, Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>3</sup> "From my Aunt Mary March 31st 1846/ (To whom I had sent 2<sup>d</sup> volume Spirit of the/ Nation, containing the Ode to '98)."

144. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Tennant [Belfast]

**Date:** 14 May 1846

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/H/29/2

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery Status:** Delivered

**Material Features:** 1 bifolium, black edged mourning paper, missing envelope

Belfast 14<sup>th</sup> May 1846  
7 Queen St

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Eliza

I beg to return you my best thanks for your kind & elegant present of the "Spirit of the Nation" for which I feel much obliged – It is beautifully got up, but I have only had time to look over a few of the songs, the bold & daring spirit of which equally delights & surprizes me. Less than fifty years ago[,] similar sentiments openly advocated would most probably have caused the death of the authors, and now such things pass over causeless of injury to any, this is certainly a blessed change on which we may congratulate ourselves, and from the progressive

change towards just opinions which seems to be taking place in the public mind[,] I trust[,] thro' time[,] the general happiness of the whole community will be the ultimate aim of statesmen & voters but I fear it will be a long time & not certainly in my day that that

[Fol. 1b]

point<sup>1</sup> will be attained – Were all who  
are professed christians really<sup>2</sup> such  
in heart & practice so as to overtake  
every selfish feeling, then would Truth  
& Justice reign triumphant & who  
can dare to say that time will nev-  
er arrive – I particularly ad-  
mire [O]urselves [A]lone<sup>3</sup> & [T]he [V]oice  
of Labour –<sup>4</sup> [T]he tribute to Father  
Mathew<sup>5</sup> is very just & several

others I admire very much,  
but I am at a loss to know  
who William Drennan is, whether he  
be son to our late friend the Doctor.<sup>6</sup>  
I hope you are deriving benefit  
from this fine weather & the country  
air. A few days ago I met a very  
young Lady, with two or three little  
girls, who smiled & saluted me as  
we passed each other in a hurry &  
tho' I returned the salute & thought  
I should know the countenance, it  
was not till afterwards, I ~~thought~~<sup>thought</sup>^imagined^ her

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>1</sup> “that, that, point” [commas omitted (ed.)].

<sup>2</sup> “christians, really” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> John O'Hagan, “Ourselves Alone” in *The Spirit of the Nation*, vol. 1, 1–2.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, “The Voice of Labour” in *The Spirit of the Nation*, vol. 2, 1–2.

<sup>5</sup> “Father Mathew” in *The Spirit of the Nation*, vol. 1, 1–2.

<sup>6</sup> William Drennan Junior (1802–1873) was indeed the son of Doctor William Drennan. Two of his poems, “The Battle of Beal-An-Atha-Buidh” and “The Irish Arms Bill” are included in *The Spirit of the Nation* under the pen name ‘W.D.’ See: W.D., “The Battle of Beal-An-Atha-Buidh” in *The Spirit of the Nation*, vol. 2, 7–8 and W.D., “The Irish Arms Bill” in *The Spirit of the Nation*, vol. 2, 44.

very like your niece Mary,<sup>7</sup> & on looking  
back I saw two of [the] little girls turn  
round, & thought them like yours, but  
supposed they were there in the coun-  
try[.]<sup>8</sup> [W]ere your young folks the par-  
ty I passed[?] [W]ill you apologize for my  
stupidity[?] – Joined by Maria in kind

regards to your fireside circle[,]  
including Mr Tennent[,] I am my  
dear Eliza

[Fol. 2b]

Yours truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Brown McCracken (16 August 1827–9 July 1885), daughter of Henry Joy McCracken Junior (John McCracken Junior's son) and Eliza Duffin. Mary Brown McCracken and Eliza Tennent (her Aunt) were close friends. She later married Rev. Charles Reichel on 17 September 1851.

<sup>8</sup> Eliza Tennent's surviving daughters were, Annie (who married Nicholas de la Cherois of Ballywilliam in 1864), Evelyn Margaret (who married James Owens of Holestone, Antrim in 1861) and Letitia (who married Henry Harrison in 1860 and was mother to artist Sarah Cecilia (1863–1941) and Henry Harrison (17 December 1867–20 February 1954). Letitia remarried Henry Hartley Withers in 1896 after the death of her first husband.

145. Mary Ann McCracken [Holywood] to Dr Madden [Paris]<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** 14 July 1847

**Archive:** Royal Irish Academy

**Reference code:** 24 O 10/ 22 (i&ii)

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium (24 O 10/ 22i), embossed design. 1 folio (24 O 10/ 22ii), missing envelope

Belfast ^Holywood^ 14 July 1847 [Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

It was with mingled feelings of pleasure & regret that I heard of your appointment to a situation which tho' highly honourable & no doubt lucrative, yet as it must necessarily separate you from<sup>2</sup> your family & friends, it will be dearly enough purchased, it must be highly gratifying that it was conferred unsolicited on your part, & I was glad to learn from M<sup>r</sup> Getty that it might be changed on application for some -thing more desirable, which I hope has been realized –<sup>3</sup> I have never heard whether your second edition

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<sup>1</sup> Madden, his wife and younger son (Thomas More Madden) moved from Lisbon to Paris sometime around December 1846. They remained there until October 1847, "whilst their eldest son, William Forde Madden, who had been educated in the Royal College of Versailles, pursued his professional studies as a civil engineer in the Ecole Polytechnique." See Madden, *The Memoirs*, 192. This letter was presumably posted to Madden's Paris address.

<sup>2</sup> "you, from" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> Madden had been appointed Colonial Secretary of Western Australia; a post which he took up in November 1847. He retired from this position prematurely and returned to Ireland in early 1849, following the untimely death of his eldest son William Forde Madden on 29 March 1848.

of the United Irishmen has<sup>4</sup> yet been published nor any particulars concerning

concerning [sic] it, nor if the collection of Irish songs, which you purposed editing[,] have yet appeared,<sup>5</sup> but as your time must, & will continue to be so<sup>6</sup> fully employed as to leave no leisure for unnecessary letter writing, I must rest contented in future, in hearing of your health & welfare from<sup>7</sup> your niece Miss Cogan with whom I have occasionally corresponded –<sup>8</sup> Looking on you as a friend who felt interest[-]ed in our welfare, I intended two months ago to have informed you of<sup>9</sup> a change which has taken place in Maria's situation, which if you have not already heard, you will no doubt be surprized when<sup>10</sup> I tell you that she ^has^ changed her name & become responsible for the duties of a mother, to four as fine children as are to be met with[;]

[Fol. 1b]

two girls, & two boys, the eldest fourteen

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> "Irishmen, has" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> Possibly a reference to Richard Robert Madden, *Literary Remains of the United Irishmen of 1798* (Dublin: James Duffy & Sons, 1887).

<sup>6</sup> "be, so" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> "welfare, from" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>8</sup> Miss Cogan was one of Madden's four nieces; either Eliza, Catherine, Margaret (d. 4 April 1876) or Lizzie.

<sup>9</sup> "you, of" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>10</sup> "surprized, when" [comma omitted (ed.)].

years of age, the youngest not yet four—<sup>11</sup>  
[T]heir mother was a highly valued  
relative of ours<sup>12</sup> whom Maria had  
watched over during<sup>13</sup> the greater part  
of her last illness which was tedious,  
& since that[,] Maria has been taking  
a motherly care of ~~them~~ ^children,^ them having  
no other female relatives in Belfast  
but us – [I]t was certainly late in life  
to take such a step, but in Maria’s  
peculiar circumstance I think  
it was judicious, she had no near  
female relative but myself, & the  
law did not<sup>14</sup> acknowledge her as  
having any, which she felt bitterly[.]  
M<sup>r</sup> McCleery was most devotedly at-  
tached to his first wife & one of the best  
of husbands, is a most affectionate father  
& highly esteemed by all who know him<sup>15</sup>

& the children could scarcely be fonder

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>11</sup> The eldest was James Douglas McCleery (b. c.1833), who was later sent to live with his Uncle James McCleery in Louisville, Kentucky. Next was Anna McCleery, the author of “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” within Young’s *Old Belfast*. Then came Mary McCracken McCleery, who married Belfast bookseller Christopher Aitchison on 23 July 1862, before moving to Loanhead, Edinburgh where they raised a large family. The youngest was William McCleery Junior (b. August 1843), who studied at the Belfast Academical Institution in pursuit of a career in engineering.

<sup>12</sup> Francis Mary Isabella Douglas (1810–24 March 1844), MAM’s half second cousin as a result of her grandfather’s second marriage.

<sup>13</sup> “over, during” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>14</sup> “did, not” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>15</sup> William McCleery (1804–1 September 1874), accountant of Belfast. Upon the death of his first wife, Francis Mary Isabella Douglas, he remarried Maria McCracken in 1847. In a letter dated 13 January 1848, McCleery outlines to his cousin, John Malcolm Orr in Chicago, his desire to become the Belfast Consul for the United States. He states, “the only thing in my favour is that none of the other Candidates are Citizens of the U.S. and I am.” Private Collection of John Orr McCleery. Orr then wrote to the President recommending McCleery as “a Citizen of the State of Georgia and a person who resided many years in the United States.” Private Collection of John Orr McCleery.

of Maria were she really their mother[,] so that what would have been looked on by so many as an objection, was with her a principal inducement to the match[,] with which[,] tho' I never ventured to advise[,] I am quite satisfied, having the satisfaction to think that when I am gone she will be in the midst of an amiable & affectionate family, as otherwise she would then feel very desolate. We are come to Holywood for a few months but I am generally in Belfast twice a week having duties to perform there which I cannot think of relinquishing. The destitution of the land is[,] I trust[,] abating fast, but I fear the evils it has caused will<sup>16</sup> not so soon pass away[.] [T]he habit of depending on alms, in place of industry for support, & the difficulty of inducing the latter during the present

2

[Fol. 3a]

present [sic] weak state of the peasantry & the want of a head to rule, & guide & restrain their impatient spirits from acts of violence, I fear will be much felt, & now that Repealers are split into two parties, hostile to each other, it seems at a greater distance than ever –<sup>17</sup> [W]ho can the people look up to now, and according to the statements in the newspapers respecting the new Poor Rates,<sup>18</sup> it appears that the land will be in many districts[,] more than confiscated, &

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<sup>16</sup> "caused, will" [comma omitted (ed.).]

<sup>17</sup> In 1846 the Young Ireland faction of the Repeal Movement split from O'Connell.

<sup>18</sup> In the spring of 1847, Peel's government ruled that the Irish Poor Law would take full responsibility for both permanent and temporary famine relief.

I often think of our good old departed friend Jemmy, & his prophecy about the freeing of the soil, which from present circumstances appears nearer being accomplished ~~and~~ than he supposed, unless some other important

changes take place – [T]he exertions of Belfast to relieve the general desolation, have been considered by many as having been highly injurious to our own poor, by causing such an influx of strangers ~~by~~ <sup>^from^</sup> the inducements of the Night Asylum,<sup>19</sup> & Day Asylum,<sup>20</sup> to which such numbers flocked, that no[ugh]t out of five taken<sup>21</sup> daily to the Fever Hospitals<sup>22</sup> belonged to Belfast & fever patients were known to have <sup>^been^</sup> frequently brought by the Railway Train & laid down in the street – But one good result at least has occurred, which I trust will be permanent, the kind & cordial feeling among Ladies of the most opposite sects[,] for instance Catholics & Methodists, each acknowledging the high moral worth & excellence of the others, & the calling forth into active execution ~~the~~ benevolent feelings

[Fol. 3b]

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<sup>19</sup> Belfast's Night Asylum opened in November 1841. Due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions it closed in 1847.

<sup>20</sup> Belfast's Day Asylum was established in early 1847. Christine Kinealy notes that in that year, it "admitted 569 people in one day alone, three-quarters of whom were reported to be from the south and west of Ireland." Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Great Irish Famine: The Irish Famine 1845–52* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994), 171.

<sup>21</sup> "five, taken" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>22</sup> These included, the Union Fever Hospital and the General Hospital on Belfast's Frederick Street. Temporary fever hospitals were also set up in the Workhouse infirmary, the Lancasterian school, the old military quarters in Barrack Street and at the Academical Institution.

formerly only exercised in given subscriptions[.]

[F]arewell my dear D<sup>r</sup> & be assured that in  
whatever part of the world you may be placed,  
I will ever feel myself your  
attached friend

M A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken.

[Fol. 1a]<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The sign off was written across the top of Fol. 1a, presumably in an effort to avoid taking a new folio.

**146. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent<sup>1</sup>  
[London]**

**Date:** 27 September 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/1

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums: D1748/G/387/1A and D1748/G/387/1B. Envelope: D1748/G/387/1C, intaglio seal

**Missing attachment:** A statement of M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting's case

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 27 Sep 1849  
28 Castle St

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

Tho reluctant to trespass on  
time so fully occupied as yours must be,  
yet as a particular friend of mine (M<sup>rs</sup>  
Ed<sup>d</sup> Bunting) whom[,] did you know[,] you  
~~knew you~~ would feel pleasure in serving,  
^now^ requires advice, which I trust you will  
be able to give, I shall make no further  
apology for the intrusion – Pos[s]ibly you  
may not have heard of her sad bereave-  
ment, in the death of her only son Anthony,  
a fine young man of nine & twenty; talent-  
ed, energetic & diligent in his profession[,]  
that of an Engineer, a most affectionate son  
& brother, universally beloved & esteemed  
by all who knew him, both high & low,  
& in the way of soon realizing an ample

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<sup>1</sup> Robert James Tennent "RJT" (30 April 1803–25 May 1880), JP, DL, liberal MP for Belfast 1840–1852. He married MAM's niece Eliza McCracken on 22 June 1830.

<sup>2</sup> "✓/ Answ<sup>d</sup> by Eliza/ 6. Oct<sup>r</sup> 49-/ & aft<sup>ds</sup> by self/ on 4. Dec<sup>r</sup> 49." This endorsement reveals two missing letters. The first from Eliza Tennent [London] to MAM [Belfast], dated 6 October 1849 and the second from RJT [London] to MAM [Belfast], dated 4 December 1849.

fortune, he had been for some months in ill health but just as his friends were rejoicing in his recovery ~~health~~ he was

carried off by a few days illness. This afflictive event makes a great change in the circumstances of the family the more distressing because the late Ed<sup>d</sup> Bunting had devoted so much of his time & talents, for the best part of his life, to the collecting & arranging [of] the Irish melodies, & the various <sup>^</sup>researches<sup>^</sup> connected with the subject, that he consequently neglected his other professional duties; by attending to which, he might have secured a sufficient provision for the future support of his family – His indefatigable labours however[,] have been the means of conferring a lasting benefit on the world at large, but particularly on this country, as now every individual, from the Peasant to the Peer, who has an ear to hear, & a heart to feel, may, should opportunity offer, enjoy those delightful melodies, which but for Ed<sup>d</sup> Bunting's persevering exertions, would in all probability

[Fol. 1b]

probability [sic] have been lost in a short time to the world forever, & in addition to this is the high credit reflected on Ireland by<sup>3</sup> the proofs which his researches brought to light, of the pre-eminence <sup>^</sup>of this country<sup>^</sup> in the refined science of music, at a period when the surrounding nations were in a comparative state of barbarism; as I have heard him

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> "Ireland, by" [comma omitted (ed.)].

frequently state, that in proportion to the antiquity of the tune, was its strict accordance with the scientific rules of the art, & under all the circumstances of her case[,] it is considered by her <sup>^</sup>M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting[']s<sup>^</sup> friends that she might reasonably hope to be placed on the list of her Majesty[']s pensioners for their attainment in, & promotion of the Arts & Sciences, & consequently she purposes forwarding a memorial

to her Majesty on the subject & wishes for your advice as to the most likely way of ensuring success, what adds greatly to her claim is that<sup>4</sup> I heard M<sup>r</sup> Bunting declare that had it not been for her unremittingly patient & diligent assistance, he did not think he would ever <sup>^</sup>have<sup>^</sup> got thro' his arduous undertaking – I think she will write to you on the subject, but neither she nor any person now alive knows as much as myself, how completely he devoted many years of his life <sup>^</sup>he devoted to the subject<sup>^</sup> when his energies were all at their very best, & how frequently he went travelling thro' the country for many weeks <sup>^</sup>at once[,]<sup>^</sup> I think I may say months at one time[,] <sup>^</sup>attended<sup>^</sup> by a Professor of the Irish Language,<sup>5</sup> at another by a musician[,]

[Fol. 2b]

besides the entire summer of 1809 which he spent in London overseeing the publication of the work, all which was attend[-]

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>4</sup> "is, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Lynch.

ed with considerable expense,  
besides the loss of time, which  
should otherwise have been oc-  
cupied in giving instructions to  
others, so that I do not think he  
derived any pecuniary advant-  
age from his publications –  
I send you[,] by post[,] a prospectus  
of his last ~~publi~~ work[,] also a state-  
ment of Mrs Bunting's case which  
I think very weak & lame, & by  
no means doing justice to her  
cause[.] [M]ay I beg you will have  
the goodness to turn the matter in  
your mind, & if you can in any

way

[Fol. 3b]

by your advice or influence for-  
ward her interest, you will be serv-  
ing a most deserving lady, as she  
has always been one of the most  
devoted characters in every rela-  
tion of life, as a wife, a mother, a  
daughter, & a sister, never study-  
ing her own comfort or ease  
when<sup>6</sup> her exertions were[,] ~~her~~  
~~exertions were~~ or might be[,]  
useful to her friends – I trust  
therefore you will excuse me for  
trespassing so long on your  
time & patience & when you  
have leisure I will be extreme-  
ly obliged by a few lines from you[.]  
I was glad to hear from Fra<sup>s7</sup>  
on saturday that Eliza continues

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<sup>6</sup> "comfort, or ease, when" [commas omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> Francis McCracken Junior (c.1802–23 August 1863), son of John McCracken Junior who took over the family cotton mill business in 1836. He was also a noted collector of Pre-Raphaelite art. See Martyn Anglesea, "A Pre-Raphaelite Enigma in Belfast," in *Irish Art Review* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 40–45.

progressing towards recovery &

is now able to be taken out to  
drive & I trust she will gain  
ground daily until she is quite  
restored to health[.] [H]er sister  
Mary is gone to Ballynahinch,  
her family & Francis's are all  
well & the mills going on –<sup>8</sup>  
Pray give my love to Eliza & all  
your family circle[,] not forgetting  
your niece Mary & believe me  
my dear sir

Yours very truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

[Fol. 4a]

[Fol. 4b, blank]

[Superscription]  
Robert James Tennent Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Upper Heath  
Hampstead  
London

[Envelope, Fol. 1a]

[Endorsement, R.JT's hand]<sup>9</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>8</sup> Mary Hull née McCracken, John McCracken Junior's daughter and Eliza Tennent's sister.

<sup>9</sup> "Belfast - 27 - Sept: 49/ Miss Mary McCracken/ - pension for the Bunting/ family -/  
✓/ as within."

147. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Tennent [London]

**Date:** 3 October 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/H/29/3

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 separate folio, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 3<sup>d</sup> Sep<sup>2</sup> 1849  
28 Castle St

My Dear Eliza

You have no doubt heard of M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting[']s sad bereavement in the death of her dear son Anthony, as I wrote a few days ago to M<sup>r</sup> Tennent on the subject,<sup>3</sup> which you as a mother will know how to feel for, & sympathize with. The death of an only son, amiable, affectionate, & talented would under any circumstance be a deep affliction, but much more so when[,] as in this case, he was the principal support of the family, for tho' her daughters<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "✓/ Answ<sup>d</sup> by/ M<sup>rs</sup> T. 6. Oct<sup>r</sup> 49."

<sup>2</sup> ^[October]^ [Eliza Tennent ed., ink].

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 146 (PRONI D1748/G/387/1).

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Elizabeth Bunting and Mary Ann Bunting. Although this appeal for a civil pension was unsuccessful, Sarah's marriage to Mr MacRory of Belfast brought the family's financial difficulties to an end. Mrs Bunting lived comfortably with the MacRory's in Dublin's Rutland Square until her death, while Mary Ann Bunting subsequently married James Wright. See Fox, *Annals*, 82.

will be sufficiently provided for on the death of their uncle Bunting,<sup>5</sup> yet in the meantime Mrs Bunting possesses little or nothing but her household furniture & what Anthony had realized by his profession, & as her husband's labours have been the means of perpetuating a<sup>6</sup> source of gratification to all classes in society, to the least cultivated taste, as well as the most refined, besides the gratification of national pride<sup>^</sup> which all naturally feel, either less or more, & as the pecuniary circumstances of the family were injured by his<sup>^</sup> having so diverted his time, & talents, it seems but reasonable to hope

[Fol. 1b]

that Mrs Bunting might<sup>7</sup> become a sharer in the fund at her Majesty's disposal for the remuneration of such services, were her claim properly brought forward, & what I have therefore to beg of you my dear Eliza is that<sup>8</sup> you<sup>^</sup> may use your persuasive influence<sup>^</sup> with Mr Tennent, in Mrs Bunting's behalf, to prevail on him to give his best advice, & interest in her favour – [W]ere you intimate with her, I am sure you would feel much pleasure in promoting her

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Bunting.

<sup>6</sup> "perpetuating, a" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> "Bunting, might" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>8</sup> "is, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

welfare as she is a most exemplary character. It was only on Mr Bunting[']s last visit to us, just a few months before his death, that in alluding to Mrs Bunting[,]

he said "you know Mary[,] that when looking for a wife, I thought of many women before I met with her, & if I waited long[,] I waited to some purpose, as she is superior to them all" – [T]his was certainly very high praise, & in every other relation of relation [sic] of life[,] her conduct was equally praiseworthy. At another time after the publication of his last volume, he said he did not ^think^ he would ever have got it completed but for ^her^ unrewearying assistance – Their daughters are very fine girls, & much admired but of very delicate constitutions. I shall say no more on the subject, feeling confident that you will do your best to promote her interest, by keeping it in Mr Tennent[']s view[.]

[Fol. 2b]

I was very glad to hear from Francis that you were gaining ground daily, which I trust you will continue to do, until you get quite strong, & able to return to your own home – You will then see many great improvements in the appearance of Belfast, & in many other aspects of more importance than mere appearance, & I trust the

[Fol. 3a]

Queen's gracious visit<sup>9</sup> is the harbinger of much improvement to the whole country, & that a better spirit will shortly prevail<sup>^</sup> betwixt the two countries, & among all classes of Irishmen.

Hoping your family circle all enjoy health & happiness as those of this household do at present, & with love to all, including your niece Mary & best respects to M<sup>r</sup> Tennent[,] I remain my dear Eliza

[Fol. 3b]

Yours sincerely  
Mary Ann McCracken

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<sup>9</sup> On 11 August 1849, Queen Victoria spent five hours visiting Belfast.

**148. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent [London]**

**Date:** 30 November 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/2

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery within another envelope

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, embossed design. Envelope: D1748/G/387/2B, intaglio seal

**Attachment:** A pension for the widow of Edward Bunting (see section 5.2.7 below)

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 30<sup>th</sup> Nov  
28 Castle St

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

I herewith send you  
a paper which I received  
by this morning[']s Post from  
Miss Bunting, requesting  
I would forward it to you for  
your signature in order  
that it[,] with as many sig-  
natures as can be obtain-  
ed from people of weight &  
consequence, to accompany  
the Memorial to her Ma-  
jesty which is to be handed

to Lord Carlise when  
ready, & before it be too  
late for the present ses-

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> “✓/ 4 Dec<sup>r</sup> 49 –/ authorizing her to affix my/ name to docum<sup>t</sup> of [...] copy sent/ me,  
& retaining copy/ to try for some other/ good names/ &c.”

sion.<sup>2</sup> Mrs Bunting has been advised to this plan by Mr McDonnell (the Dr<sup>r</sup>'s son) & has been promised the signatures of several bishops, the Duke of Leinster<sup>3</sup> & several of the Nobility, & wishes also for some of the leading people in Belfast to add their names also

but in order to expedite the business, I have another ^similar^ paper & the names are afterwards to be pasted on another paper[,] cutting off the blank portions, no doubt it would be advantageous if you could obtain a few names more should it not cause delay, but expedition is of much importance – I saw Francis today & Mary Hull yesterday & was rejoiced

[Fol. 2a]

to hear such good account of Eliza's health, they & their families ^are well,^ & Francis is very hopeful of success in his business, which is a cause of general satisfaction. Mrs McCracken's<sup>4</sup> health & spirits seem much impro-

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>2</sup> George William Frederick Howard (18 April 1802–5 December 1864), 7th Earl of Carlisle and Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1832 until 1841.

<sup>3</sup> Augustus Frederick FitzGerald (21 August 1791–10 October 1874), 3rd Duke of Leinster.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Ann McCracken née Taggart (c.1803–1867), Francis McCracken Junior's wife.

ved of late – I saw M<sup>rs</sup> Tomb<sup>5</sup>  
today who desired me to give  
her love to Eliza for whom she  
was very kindly inquiring.  
Pray give my love to her also  
& to the rest of your family circle.  
Yours most truly  
M A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Robert James Tennent Esq<sup>r</sup>

[Envelope Fol. 1a]

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>6</sup>

[Envelope Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>5</sup> Presumably a daughter-in-law of Elinor and David Tomb.

<sup>6</sup> "Belfast .30. Nov. -49/ Miss Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ -with docum<sup>t</sup> in favour/ of pension  
to widow/ &c. of Edw<sup>d</sup> Bunting./ ✕/ 4. Dec<sup>r</sup> 49/ as within."

**149. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Tennent [London]**

**Date:** 6 December 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/H/29/4

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery<sup>1</sup>

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 6<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1849

28 Castle St

My Dear Eliza

I wrote to M<sup>r</sup> Tennent a few days ago<sup>3</sup> requesting his signature to a memorial to be handed to Lord Carlisle ^for presentation^ to her Majesty in favour of M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting[']s claim for a pension, in consideration of her husband[']s labours in rescuing the Irish melodies from oblivion & today I had a letter from Miss Bunting on the same subject,<sup>4</sup> saying that the Marquess of Donegall[']s<sup>5</sup> signature ^& interest^ would be of the utmost importance & as he was now in London[,] it would render her a lasting obligation if M<sup>r</sup> Tennent would

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 150 (PRONI D1748/G/3), wherein MAM explained to RJT that his letter arrived "a few minutes after I had dispatched mine for Eliza to the Post office."

<sup>2</sup> "✓."

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 148 (PRONI D1748/G/387/2).

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter from either Sarah Elizabeth Bunting or Mary Ann Bunting [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], received 6 December 1849.

<sup>5</sup> George Hamilton Chichester (10 February 1797–20 October 1883), 3rd Marquess of Donegall.

have the goodness to apply to his Lordship for that favour. The progress in Belfast is very satisfactory, there are

now 25 names procured, almost all gentlemen of the highest influence – Sir Robert Bateson,<sup>6</sup> Mr Gregg, all the Bank[-]ers of the Belfast, the Ulster & the Northern ^Bank[,]^ Doctor Dixon, many Professors, J. Ps[,]<sup>7</sup> D.L's[,]<sup>8</sup> D.P's<sup>9</sup> &c &c[.] [T]he rest of the Professors I expect will be obtained tomorrow & I hope from the encouragement she has got in Dublin that she will be successful – I prefer writing to you as I know that gentlemen of business having so many weighty ^public^ matters to attend to, have not always leisure to ~~attend to~~ think of lesser things, but you[,] my dear Eliza[,] will not let it slip out of your recollection, & will know the best time to remind Mr ^T-^ of it, & so I leave it with you – I saw your sister Mary the day before yesterday & was glad to hear from her how well your health was

[Fol. 1b]

progressing & that all your family[,] including your niece Mary[,] were well. Mary looked very well, & I am glad to observe a great improvement in the appearance of Mrs Fra<sup>s</sup> McCracken, & her family all appear so cheerful now Francis's Mill is going on[,] ^to^ the great joy & comfort of hundreds of poor who

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>6</sup> Sir Robert Bateson (13 March 1782–21 April 1863), 1st Baronet of Belvoir Park.

<sup>7</sup> Justices of the Peace.

<sup>8</sup> Deputy Lieutenants.

<sup>9</sup> Deputy Presidents of the Supreme Court.

were before in want & suffering, & are now comfortable & happy, & Fr<sup>s</sup> is full of hope as all is going on well – The health of the town is much improved of late & of course there is an increase of general happiness[.] [W]hen convenient[,] I will be glad to hear from you & with kind regards & best wishes to your fireside circle[,] I remain my dear Eliza

Yours affectionately  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>10</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>10</sup> "Belfast 6. Dec<sup>r</sup> 1849/ Miss M.A. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ – M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting's applic<sup>on</sup>/ for a pension – &c/ ✓."

**150. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent [London]**

**Date:** 8 December 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/3

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & separate 1 folio. Envelope: D1748/G/387/3C, 3 circular date stamps, penny postage hand stamp, obliterating stamp, missing adhesive postage stamp, intaglio seal

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 8th Dec<sup>r</sup> 1849

28 Castle St

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

I duly received your kind letter respecting M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting's business<sup>2</sup> which came to hand a few minutes after I had dispatched mine for Eliza to the Post office,<sup>3</sup> & this morning's mail brought me one from Miss Bunting saying that they<sup>4</sup> had been obliged to give up the idea of forwarding the memorial this month partly from the impossibility of getting in all the papers in time, & partly from Sir Rob<sup>t</sup> Ferguson[,]<sup>5</sup> when applied to

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<sup>1</sup> "✓."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, RJT [London] to MAM [Belfast], received 6 December 1849.

<sup>3</sup> See Letter 149 (PRONI D1748/H/29/4).

<sup>4</sup> "saying, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> Sir Robert Alexander Ferguson (26 December 1795–13 March 1860), 2nd Baronet of The Farm, Londonderry.

for his name, having not only signed the memorial, but also promised

when he went to London to present it to the Prime Minister,<sup>6</sup> & as that will not be till Feb<sup>y</sup>, there is still a full month or more to get the matter completed, which I trust will be sufficient to obtain signatures enough of the highest respectability to give it effect[.] I feel extremely obliged for your entering so warmly into the business & feel assured that M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting will be most deeply grateful for your kind & friendly exertions on her behalf –

Today's newspapers notice a probability of either a change of Ministry, or a change of measures in regard to protecting duties which I hope will not take place, as a measure that must raise the price of food to

working class, [---] particularly ~~class~~ ^the manufacturing^ class, cannot I should suppose, benefit the farmers, but it is certainly a most difficult matter to enact laws that will promote the general happiness of the community & benefit one class without injuring another, & it seems strange when one looks back on all the wonderful inventions, & discoveries which have taken place during the last sixty or seventy years, that the science of

[Fol. 1b]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>6</sup> John Russell (18 August 1792–28 May 1878), 1st Earl Russell and Whig Prime Minister from 30 June 1846 until 23 February 1852.

political economy seems<sup>7</sup> yet so far from being well understood, in one respect however I think the advocates of free trade go a step too far, & that is in admitting the produce of slave labour into the British market, if it be not practicable to prohib-

it to altogether[,] it <sup>^there^</sup> surely might be such a duty on its admission as would exclude A<sup>a's8</sup> if consistent with common honesty to buy, or promote the traf[f]ic in stolen goods, & is it not the most erred species of injustice to rob a man of himself, & to countenance & encourage such injustice is much the same, & it used to be a common adage long, long ago, that the receiver was as bad as the thief, but I hope the time is approaching when just news of that, & many other subjects will become prevalent – [W]ere all who profess the christian religion real<sup>9</sup> christians in heart, & practice[,] loving their neighbour as themselves, & do to others as they would wish others to do to them[;] this world would be a heaven upon earth – You will be aware of course[,] as there

[Fol. 2b]

is now no haste, that I did not affix your name to the memorial so that you can add it to the list in your own hands before returning it[.] [F]orgive me for tres-

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>7</sup> "economy, seems" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>8</sup> America's.

<sup>9</sup> "religion, real" [comma omitted (ed.)].

passing so much on your time with  
my crude ideas on politics, which  
is a subject in which the general  
happiness is so much involved  
that it is mixed with almost  
every other subject – With love  
to Eliza, Mary & all your young  
folk[,] I remain[,] my dear Mr Tennent  
Yours very truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 3b, blank]

[Diamond obliterating stamp, black, partial]<sup>10</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1a]

[Superscription]

Robert J Tennent Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Upper Heath Hampstead  
London

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>11</sup>

[Circular date stamp, black]<sup>12</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1b]

[Penny Postage hand stamp, black]<sup>13</sup>

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The majority of this hand stamp originally covered the adhesive postage stamp which is now missing.

<sup>11</sup> "Belfast 8 Dec. 49 Miss M.A. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken –/ ab<sup>t</sup> the Bunting/ Memorial – which Sir / R. Ferguson is to present in Feb<sup>y</sup> / Free trade – slave/ labour &c."

<sup>12</sup> "BELFAST/ DE9/ 1849/ M.<sup>NC</sup>."

<sup>13</sup> "Penny Post" This hand stamp is extremely smudged and faint.

<sup>14</sup> "1A/ 100E10/ 1849."

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "3/ DE 9/ 1849/ H."

151. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Eliza Tennent [London]

**Date:** 26 December 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/H/29/5

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 separate folio. Envelope: D1748/H/29/5B, 2 circular date stamps, intaglio seal, red wafer seal, missing adhesive postage stamp

**Missing attachment:** Copy of a paper to be sent alongside Mrs Bunting's memorial

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 26 Dec 49

28 Castle St

My Dear Eliza

I send you a copy of a paper which is intended to accompany Mrs Bunting's memorial to her Majesty, being extracts from various letters respecting Mr Bunting's collection of Irish music, some of which were ^addressed^ to your father – I am sure you will be glad to hear that ~~that~~ she has much reason to hope for success from the

great number of names she has obtained to her memorial from gentlemen of the highest respectability[.] I believe I mentioned in

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "✓."

my last[,] the Marquis of  
Downshire,<sup>2</sup> since then I  
had a letter from M<sup>rs</sup> Bunt-  
ing saying she<sup>3</sup> had a very kind  
note from our friend Geo Tomb<sup>4</sup>  
with a list of 18 names, all of  
very influential, which gra-  
tified me very much, as I  
felt rather reluctant at the

time I wrote to him with a<sup>^</sup>  
list requesting his name,  
having learned from M<sup>rs</sup>  
Tomb that he was confined  
to the house with a severe  
cold & unable to attend to bu-  
siness for some days previous,  
of course I waited until I heard  
that he was better – M<sup>r</sup> Dun-  
bar<sup>5</sup> to whom I also wrote on  
the subject,<sup>6</sup> not only added his  
own name, but has also pro-  
cured the Primates, & a Capt<sup>n</sup>  
James R.N<sup>7</sup> & MP, & M<sup>r</sup> Shailly  
has obtained the Professors of

[Fol. 2a]

of the Queen's College, among  
whom is your friend M<sup>r</sup> Hen-  
ry – M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting[,] in a late  
letter[,] <sup>^</sup>said<sup>^</sup> that it is not material

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur Hill (6 August 1812–6 August 1868), 4th Marquess of Downshire.

<sup>3</sup> "saying, she" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>4</sup> George Tomb Q.C., assistant barrister based in Dublin.

<sup>5</sup> George Orr, who assumed the surname Dunbar in 1833 (c.1800–17 August 1875), JP, DL, mayor of Belfast 1842–3, MP for Belfast.

<sup>6</sup> Missing letter, Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to George Dunbar, 1849.

<sup>7</sup> Royal Navy.

as to the order in which the signatures appear on the list, as they are all to be copied according to procedures ~~but~~ ^which^ the original ^list^ is to accompany to prove the authenticity of the signatures –<sup>8</sup> Mrs Bunting wishes the lists to be returned by the beginning of next month as she expects her brother<sup>9</sup> in Dublin about that time, to get the business properly arranged in every

respect & no doubt Mr Tennent will ^hav[e]^ his ready by that time, & it will be ^to^ the same purpose whether he sends the list to me, or to Mrs Bunting[,] 45 Upper Baggot Street[,] Dublin – The latter would save time – I hope[,] my dear Eliza[,] that you continue recovering strength daily, & that on your return to Belfast you will be able to visit every part of the town, & see all the wonderful changes, (many of which are great improvements) which have taken place during

[Fol. 3a]

your absence – Wishing  
~~you~~ many happy returns  
^of the season^ to you & your family circle[,] I  
remain[,] my dear Eliza  
Yours truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

[Fol. 3b]

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<sup>8</sup> Missing letter, Mary Anne Bunting [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], c. December 1849.

<sup>9</sup> Mr Chapman.

I wrote the foregoing nearly  
in the dark with my back to  
the window so that you will  
have difficulty to decypher [sic]  
some of it –

[Superscription]

M<sup>rs</sup> Tennent

Upper Heath Hampstead

London

[Envelope, Fol. 1a]

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>10</sup>

[Circular date stamp, blue]<sup>11</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1b]

[Circular date stamp, red]<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "Belfast – 26. Dec<sup>r</sup> 1849/ Miss M.A.M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ – with paper accompanying/ M<sup>rs</sup>  
Bunting's Mem<sup>l</sup> for/ a pension –/ &c./ ✓."

<sup>11</sup> "BELFAST/ DE28/ 1849/ [...]."

<sup>12</sup> "N [crown motif] O/ 28DE28/ 1849."

**152. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennant [London]**

**Date:** 8 January 1850

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/4

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 8<sup>th</sup> June 1849<sup>2</sup>

28 Castle St<sup>3</sup>

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

I received a letter yesterday from M<sup>rs</sup> Miss Bunting requesting me to forward[, ] by return of post[, ] the list of names which had been obtained in Belfast to her mother[']s memorial,<sup>4</sup> which I accordingly did last night, & had the pleasure of sending the entire list filled up, the names amounting to 54, the list just then being ^returned^ from the Bishop of Down & Connor,<sup>5</sup> for whose name a vacant space had been reserved next to the

---

<sup>1</sup> “✓/ 10. Jan<sup>y</sup> 50/ – had not had time to get/ any sign<sup>res</sup> –, nobody in town/ &c... Hoped she had forwarded/ my name,/ or if not that she w<sup>d</sup>./ &c. &c.”

<sup>2</sup> June ^Jan<sup>y</sup>^ 1849 [RJT ed., ink].

<sup>3</sup> ^January 1850^ [RJT ed., ink]. RJT has corrected MAM's date from 8 June 1849 to 8 January 1850.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, Sarah Elizabeth Bunting or Mary Ann Bunting [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], received 7 June 1849.

<sup>5</sup> Cornelius Denvir (13 August 1791–10 July 1866), Lord Bishop of Down and Connor from 1835 until 1865.

Primate's, which immediately succeeded the  
~~Primates above which I was~~ the Marquis  
of Downshire[']s at the top, tho' not the first  
procured – The Bishop returned the list  
with a most kind & polite note saying that  
he had signed it with much pleasure &  
would be happy to hear of its being suc-  
cessful

& begged I would command his  
services in any way I thought would be  
most advantageous to the widow & fami-  
ly of the late[,] celebrated M<sup>r</sup> Bunting[;]  
of course M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting may rely on  
his best exertions in her favour –  
M<sup>r</sup> Chapman[,] her brother[,] was expect-  
ed immediately in Dublin in order to  
get all in readiness to be handed by  
M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Donnell to Lord Carlisle for  
presentation to her Majesty & I hope  
from the number of names of the high-  
est respectability[,] both as to station &  
character[,] that her claim will be favour-  
ably received, & attended to – [S]hould you  
have succeeded in obtaining even  
one or two ^signatures^ in addition to your own[,]  
will you have the goodness either to send  
them direct to M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting[,] 45 Upper  
Baggot St[,] Dublin, or to me, which would[,]  
I suppose[,] only cause one day's delay & I  
would be glad to know how Eliza is, as I

[Fol. 1b]

was sorry to learn from Mary Hull  
yesterday that she had not been so well  
well [sic] latterly as ~~she had been~~ for some  
time before, but this I hope is only  
from the severity of the season which  
is much felt by all invalids & when  
spring advances[,] I trust its genial in-

[Fol. 2a]

fluence will renovate her health –<sup>6</sup>  
[P]ray give my love to her & with best  
wishes to you & your family circle & that  
you may all enjoy many happy re-  
turns of the season[,] I remain dear Sir

Yours sincerely  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

Mary Hull & family were all well  
she said, except M<sup>r</sup> Hull, who had a  
cough which he did not expect to  
get rid of during the cold weather[.]  
[S]he had heard[,] a day or two before[,]  
from her sisters in Dublin[,] who were  
both well –

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> Eliza Tennent died just over three months later.

<sup>7</sup> "Belfast – 8. Jan<sup>y</sup> – 50/ Miss Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ –ab<sup>t</sup> the Bunting/ Memorial/ ✓/  
10<sup>th</sup>/ as within."

**153. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennant [London]**

**Date:** 5 February 1850

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/5

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 1850

28 Castle St

My Dearest Mr Tennent

M<sup>rs</sup> Bunting has been advised to have her memorial presented to Lord John Russell and as you are to be requested to be one of the number[,] she wished me to let you know that her brother[,] who is shortly to be [in] London[,] would wait on you for that purpose. She had been most anxious to obtain the Marquis of Donegall's<sup>2</sup> signature & also that of Lord Belfast[,]<sup>3</sup> considering their

names the more important from Belfast[,] their own town having been the scene

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "✓."

<sup>2</sup> George Hamilton Chichester, (10 February 1797–20 October 1883), 3rd Marquess of Donegall.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Richard Chichester (25 November 1827–11 February 1853), Earl of Belfast and the Marquess of Donegall's second son.

of Mr Bunting's labours & his residence for the half of his life & as none of his consumers wished to interfere in the matter[,] tho' feeling an interest in it[,] nor even Mr Davison[,] one of the Marquis's law agents[,] Mrs Bunting requested I would write to him as there was no other person who could so well verify the truth of the statement, which I did eight days ago but no answer has been returned -<sup>4</sup> [I]f you had an opportunity of speaking to the Marquis on the subject & would urge her suit[,] you would confear [sic] especial favours on her & should his signature be too late for the

presented copy[,] it might appear in the other & he might further the suit by his weight & influence otherwise - I shall tres[pass] no longer on time which must now be precious when affairs involving the welfare of the nation are under consideration but shall reserve for Eliza what farther I have to communicate & remain dear Sir

[Fol. 2a]

Yours truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

Excuse my mistake thro haste[.]

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<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Mr Davison, 28 January 1850.

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>5</sup> "Belfast – 5 Feb<sup>y</sup> 1850/ Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ – ab<sup>t</sup> L<sup>d</sup> Donegall's sign<sup>r</sup>/ to Edw. Bunting's Memorial/ ✓."

**154. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennant [Belfast]**

**Date:** 23 September 1851

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/6

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium. Envelope: D1748/G/387/6B, various hand stamps, missing adhesive postage stamp

**Missing attachment:** List of subscribers and their contributions for the Wilson family

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 28<sup>th</sup>2 Sep 51

28 Castle St<sup>3</sup>

My Dear Mr Tennent

I received your note yesterday[,]<sup>4</sup> from which I think I must have neglected to send you a list of the contributions I had received for the unfortunate Wilson family, or you would have perceived that no subscription[,] however small[,] is to be despised, as by diligence & perseverance the gross amount thus obtained becomes considerable & you may see by the list now enclosed that there are but fourteen

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<sup>1</sup> "rec<sup>d</sup> &c. / ✓ / 24<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 51 / send<sup>s</sup> 5 / -" RJT's endorsement indicates that he replied to this letter the following day. Missing letter, RJT [Belfast] to MAM [Belfast], 24 September 1851.

"Mem. Total subscr. [...] £38.1.-" [RJT ed., pencil].

<sup>2</sup> ^23<sup>d</sup>^ [RJT ed., ink].

<sup>3</sup> 28 qu: N<sup>o</sup> 21? [RJT ed., ink]. RJT appears to be querying MAM's house number.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, RJT [Belfast] to MAM [Belfast], received 22 September 1851.

sums above 10/0 & 36 names under 5/0 while some of the names include two or three of one family – It would not be reasonable to expect more than small subscriptions for a family

not known to more than about half a dozen of individuals ^in Belfast^ while there have been such heavy demands of late, both for public & private charities, the merits of which are known & felt by the inhabitants, & I have therefore [...] been refused by several very rich & truly charitable individuals, from the very pressing claims which they felt it more their bounden duty to attend to; which in other cases I have obtained more than ^double what^ I expected, & this encourages me to go on, still trusting from the success that has hitherto attended my efforts, that I shall be able to get M<sup>rs</sup> Wilson supported until the end of the quarter, when, if the promises that induced

[Fol. 1b]

her to remove to Cushendall<sup>5</sup> be realized, her own exertions will be sufficient for the support of her family, & as you may perceive from M<sup>r</sup> Irwin[']s note[,] nothing on her part will be wanting to ensure success – I have just been called away to receive 7/6 (a very handsome subscription) from M<sup>r</sup> Sinclair

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>5</sup> Cushendall, a village in County Antrim.

Mulholland,<sup>6</sup> to for whom I had left  
a note yesterday –<sup>7</sup> I trust I am  
not presumptuous in my  
hopes & expectations, I look on  
it as a duty of gratitude in re-  
turn for the enjoyment of health so  
unusual at my time of life[,] to em-  
ploy my short remaining time  
in trying to be serviceable to  
others, & leave the rest to Providence.

In your observations res-  
pecting Mr Wilson[']s friends,  
you seem not aware that he  
has no near relations by his  
father, but our family, & between  
the two families there<sup>8</sup> was but  
little cordiality & consequently[,]  
no more could be expected from  
that quarter than mere compassi-  
on to strangers[.]^ [H]is other relatives were dist-  
ant cousins who had frequently  
assisted him before^ but at last grew  
tired & gave but^ little latterly – The  
Joys of Dublin are third cousins &  
had never before been applied to[,]  
neither had they ever seen him –  
The most unpleasant part of the^ business to  
me is that my niece Maria is much  
annoyed by my frequent collections for  
in^divi^dual cases & of course I did not tell  
her then, or^ nor^ now that I was writing to you  
or she would have joined in kind regards

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> St Clair Kelburn Mulholland (12 March 1798–27 January 1872), of Eglantine, Hillsborough, Justice of the Peace for County Down and High Sheriff of County Louth who ran a linen mill alongside his brothers Andrew and Thomas Mulholland.

<sup>7</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Mr Sinclair Mulholland [Belfast], 22 September 1851.

<sup>8</sup> “families, there” [comma omitted (ed.)].

with yours truly

M A McCracken

[Town name stamp, blue]<sup>9</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1a]

[Diamond obliterating stamp, partial, black]<sup>10</sup>

[Superscription]  
R. J. Tennent Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Green Island  
Belfast

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>11</sup>

[Circular date stamp, blue]<sup>12</sup>

[Envelope, Fol. 1b]

[Circular date stamp, blue]<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "GREEN ISLAND/ BELFAST."

<sup>10</sup> "62" This was the cancellation number for Belfast. Presumably, the partially missing part of this hand stamp originally covered the adhesive postage stamp which is now missing.

<sup>11</sup> "Belfast – 23 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1851/ Miss Mary Ann McCracken/– ab<sup>t</sup> subscription for R.S. Wilson/ 4/ [...] 57."

<sup>12</sup> "BELFAST/ SE23/ 1851."

<sup>13</sup> "BELFAST/ SE24/ 1851."

155. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 26 November 1851

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/71

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, embossed design, two blue paper binding strips along right side of Fol. 2b, missing final folio (the text of which is transcribed by Madden onto Fol. 2b), missing envelope

Belfast 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 1851  
28 Castle St

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of 21<sup>st</sup>[,]<sup>1</sup> with prospectus of the work you are now editing & rejoice to find that your time is not so entirely occupied with the duties of your public situation as to prevent you from exerting your abilities in another line for the public good, the last letter which I received from you mentioned your time being so fully occupied, that altho' longing to know how you were & what you were about[,] I did not dare to trespass on time so valuable – The subject you are engaged in, is one of general interest, all being equ[a]lly certain of death, & consequently, all should feel deeply concern[-]ed

concerned [sic] in every thing connected with such a serious subject, & I have no doubt but that the manner

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], 21 November 1851.

in which you <sup>^</sup>have<sup>^</sup> treated <sup>^</sup>it<sup>^</sup> will be essentially instructive, & well worthy of attention & certainly a<sup>2</sup> considerable portion of the miseries of this country arises from the connexion between Church & State, but that, & all other evils, I think proceed from the want of real[,] vital, & practical religion[,] for were all ~~the~~ who profess to be christians truly so in heart, & practise, obedient to the commands so simple & easy to be understood & imitations of the example of him whose followers they profess to be, there would neither be slaveholding in America (where there is no connexion between Church & State, but much hypocritical profession of piety) nor any of the numerous unjust & oppressive laws with

which great Britain abounds, a prominent one in this country being heavily taxing the poorest sect for the support of the <sup>^</sup>Clergy of the<sup>^</sup> richer sects, from which they (the poorest) derive no advantage & even to those for whose benefit the establish[-]ment is intended, <sup>^</sup>they<sup>^</sup> are but little the better of it, it is so ill divided, the Dignitaries of the Church being supported in such luxurious idleness, while the hard working ~~curates~~ curates[,] after an expensive education, with the feelings <sup>^</sup>& habits<sup>^</sup> of a gentleman & a station to support, are not better paid than a merchant[']s clerk of an inferior order – What a pity Dan O'Connell did not adhere to getting rid of that evil rather than a repeal of the Union, he obtained a partial

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>^</sup>"A<sup>^</sup> [Madden ed., ink].

reform in the one, but no progress

whatever from his labours in the other, & now I fear the labours of the United Irish is<sup>3</sup> about to be overturned, & the Orange system of religious discord & ill will be re-established –<sup>4</sup> It seems as if the world was going back, in place of advancing in just & liberal senti[-]ments, both here & in distant coun[-]tries, the fugitive slave Law in America<sup>5</sup> & the great ^increase^ in the slave population of America is quite off putting; where, & when, is all this to end[?] I fear neither you, nor I will live to see an end to these evils – Mr Corbett[,]<sup>6</sup> who was clerk in the office of the Northern Star when it was wrecked, called on me yesterday to ask if I had a pamph[let] called “Wind and Weather” on the dispersion<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

<I am circulating your prospectus & will continue to do so>

[Fol. 1a]

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<sup>3</sup> is ^are^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> In 1848, Orangemen were quick to claim undue credit for the defeat of the Young Irelander’s rebellion, framing it as a sectarian struggle and inflaming sectarian tensions. See Christine Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution: 1848 in Ireland*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 283.

<sup>5</sup> The Fugitive Slave Law or Act of 1850.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Andrew Corbett, printer and editor of the *Northern Star* newspaper.

<sup>7</sup> ^of the English Fleet. Signed Mary Anne McCracken^ [Madden ed., ink]. See James Porter, *Winder and Weather: A Sermon on the Late Providential Storm which Dispersed the French Fleet off Bantry Bay. Preached to the Congregation of Gray-Abbey, on Thursday the 16th February, Being the Day Appointed by Government for Thanksgiving* (Belfast, 1797). Based upon the pamphlet’s full title, it would appear that either MAM assigned the wrong nationality to the fleet or that Madden’s insertion was erroneous.

156. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 27 & 29 November 1853

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/72

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums, large tear along left side of Fol. 2a/b, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b and Fol. 4b, missing envelope

Belfast 27 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1853  
Bankmore

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I was indeed very much gratified yesterday at receiving your letter<sup>1</sup> as I had been wishing very much to hear how you were & how ~~now~~ occupied, but had not a sufficient excuse for trespassing on your time – The work you mentioned[,] the great christian hero of the 15<sup>th</sup> century[,] was lately mentioned with much approbation in one of our Belfast papers, ^published^ by R Madden, but I did not know that you were the author ~~from~~ from [“]Doctor[”] not being prefixed to your name, but I shall endeavour to get it from one ^of^ our libraries ^when I have time to read it^ –<sup>2</sup> Israel Milliken is still alive but confined to the house, it is some time since

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], received 26 November 1853.

<sup>2</sup> The work to which MAM is referring is Richard Robert Madden, *The Life and Martyrdom of Savonarola: Illustrative of the History of Church and State Connexion* 2 vols (London: T. C. Newby, 1853).

I saw him[.]<sup>3</sup> [H]e was very  
anxious to get our friend Hope's  
tombstone erected but said you  
were to supply the inscription &  
as he is incapable of any active  
exertion[,] he ^had^ put it in good hands[;]  
John Teeling,<sup>4</sup> son of our late[,]  
much respected friend Luke  
Teeling, who is now settled in  
Belfast as an Attorney & is[,] I be-  
lieve[,] doing tolerably well as  
I see his name in the news-  
paper accounts of Law pro-  
ceedings – Robert Hope who ^was^ for-  
merly living in a small cottage at  
the back of the Old Poorhouse, has remov-  
ed somewhere else, I used to call there  
to see his family, but since Mr Smith[,]<sup>5</sup>  
the printer[,] gave up business, he has re-  
moved from that, I am not sure where, but  
heard lately it was to some of our turn-  
pikes of which I heard ^he had^ charge & intend

[Fol. 1b]

finding out the family the first day  
I can command time, as I value  
the family for his father & mother's sake  
as well as his own & think also highly  
of his wife, I think they had four child-  
ren when I last saw them – I fear the  
republication of the United Irish will  
be a losing concern, as the history is  
neither new enough, nor old enough,

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> Israel Milliken (c.1771–9 January 1857), of Belfast, muslin manufacturer and United Irishman who was arrested on charges of High Treason on 1 May 1797 and imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol until September 1798. He founded Belfast's Private Cold Water Baths which in 1879 became the Peter's Hill Private Baths. See a letter from Israel Milliken to Madden, dated 22 April 1842 (TCD MS873/398) and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, Second Edition, 572–73.

<sup>4</sup> John Teeling (1782–1799), seventh child of Luke and Mary Teeling, Belfast attorney.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Smyth.

to excite a general interest. [T]he wonders  
of the present ^day[,]^ the discoveries in nature[,]  
the inventions in art & all ^the^ extraordinary  
changes in the mind of man, are of such  
absorbing interest that the politics of  
half a century back is little thought ^of[.]^ [I]f  
however[,] the work is to go on, I think  
there were a few inaccuracies which might  
be corrected, & should it make no difference[,]  
perhaps it would be as well ~~to~~ not to menti-  
on Miss Grizzy Joy[']s name in full, as when  
living she would have shrunk from publicity[.]

I think it is about two years since  
the death of Capt<sup>n</sup> Russell, but I was  
just going to write to his widow[,]  
from ^whom^ I hear occasionally & shall g[ive]<sup>6</sup>  
you all particulars, she resides at Wiveli-  
scombe —<sup>7</sup> [H]er address is Ford Wiveliscombe[,]  
Somersetshire, she has two children[;]  
the oldest a girl sixteen years of age, the  
youngest a boy of ten, they are both rather  
delicate in health but she says they are  
most affectionate & would not do any thi[ng]<sup>8</sup>  
to give her uneasiness, she seems quite  
wrapped up in them, she had a married si[ster]<sup>9</sup>  
with her when she was in Belfast, & her br[other-]<sup>10</sup>  
in[-]law who was very kind, & at the expense [...tear...]<sup>11</sup>  
her daughter[']s education at a boarding

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by binding.

<sup>7</sup> Wiveliscombe, a town in Somerset, England.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Most likely, "of."

school, but her brother[-]in[-]law M<sup>r</sup> Lewis di[ed]<sup>12</sup>  
two years ago, & her sister is lately married  
& gone abroad[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Russell left Wales, her  
mother having also died at Brecon South  
Wales, & the cause of M<sup>rs</sup> R leaving that[,]  
was on account of her son[']s education as

her circumstances rendered it  
necessary she should reside where  
there was a good day school for her  
son[.] I fear I am tiring your pati-  
ence with my tedious details, which  
is a general fault of mine – I am  
glad however to tell you that M<sup>r</sup>  
Johnston Hamilton[,]<sup>13</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup> Russell[']s  
nephew who met so accidental-  
ly with his uncle in Downpatrick  
churchyard,<sup>14</sup> has lately ^been^ promoted  
to the rank of Cap<sup>t</sup>n after 35 years  
& I believe very meritorious active  
services[,]  
having been engaged in the  
Burmese War & suffered a great  
deal by a marauding attack of the  
army at night, for sake of plunder  
in which he received a number of  
wounds[,]  
some of them in the head  
which nearly cost him his life but  
not being in the field of battle tho' in  
defence of the Company[']s property, he

[Fol. 3a]

he did not receive he did not re-  
ceive [sic] the honourable distinction to  
which his services entitled him[.]  
[H]e ordered a few copies of the United

[Fol. 3b]

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<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>13</sup> Johnston Hamilton, a son of William Henry Hamilton and Mary Anne Hamilton (née Russell).

<sup>14</sup> JAR being Johnston Hamilton's uncle.

Service Gazette<sup>15</sup> to be forwarded [to] me from Madras<sup>16</sup> ^for various friends^ with an account of his promotion ^& a high^ encomium of his character, one of which I sent thro mistake to Conway who had been in an inferior situation in the Dublin Evening Post ^with Hamilton[']s father^ but was dead before the papers arrived & of course I suppose the article has appeared in that paper & that you may have seen it, but it is only his intimate friends who know the worth of his character in private life, for eight years when he had a wife & family to support, he remitted £50 yearly for the support of his mother[,] then residing in America with his sister & was also sending £8 a year for his good old aunt Russell, he took his mother from this to visit her daughter[,] indulged both in a tour thro' part of the United States[,] where he took a fever attended with much expense, & made his sister a present ~~to his sister~~ of fift[e]n hundred dollars on departing[,] which left left him[,] of the little patrimony he had sold, not en-

[Fol. 4a]

ough to carry him back to ~~America~~ ^the East Indies[.]^ [H]e has ↵ six daughters[,] two of them married to military men[,] of whom he has the highest opinion, one a Capt<sup>n</sup>[,] the other a Lieutenant, & he has now five grandchildren, is not it most pleasing to contemplate such a character – 29th I kept this open till today that I might get the information you wished for about Hope's monument[.] [W]hen I called on Israel Milliken I found him sitting at the fire in his easy chair[,] not able to walk from severe rheumatism but cheerful, & his mind quite clear[.] [H]e told me that there were funds enough sub-

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<sup>15</sup> *United Services Gazette* (1833–1854), military periodical.

<sup>16</sup> Madras, the former name of the Indian city of Chennai. Madras was a British military garrison and outpost for the East India Company.

scribed for Hope[']s monument, tho' not all paid but would be forthcoming when required, but the great difficulty he said[,] was to get a meeting of the subscribers, & that you were to supply the inscription, it did not occur to me till this instant that ^there should be^ a plan of the design & whether it should be upright or horizontal & submit the same to you, & also to the artist as without such[,] how could the expense be ascertained – John Teeling is the Secretary & M<sup>r</sup> Patrick treasurer[.] I called on the latter who told me that he had already £7-15-0 in hand but he had not been required to collect the

rest - [Y]ou say you send £1, but there was not one in your letter, it is a great risk to enclose an entire note, I lost £7– once by doing so[.] Robert Hope[,] since M<sup>r</sup> Smith gave up business[,] has got the employment of receiving the tolls at the turnpike on the Crumlin road about two miles out of town & I have not seen him since he left he left [sic] the little cottage behind the old Poorhouse where I used to call to see his family[.] I was sorry to learn from M<sup>r</sup> Smith some time ago that he had acquired that unhappy propensity which has been the great bane of this ^country^ but now since I know where to find him[,] I will[,] as soon as I can find time, try to see & convince him of the great benefit of total abstinence[,] the only sure preservation of temperance, perhaps he has already adopted it, might not a line from you o[n]<sup>17</sup> the subject have great weight with him – As for this family[,] they are all in good health but poor M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cleery who has been very ill for about a year<sup>18</sup> past, the Doctors say it is from disease of the liv[er]<sup>19</sup>

[Fol. 4b]

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<sup>17</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

which is attended with such extreme depression of spirits<sup>20</sup> as casts a gloom on all around him, & he is so hopeless that he cannot be prevailed on to take exercise in the open air which the Doctors say would restore him, but we are most happy in the young folk who are all we could wish & I have not given up hope<sup>21</sup> of Mr McCleery & am still able to walk three miles & more every day, should I not be very thankful – Yours truly  
M A McCracken

Pray give my best  
respects to Mrs Madden &  
Miss Cogan -  
Maria presents hers to you[.]

[Fol. 1a]<sup>22</sup>

<Pray excuse all errors[,] I have no time for writing but by candle light on a very wet day[.]>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> This additional sign off was written across the top of Fol. 1a in an effort to avoid taking a new folio.

157. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 16 December 1853

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/73

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, embossed design, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b.

**Missing attachment:** An extract from the *Northern Star* newspaper

Belfast 16<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1853

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

I send you this extract from the Northern Star respecting Jackson<sup>1</sup> but have not yet been able to procure any farther information[,] either respecting him or others which you wish for[,] except that our old friend Israel Milliken[,] whom I saw today[,] told me that McNally<sup>2</sup> had been suspected of treachery but whether by Tone or not[,] he did not know but no doubt that could easily be found in Tone[']s memoirs which[,] however[,] is a very voluminous book[,] tho' interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Reverend William Jackson (1737–30 April 1795), of Newtownards, County Down. Anglican preacher, journalist, editor of the London newspaper *The Ledger*, "spin doctor," author and radical. Jackson persuaded leading members of the United Irishmen to seek assistance from the French, however, he unwittingly sent related incriminating documents by post, leading to his arrest in 1794. After being found guilty of treason, he died during his sentencing hearing as a result of ingesting poison.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard McNally (1752–1820) of Dublin, founding member of the United Irishmen, barrister who defended many United Irishmen in court, playwright, lyricist and author of numerous legal texts. It was posthumously discovered that McNally had been acting as a government spy from as early as 1794, informing on Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Robert Emmet, among many others.

& amusing & would occupy a good deal  
of time to look over it from beginning  
to end but it has just occurred to me  
that probably M<sup>r</sup> John McAdam[,]<sup>3</sup> whose  
wife[,] being a daughter of Sam Neilson[,]<sup>4</sup>

must of course take a deep interest  
in these matters [&] may rem<sup>^</sup>em<sup>^</sup>ber or be  
able to direct to some person who  
has a recollection of these old affairs  
which I am sorry to say I cannot  
obtain any intelligence of[,] tho' I have  
tried several, but there are few now  
living who took an active part at  
that unfortunate period of Ireland's  
history & those who are[,] in general  
have defective memories – I should  
have answered your last letter sooner  
but delayed in hope of getting the in-  
formation from M<sup>rs</sup> Russell which  
you wished for respecting the time  
of her husband's death[.]<sup>5</sup> I wrote to  
her on 2<sup>d</sup> of Nov.<sup>6</sup> but did not receive  
an answer till 30<sup>th</sup><sup>7</sup> which was a long  
apology stating the cause of her delay  
& various particulars of her difficul-  
ties but forgetting ~~to you~~ the particular

[Fol. 1b]

information wished for respecting  
the time of her husband[']s death[.]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> John McAdam (1783–29 November 1862) of Belfast, son-in-law of Samuel Neilson. See Letter 158 (TCD MS873/160).

<sup>4</sup> Sophia McAdam. See Letter 117 (TCD MS873/534).

<sup>5</sup> JAR died in 1848.

<sup>6</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset], 2 November 1853.

<sup>7</sup> Missing letter, Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset] to MAM [Belfast], 30 November 1853.

[S]he had been busy making preparation for shutting up her small house at Wyvilscombe [sic] preparatory to going with her little boy to spend their Christmas with her sister Mrs Gynne in Wales & as she was to leave home in a few days, I wrote again saying perhaps she would prefer getting her sister to write to me on the subject,<sup>8</sup> which I thought mi[ght] be painful to her to enter on, if however[,] if [sic] I do not hear from her[,] ~~again~~ I will write to her again but if it would be soon enough after Christmas which by most people is devoted to gayety[,] perhaps it would be as well to wait for a little after that – Old Israel looks wonderfully well[,] tho confined to his arm chair from rheumatism & is quite

cheerful & was very glad to hear of you – Respecting James Hope[']s tombstone, when you have leisure will you write the inscription & give your opinion whether it should be perpendicular or horizontal, & if you could also give your judgement to a suitable plan for it, might you no[t]<sup>9</sup> get a drawing of such a one as you wou[ld]<sup>10</sup> approve of – My niece thanks you for your kind remembrance[.] ^Mr McCleery^ is not better at present but his Doctors give his [...binding...] much hope of his recovery[,] tho' it may be tedious – [A]ll the rest of the family are

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>8</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Mrs Russell [Wiveliscombe, Somerset], December 1853.

<sup>9</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

well & I am stronger than I was two yea[rs]<sup>11</sup>  
ago & able to walk for two or three hours  
& sometimes four every dry day in my us[-]  
ual avocations – Please give my kind re-  
gards to M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & joined by Maria  
in every kind wish[,] I remain my Doctor  
Yours very truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

158. John McAdam [Belfast] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Date:** 29 December 1853

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/160

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

**Missing attachments:** Two notes from Madden to John McAdam

Donegall Street 29 Dec<sup>r</sup>  
1853

[Fol. 1a]

My dear Miss McCracken

I regret not being able to give you the information you require for D<sup>r</sup> Madden. I have read somewhere the particulars of Jackson's life, and his heroic contempt of life in the face of a corrupt Bench and packed Jury. I have always heard he was of the Newtownards branch of the Jacksons, and the same branch with old Hicory Gen<sup>l</sup> Jackson of American notoriety —<sup>1</sup> McNally was not a

a [sic] northerner, at least I never understood he was. I know these matters merely from the history of the times; I was but 14 years old when I witnessed

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jackson (15 March 1767–8 June 1845), soldier, lawyer and seventh President of the United States (from March 1829 until March 1837). Jackson's Presbyterian parents emigrated from County Antrim to America two years prior to his birth. The men under his command gave him the nickname "Old Hickory" (referring to the thick wood of the Hickory tree), in recognition of his toughness.

the fight in Antrim, too young  
to understand the nature of  
the contest.

W<sup>m</sup> Thompson[,]<sup>2</sup>  
formerly of High street, son  
of the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Thompson of  
Carnmoney, has a complete  
set of the Northern Star, I  
once had the loan of them.<sup>3</sup> He  
would let D<sup>r</sup> Madden consult  
them

in Belfast, but I rather  
think he would not be willing  
to let them out of his possession.  
I have to apologize for  
not sooner replying to your  
interesting note.<sup>4</sup> Enclosed  
are the Doctor's two notes;  
I am afraid he will not  
can [sic] sell as many copies of a  
new Edition of his United  
Irishmen as will pay him;  
there is sad falling off among  
our present population of all  
feeling of patriotism, and love  
of Country. Ever yours truly  
John McAdam

[Fol. 2a]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>5</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>2</sup> William Thomson, ran a grocery business with his brother Charles on Belfast's High Street.

<sup>3</sup> Reverend John Thomson, Presbyterian minister of Carnmoney Church.

<sup>4</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to John McAdam [Belfast], c. December 1853.

<sup>5</sup> "from John McAdam/ of Belfast."

**159. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]**

**Date:** 25 February 1854

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/75

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, six white paper binding patches along right side of Fol. 2b, missing folio/s, missing envelope

**Attachment:** Letter 158 (TCD MS873/160)

Belfast 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 1854

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

You must ^have^ considered me very negligent in not having long since answered your last which I delayed doing[,]<sup>1</sup> hoping to be able to obtain all the information you wished for, but have ^been^ disappointed in regard to Jackson & M<sup>c</sup>Nally, as to whether they were Northerns, or ~~th~~ what part of Ireland they were natives of, all I could obtain approaching the subject was<sup>2</sup> from John M<sup>c</sup>Adam, whose note I shall enclose.<sup>3</sup> I had supposed that Jackson had been related to the wife of the

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], between 16 December 1853 (the date of MAM's last letter to Madden) and 25 February 1854 (the date of the present current epistle).

<sup>2</sup> "subject, was" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> Referring to Letter 158 (TCD MS873/160).

late W<sup>m</sup> Tennent,<sup>4</sup> & Hamilton Rowan,<sup>5</sup>  
but he was not[.]  
[N]obody I could think of could tell  
me Tone's opinion of McNally but Israel

Milliken told me he knew that  
McNally was suspected of trea-  
chery, but he did not know what  
Tone's opinion of him was, how-  
ever I got a gentleman to ^begin to^ read Tone's  
memoirs, which is an amusing &  
interesting work, but so voluminous  
that it will take some time for a man  
in business, far advanced ^in life[,]^ to get thro'  
it – In regard to Capt Russell[']s death[,]  
it took place on 2<sup>d</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1848 in Chester[.]<sup>6</sup>  
[H]e was attended by two ^of^ the most emi-  
nent Physicians of the place, he left  
two children[,] a daughter & son[,] the young-  
est a boy now ten years of age[,] the girl  
older – [...] [T]hey are both[,] she ^M<sup>rs</sup> Russell^ says[,]  
most amiable, highly principled & affecti-  
onate, & would not on any account cause her  
uneasiness could they help it, she seems  
wrought up in them, & most anxious about

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>4</sup> William Tennent (26 June 1759–20 July 1832) of Belfast, a founding member of the United Irish movement and a supporter of Catholic Emancipation. In June 1798 Tennent was arrested, imprisoned and later transferred to Scotland's Fort George prison for several years. Despite his large family of illegitimate children, Tennent was a well respected and extremely wealthy merchant and banker.

<sup>5</sup> Archibald Hamilton Rowan (1 May 1751–1 November 1834), born in London, moved to County Kildare in 1784 and joined the Killyleagh Volunteers, a founding member of Belfast's Northern Whig Club and a founding member of Dublin's Society of United Irishmen. In 1794 he was found guilty of sedition and imprisoned in Dublin's Newgate Prison from which he escaped soon after and fled to France where he witnessed the bloody Thermidore Revolution. Deterred, Rowan moved on to America before finally being permitted to return to Ireland in 1806 where he took up residence at his ancestral home of Killyleagh Castle in County Down. See: Archibald Hamilton Rowan, *The Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, (Shannon, Irish University Press), 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Chester, a city in Cheshire, England.

their health & future welfare & I sincerely

hope she may be so happy as to find them[,] as they advance in life[,] worthy [of] the noble character to whom they are related – [V]arious circumstances prevented me from being able to obtain even the small portion ^of information^ I am able to give you. It was a considerable time before I got an answer from M<sup>rs</sup> Russell[,] from not knowing her address, as she was on a visit to one of her sisters & various matters afterwards occurred to prevent her writing to me ^immediately^ – [S]he is a truly amicable & estimable character & devotedly attached to her husband[']s memory – And now respecting James Hope[']s ~~memory~~ epitaph, I think it was perfectly correct & as much as could be said in as few and appropriate words as could be chosen, but I am quite ashamed to say that I have mislaid it, before I could command time to take it to the treasurer or secretary[.]<sup>7</sup> I received ^it^ when I was particularly

[Fol. 2a]

occupied with my usual out of door avocations, which would not admit of delay, & before I had entirely finished, I had an attack of illness by which I have been confined to the house for two months, & part of the time to bed, & it was only yesterday I was allowed to go out for the first time, for a few moment into the garden – The Doctor (Drennan) said my illness was not only

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>7</sup> The epitaph (composed by Madden) on James Hope's headstone at Mallusk Cemetery reads, "SACRED/ to the memory of/ James Hope/ who was born 1764 and died 1847/ One of Nature's Noblest Works/ An Honest Man/ Steadfast in faith and always hopeful/ In the Divine Protection/ In the Best Era of his country's history/ A Soldier in her cause/ and in the worst of times still faithful to it/ Ever True to Himself and to those/ who trusted to him he remained to the last/ unchanged and unchangeable/ in his fidelity."

from cold but also from overexertion & that I must take perfect rest for some time & even refrain from writing[.]<sup>8</sup> I do not think such great care was at all necessary as I have been subject to a cough since I was six years old[,] accompanied with expectoration but never with any inward pain whatever[,] only two or three times during my last illness that the phlegm had nearly choked me[,] in all other respects I have much reason for thankfulness that I am perfectly free from pain of any kind, which few at my ^age^ are blessed with, but I was obliged to submit rather than to add to my niece[']s anxiety who [End]

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<sup>8</sup> Doctor John Swanwick Drennan (1809–1893), son of Doctor William Drennan, he was the first Professor of Materia Medica at the Leeds Medical School and was President of the Ulster Medical Society between 1866 and 1867.

160. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 21 January 1857

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/76

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a, 1 partial folio attached to Fol. 2b to replace the lower half which has been cut away

Belfast 21<sup>st</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1857  
Bankmore

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter of 13<sup>th</sup> instant<sup>1</sup> & beg you will feel assured that you have not passed from my memory, which tho' far from being so good as it was twenty years ago as to shaping events; yet I do not feel my heart getting at all cold, but whoever has had a place there once, still remains firmly fixed, & I hope will continue there while life is granted me – [A]s a proof that I had not forgotten you[,] I hope you received the Whig which I sent you with the account of worthy old Israel Milliken[']s death, which I posted the day before I received your letter;<sup>2</sup> I had not heard of the event till then, & it was the

last of the papers Mr ^Finlay^ had on hand, & he would not allow me to pay for it, & I was in such haste to post it, that I had

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden to MAM, 13 January 1857.

<sup>2</sup> MAM posted a copy of *The Northern Whig* to Madden on 12 January 1857.

not time to look for ~~it to find~~ your present  
address, & therefore directed it to Rath-  
mines Hall, & I hope you received  
it[.]<sup>3</sup> I should have written to you  
long before ^this^ as I wished for your advice  
& assistance in two matters of pub-  
lic importance, in which you take as  
deep an interest as myself, but waited  
until I should see our old friend  
Israel again, as the last time I had seen  
him, he wished me to enquire of you for  
some of his old fellow prisoners whose  
names he could not ^then^ recollect, & as I had  
not heard of his being worse than usual  
& was confined to the house for more than  
a month, & tho' quite well again[,] I am not  
~~allowed to~~ yet allowed to go out but on a  
tolerably good day, it was only a cold I had  
& ^as^ I am quite free from pain or sickness

of any kind, for which I cannot be  
sufficiently thankful, & consider it  
my bounden duty, as well as the great-  
est pleasure which this world can afford,  
to promote the happiness of others & there-  
fore feel it a hardship to be restrained  
from exertion[,] thinking it preferable  
to wear out than to rust ^out^ but I do not  
wish to fret Maria[;] she has so much to  
bear – It is now full time to thank you  
for the beautiful & appropriate verses you  
sent me[,] so suitable to all ages, but par-  
ticularly to one at my advanced time of  
life[,] so few reach their 87<sup>th</sup> year & while  
so many around me are suddenly called  
away in early life, I should be the  
more watchful to be ready for a summons.  
Please accept my best thanks therefore[,]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> Possibly referring to Trinity Hall in Rathmines, Co. Dublin.

for your agreeable New year[']s gift & also your  
kind wishes for my present & future happiness  
which I am not so presumptuous as to  
to [sic] think I am entitled to from any good works  
of my own, I am conscious of many neglects of duty

& much cause for self reproach & all my  
hopes for the future are in dependance on the  
merits of him who came to seek & to save  
a lost & perishing world –  
You will be glad to hear that poor old  
Israel was not allowed to suffer want, there  
were a few who took a warm interest in his  
welfare & contributed what was necessary for  
his comfort, tho' they could not relieve his  
bodily sufferings which were considerably  
abated when I last saw him, & his spirits  
also were much improved[.] [H]e was buried in  
Shankhill, & many respectable people attended  
his funeral. ~~I have not seen his widow since~~<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

I would  
be glad[,] when you have time to spare[,] to  
know how you & your ^family are^ doing, ^& what you are doing[,]^  
I suppose from  
your address[,] that you are occupied in some  
benevolent plan for the good of the working  
class, & also what you think of affairs in general[.]  
We have seen so many discoveries in na-  
ture & inventions in art[,] almost like magic[,]  
that we need hardly doubt the possibility that  
some of the present generation may yet witness  
the conviction & conversion of the American  
tyrants, & consequent abolition of slavery[.] [W]ith  
best wishes to you & all who are dear to you[,]  
Yours most truly

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>4</sup> Fol. 2b has been cut and a new piece of paper attached, on which the letter continues. Presumably MAM cut off the final third of this page because she was dissatisfied with what she had written and then replaced it with a piece of paper cut to complete the missing third.

Mary Ann McCracken

[Fol. 3b, obscured]

161. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 13 November 1857

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/70

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 3 bifoliums, white paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a, 1 partial folio attached to Fol. 6b to replace the lower third which has been cut away and replaced with a piece of blank lined paper, missing envelope

1

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 1857  
Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

I delayed acknowledging your letter until I should try to obtain some of the information you wished for & have since learned from a Lady who has long been intimate with Mr Jackson's<sup>1</sup> daughter, Miss Jackson[,] Poles House[,] Kings Court[,] that there is no son of his alive.<sup>2</sup> Of Mrs Bond,<sup>3</sup> I cannot obtain any information but heard some years after O. Bond's ~~that~~ ^death^ that she had gone with her family to America & had then

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Jackson (1750–1817), of Monaghan, Dublin-based iron monger, Presbyterian and United Irishman who, on being charged with treason, fled to America aboard the Martha Bland on 4 October 1799. He was living with his daughter Eleanor Bond in Baltimore upon his death.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], c. November 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Eleanor Bond née Jackson (1772–15 September 1843), of Dublin, United Irishwoman who married Oliver Bond on 10 June 1791. They had two daughters and two sons. After her husband's death in 1798, Eleanor continued to run the family woollen business in Dublin before moving to Baltimore, Maryland in 1809.

changed her politics, which I suppose meant that<sup>4</sup> she found that there was more injustice & cruelty under a republican form of government than under a monarch<sup>i</sup>cal one – I sincerely hope your forthcoming publication of the sufferings & sorrows of Ireland may compensate your former loss, but this is such

an appalling time, between the horrid cruelties that are <sup>being</sup> practised abroad, & the mercantile distress over the whole trading world, that nothing can be reckoned <sup>on</sup> with any degree of certainty, in the mean time however[,] we should all go on using our utmost exertions to promote the public good as far as [is] in our power, & in your work I think there might be an improvement, as I felt considerable regret & self reproach at my injudicious & imprudent communications of private matters, particularly the names of Ladies, which must have been painful to them had they been living, but though they were both dead, yet Miss Goddard<sup>5</sup> had left a husband, who of course was not before aware that she was attached to another at the time she married him, whether he be dead or not I do not know, & in respect to Miss Simms[,]<sup>6</sup> she died many years ago & left no family, but her attachment to Russell[,] ~~that~~ her own family were

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>4</sup> “meant, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>5</sup> Bess Goddard, daughter of John Goddard of Newry. In 1795 she married Captain Kingston.

<sup>6</sup> Miss Simms, sister of William and Robert Simms, United Irishmen and close friends of Thomas Russell.

totally ignorant of ~~it~~ until she  
fainted on hearing of his death, &  
consequently her niece told me that  
it was untrue that her aunt was to  
have been married to Russell & this  
idea of ~~utunth~~ ^untruth^ [&] falseness tends to throw  
a doubt on other facts, might not these  
Ladies names be omitted & in the ensu-  
ing edition & the particulars more light[-]  
ly touched on[?] <sup>7</sup> [I]t is most probable  
that Russell never spoke of marriage  
to either of these Ladies, but his ad-  
miration of ~~his~~ ^Miss Goddard was^ so apparent, & her  
seeming pleasure at his attentions[,]  
that it was generally supposed that the  
attachment was mutual, but she[,] hav-  
ing been attached from childhood[,] when  
she knew she could never hope for her  
father[']s consent, she was forced to con-  
ceal it, & afterwards when another Gentle-  
man paid his addresses to her, ^her^ wish to  
conceal the real state of her heart pre-  
vented her from rejecting him until it

[Fol. 2a]

was too late[.] [H]er father was a harsh  
man & she had no choice[.] [W]hether  
her husband be dead or not[,] I am ig-  
norant[,] if he be ^living[,]^ the statement[,] if he  
believed it[,] might be painful[.] [T]he  
secret of Miss Simms[']s attachment  
was discovered by Mrs McTier[,] <sup>8</sup> sis-  
ter of the late Doctor Drennan, a Lady  
of first rate abilities who inform-  
ed Russell of the fact, who of course  
had no doubt of being accepted when

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>7</sup> See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 147–48.

<sup>8</sup> Martha McTier née Drennan (1742–3 October 1837), of Belfast who married United Irishman, Samuel McTier (c.1738 –1795) in 1773. She was also founder of the Belfast Lying-In Hospital. See Agnew and Luddy, eds., *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, 3 vols.

circumstances should permit him  
to declare himself, but at that period[,]  
when engaged in what he considered  
the liberation of his country, every  
selfish feeling must be postponed,  
his first love was ^then^ married & he thought  
Miss Simms very agreeable, she had  
a fine voice & sang exquisitely, he liked  
the connexion, her brothers were his most  
intimate friends & he said he was de-  
termin[e]d to be a good husband to who-  
ever he should marry, these circum-  
stances I had from the best authority[;]

5

[Fol. 3a]

those respecting Miss Simms from  
Mr Russell['s niece[,] Mrs Hamilton  
& those respecting Miss Goddard  
from authority equally good –<sup>9</sup>  
I do not think you will or ought  
to give up exerting the talents with which  
Providence has been pleased to endow  
you[,] as long as you are able[.] [T]his world  
affords no enjoyment equal to that  
of promoting the happiness of others,  
it so far surpasses any mere self-  
ish gratification from its not on-  
ly being pleasant at the time, but  
from its affording ^agreeable^ recollections  
afterwards – As for my ~~birth~~ age[,]  
I was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1770 and  
therefore was 87 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of last  
July, my birthday & my sister['s were  
the bitterest in our lives, on mine  
we got an account of our dear brother  
Henry having been apprehended the

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<sup>9</sup> Both Thomas Russell's *Journals* and the *Drennan-McTier Letters* bear testament to MAM's recollections. See John Gray, "Mary Anne McCracken: Belfast revolutionary and pioneer of feminism," in Dáire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong ed., *The Women of 1798* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1998), 59.

day before on his way to leave the

country & the 17<sup>th</sup>[,] my sister[']s[, ] ^was^ the  
day of his death & old as I am &  
much as I have suffered & ^tho'^ conscious  
that my faculties are much impair-  
ed by age, I still feel it a duty[, ] a plea-  
sure & a privilege to continue in thank[-]  
fulness trust & confidence in the giver  
of all good[, ] who has favoured me  
with such unusual health at such an  
age[, ] to go on ^in^ my endeavours to relieve  
suffering as far as [is] in my power[, ]  
which occupies all the daylight at the  
present season & therefore the previous  
part of this was written by candle  
light & at intervals[.] [M]y health has  
improved so much latterly that I can-  
not be sufficiently thankful for it &  
^consider it a^ call to duty[.] [A] year ago[, ] when I had  
been out for three or four hours collecting  
for some of our charities[, ] I suffered so  
much pain below the small of my back  
for near the half of the way in returning[, ]  
that I had to press my hand with all my  
might on the bone for relief but now I

[Fol. 3b]

can walk home nearly as fast as I  
did thirty years ago without the slight-  
est pain, but only a sleepiness which  
I indulge after dinner in my easy  
chair ~~after dinner~~ & after tea I have  
other interesting occupations & some  
times[, ] whenever I have leisure[, ] Ma-  
ria reads to me as I hear her best &  
~~best~~ besides[, ] I take up enough of the  
young people[']s time in walks as I am  
not allowed to go out alone[.] [A]nother  
relief to me is that I have been troubled  
with inflammation in my eyelids

[Fol. 4a]

which was rather painful particularly when I closed my eyes[,] so that when awake in bed I tried to keep them open & after using zinc ointment for a year or two with little or no effect[,] which I still continue[,] that trouble has nearly left ^me[.]^ [A]ll these circumstances are matters for much thankfulness & should console for loss in a great measure[,] for decrease

of bodily strength[,] being easily tripped & like to fall[,] finding it difficult to rise off a low seat, not hearing so well or seeing as well as formerly which is troublesome to others as well as to myself, to be free from pain is a great blessing[.]

[Fol. 4b]

I cannot recollect whether you are aware of the effects of Paine[']s [A]nge of [R]eason[,] I mean in regard to its effects on the public mind – [T]he Rev<sup>d</sup> ^Mr^ M<sup>c</sup>Clure[,] the presbyterian clergyman of Carnmoney at that period[,] said that a great number of this work had been thrown into the houses of his congregation by unknown individuals & at the camp at Ballynahinch[,] a great number of pious covenanters left the camp in consequence of the irreligious expressions & profanation of the sabbath day[,] saying it could not have the blessing of God & I was shocked in Kilmainham to find them endeavouring to keep up each others spirits by making a jest of death which was not the way to

6

[Fol. 5a]

way to [sic] inspire true courage[;]

the truly pious man acting  
from a sense of duty & true re-  
ligious principles will be the  
most courageous soldier in a good  
cause & it was a great consolation  
to me to be told by Rev<sup>d</sup> Dr Dickson  
that he had never met with any one  
so well prepared for death as my  
dear brother Henry – There is no loss  
I regret so much as the loss of memory  
but I must think more of what ~~en~~ ^I^ en-  
joy ~~than~~ & am allowed to retain than  
of what I have lost, but I am much  
inconvenienced on meeting people whose  
countenances I perfectly remember but  
can not recollect their names –  
This family are all in good health ex-  
cept poor Mr M<sup>c</sup>C who remains much  
as when I last wrote to you, his bodily  
health is good & in some respects he is  
somewhat better & Counsellor Gibson<sup>10</sup>  
thought him perceptibly better & so did  
Dr Stephenson<sup>11</sup> the last time they saw him  
& the Dr does not consider him past hope  
of recovery but still his delusion in re-  
gard

regard [sic] to Maria continues[.] [W]e are  
very happy in the girls[,] we think  
they are superior to any others we  
meet with & all who know them love  
& esteem them[;] were they Maria's  
own daughters she could not love  
them ^better[.]^ James[,] who was such a cause  
of vexation to us at home[,] is giving satis-

[Fol. 5b]

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<sup>10</sup> Counsellor James Gibson, Presbyterian merchant and Liberal MP from 24 July 1837 until 8 March 1838.

<sup>11</sup> Dr Stephenson (d. 24 September 1869), graduate of Edinburgh University, member of the Belfast Medical Society for which he was President from November 1850 until May 1853 and an early member of the Belfast Royal Medical Benevolent Society.

faction to his uncle in whose house  
he lives & has a salary of 800 dollars[,]  
being employed in the same firm as  
cashier & book-keeper –<sup>12</sup> [W]e had not heard  
for more than a year tho' we had written  
to him in the interim several times & when  
I was last writing to him[,]<sup>13</sup> I sent one of the  
girls to ask ^her father^ if he had any message to James[,]  
when he said he would write himself[,] which  
he did – W<sup>m</sup>[,] the youngest[,] 14 years of age in August  
last, has entered College, he wishes to be  
an engineer & the masters at the Institution<sup>14</sup>  
say if [he] had but moderate industry he could  
~~obtain~~ ^accomplish^ whatever he should undertake & all  
expected he would obtain a scholarship  
but he is very playful & was not industrious  
& another of 25 years was ^the^ successful candidate[.]  
[T]his[,] Maria thinks[,] will be of much use to him[;]  
he is very affectionate & fond of his mother & I trust  
will do well – Now I have given you a full ac-  
count of our family & would be glad you would  
make me acquainted with yours as I take an

^interest^ in all that concerns you, & all that  
has once gain[ed] a place in my heart[,]  
continues there still – We have got

[Fol. 6a]

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<sup>12</sup> James McCleery was sent to live with his uncle, James McCleery of Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

<sup>13</sup> Missing letters, Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to James McCleery [Louisville, Kentucky, USA].

<sup>14</sup> Royal Belfast Academical Institution (1814–present).

a model school<sup>15</sup> & nunnery<sup>16</sup> in Belfast[,]  
both well worth coming to see[.] I have  
visited both & was quite delighted with [them.]  
[T]hey are such spacious buildings & the  
nuns are so pleasing in their manners  
but I think[,] with the same desire to  
be useful[,] they could be more so if at per-  
fect liberty[.] I could not bear to have my  
mouth shut going through the streets so  
that I could not take the part of even<sup>17</sup>

a poor ill used animal – I fear you  
will not have patience to read to the  
end of this & should apologize for tres[-]  
passing so long on your time & patience[.]  
[D]id I ever mention an idea of the duty  
of these countries in respect to Ameri-  
can slavery suggested by a sermon of  
our Clergyman[?] I must not enter on it now[,]  
wasting time so precious as yours but in  
future let M<sup>rs</sup> Madden read my letters &  
she can ~~omit~~ ^read to you^ what you is necessary for  
you & omit the rest – [W]ith kindest regards  
& best wishes to M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & all who  
are dear to [you,] I remain yours &c

[Fol. 6b]

M A McCracken

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<sup>15</sup> The Belfast Model school opened in Divis Street on 19 May 1857. It was burned down on 26 May 1922 but reopened on the Cliftonville Road the following year. In 1957, the Belfast Boys Model opened on the Ballysillan Road and the Belfast Girls Model in Dunkeld Gardens.

<sup>16</sup> Belfast's first convent was established in 1854 by the Sisters of Mercy on Donegall Square North. The convent moved to the Crumlin Road in the autumn of 1857. See Marie Duddy, "A Founding Story - Sisters of Mercy Belfast," *Mercy Live* 9, June 2004, <https://www.mercyworld.org/newsroom/a-founding-story-sisters-of-mercy-belfast-164/>.

<sup>17</sup> Fol. 6a has been cut and a new piece of blank lined paper attached.

<finished with  
candlelight >

[Fol. 1a]<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This final comment was written in the right hand top corner of Fol. 1a.

**162. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]**

**Date:** Between Letter 161 (TCD MS873/70), dated 13 November 1857 and Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86), dated 12 December 1857<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/74

**Letter form:** Original manuscript fragment

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, embossed design, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 1b, missing envelope

[Fol. 1a]

~~unrecoverable~~ with kind  
regards to M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & best  
wishes to yourself & all who  
are dear to you[,] in all which  
Maria unites[.] I remain my  
dear Doctor

Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

I find I have a lock of Oliver  
Bond[']s[,] if you would like to  
have it or know any person  
who would value it I will  
send it to you as I cannot ex-  
pect now[,] tho' in perfect good  
health[,] to be long here –  
Excuse all mistakes[,] I have  
written in twilight & candlelight[.]

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>1</sup> Although this letter fragment is undated, its contents places it between two dated letters. Within the current letter MAM stated, "I find I have a lock of Oliver Bond's, if you would like to have it or know any person who would value it, I will send it to you." In Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86) dated 12 December 1857, MAM commented, "When I last wrote to you I forgot to send you the enclosed lock of Oliver Bonds' hair." This suggests that the current letter formed part of her previous letter, dating it somewhere between her letter previous to that, dated 13 November 1857 (Letter 161) and 12 December 1857 (Letter 163).

**163. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]**

**Date:** 12 December 1857

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/86

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 3 folios, originally all the letter's folios were bound together at the upper left corner with a piece of knotted white thread, however it has detached from Fol. 1a - Fol. 3b, resulting in Fol. 3 becoming a separate folio, it remains through Fol. 4a - 5b, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 5b, tears, missing envelope

**Missing attachment:** A lock of Oliver Bond's hair

Belfast 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 1857  
Bankmore

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I received your letter yesterday,<sup>1</sup> & most sincer[e]ly do I unite with you in cordial sympathy for poor Miss Getty in her sad and sudden bereave<sup>me</sup><sup>nt</sup>, she & her brother were so bound together <sup>by</sup> affection and relationship, having no relatives as near as they were to each other & I should feel much pleasure were it in my power to be the means of promoting her comfort in any way, but while I was reading your letter Miss Templeton<sup>2</sup> called & told me that her sister[,] Mrs Grimshaw[,]<sup>3</sup> had told her Miss Getty was so overwhelm-

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], received 11 December 1857.

<sup>2</sup> A daughter of botanist John Templeton, either Ellen (b. 30 September 1800), Catherine (b. 19 July 1806) or Matilda (b. 2 November 1809).

<sup>3</sup> Mary Grimshaw née Templeton (9 December 1809–7 August 1881), daughter of botanist John Templeton and wife of James Grimshaw (1802–14 January 1857).

ed with grief, that she would not be able to see any of her friends for some time

but Miss Templeton said she would have your kind feelings on the occasion communicated [sic] to Miss Getty[.] I am not a visiting acquaintance of Miss Getty[']s, I have only met her a few times[,] ~~when calling~~ occasionally when calling on friends with whom we were both acquainted & that very seldom, but we know each other by character & if I may judge by myself[,] have a mutual goodwill for each other & exchange a bow & smile when we meet in the street, & therefore I fear a visit from me on the present occasion might be a painful intrusion, no doubt a letter from yourself[,] who were so intimate with her brother[,] might prove a soothing balm, but under these cir-

[Fol. 1b]

circumstances[,] should you wish me to be the medium of your kind regards to her[,] pray let me know – When I last wrote to you I forgot to send you the enclosed lock of Oliver Bond[']s hair, having <sup>^spent^</sup> so much time in a letter so full of egotism that I was quite ashamed of it, but had not time to write ~~it over again~~ <sup>^another[.]^</sup> I fear I am often very apt to make too great a display of what I have done & am doing & that I am too much occupied with self, which I am not so sensible of at the moment,

[Fol. 2a]

but when I am overpraised[,] which  
is frequently the case[,] I feel quite  
ashamed at ~~feeling~~ <sup>finding</sup> that I am too  
full of myself, may I beg you will  
not thus put me to the blush in fu-  
ture, it always <sup>calls</sup> to my recollection

the irreparable injury I ~~did~~ <sup>have done</sup> to  
others, which tho' unintention-  
al[,] was owing to overrating my  
own abilities, which has been  
a painful recollection to me  
<sup>daily</sup> ever since, & will <sup>be</sup> as long as  
I live – I do not know any thing  
of the Turners,<sup>4</sup> but <sup>if</sup> I can learn  
any thing of them I shall in-  
form me [sic] –<sup>5</sup> The World seems in a  
sad state of wickedness just now[.]  
I cannot know <sup>how</sup> to account ~~with~~  
for it, considering all the efforts  
that are <sup>&</sup> <sup>have been</sup> <sup>made</sup> for many years  
past, for the moral, religious &  
intellectual improvement of  
the civilized world, & particu[-]  
larly in the US of America; the  
diabolical system of slavery is  
increasing & progressing, ~~but~~ <sup>there</sup>  
& the worst

[Fol. 2b]

5 page

[Fol. 3a]

& the worst [sic] of it is that so many  
professing to be most pious chris[-]  
tians uphold & apologize for the  
system & won[']t allow a line  
to be published in their reli-

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<sup>4</sup> Madden had possibly enquired about the family of Samuel Turner (1765–c.1807),  
Irish barrister and United Irishman, turned informer.

<sup>5</sup> MAM has mistakenly written “me” when evidently she meant “you.”

gious tracts ^reflecting on slavery[,]^ surely that is quite  
inconsistent with all the teach-  
ings of him[,] whose followers they  
profess to be, but perhaps a crises  
is near, & it may be sooner than  
we expect that<sup>6</sup> the eyes of the op-  
pressors may be opened to<sup>7</sup> the ini-  
quity of the system they are sup-  
porting, & they may be favoured with  
that repentance that needs not to  
be repented of, by breaking the  
chains of the captives & letting  
the oppressed go ^free[,]^ tho it may not  
be in my day[.] [O]n looking over

[Fol. 3b, blank]

6 page

[Fol. 4a]

what I have written[,] I see it  
is much easier to see one[']s  
faults than to correct them[,]  
so I must return to business.  
I do not know any thing what-  
ever of the Turners[,] I merely re-  
member their name, I shall  
inquire for them & if I can  
gain any intelligence of them  
I shall inform you – All I kn[ow]<sup>8</sup>  
of Alex<sup>r</sup> Lowry<sup>9</sup> is that he & Tom  
Russell were passing our  
house the morning that Russ-

---

<sup>6</sup> “expect, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>7</sup> “opened, to” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed as a result of the folio’s edge having been roughly cut.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Lowry (c. 1775–1821), of Linen Hill, Katesbridge, County Down, Presbyterian linen merchant, Defender and United Irishman who fled to Hamburg in 1797.

ell was apprehended & break[-]  
fasted with us[.] Lowry escaped  
& went[,] I understood[,] to Ham-  
burg or at least he returned  
from that to Belfast some years  
afterwards bringing a wife wi[th]<sup>10</sup>

[Fol. 4b, blank]

7th page

[Fol. 5a]

with [sic] him[,] whom[,] I was told[,]  
was but four feet high but  
pleasing ^in her manners^ & handsome[.] [T]hey  
were invited to dinner but  
he said his Lady was too  
much fatigued & he did not  
invite us to visit her, & I  
believe they left town the  
next day – I had been at the  
writing school with him  
when about thirteen or fourteen  
years of age but never spoke  
to him[:] he sat at a distance  
& he was older & a nice  
well conducted lad & I understood  
was much esteemed as a good  
patriot & estimable man after-  
wards – Part of this has  
been written with candle light & I have

8th page

[Fol. 5b]

have [sic] made mistakes  
owing to the thinness of the paper  
which I fear will give you some  
trouble[.] Please give my best  
respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & with

---

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed as a result of the folio's edge having been roughly cut.

sincere love & esteem & best  
wishes to all who are dear  
to you[,] in which [Maria] unites[,] I re-  
main my dear Doctor

Yours very truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

**164. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent [Belfast]**

**Date:** 23 August 1858

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/7

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, embossed design, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 23 Aug 1858

Bankmore

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

I had a letter lately from Doctor Madden asking for information[,]<sup>2</sup> which it was not in my power to give from my own knowledge & on enquiry I was referred to you, who can probably inform me of the fact[,] which was, if there is any son of Oliver Bond[']s now living[.] [T]he cause for this enquiry is that there is at present a second edition of the Lives & Times of the

United Irishmen in preparation for the press & I shall therefore be much obliged for any information

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> “✓/ Not known –/ Lady T. might know.” Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent (27 February 1806–21 April 1883), daughter of William Tennent (26 June 1759–20 July 1832), and cousin of RJT. She married James Emerson (7 April 1804–6 March 1869) on 24 June 1831, who assumed the Tennent family name. She died in Middlesex, England.

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], August 1858.

you can give me on the sub-  
ject – I had the pleasure of  
seeing Margaret McCracken<sup>3</sup>  
a few days ago & was glad to  
see her look so well & to hear  
of you & your children[.] I remain  
my dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

Yours very truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

R J Tennent Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Rush Park

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Fol. 2b, blank]

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<sup>3</sup> Margaret McCracken (b. 1808), daughter of John McCracken Junior and sister-in-law to RJT.

165. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 3 September 1858

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/77

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 partial draft folio attached to Fol. 2b to replace several lines which have been cut away, white paper binding along right side Fol. 2b, missing envelope

Belfast 3<sup>d</sup> Sep 1858  
Bankmore

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

On looking over my letter book[,] I find it is now ~~fully~~ ^nearly^ nine months since the date of my last ^letter^ which was 12<sup>th</sup> of Dec[.].<sup>1</sup> I have still been in hope of finding out if Oliver had left a son, or sons who were still alive, but have hitherto been disappointed & perhaps the information would now be too late[.] [A]fter diligent inquiry, I learnt that M<sup>rs</sup> Bond had returned from America with<sup>2</sup> her daughter,<sup>3</sup> who is very

amiable & truly pious, but I did not learn her address,<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 163 (TCD MS873/86).

<sup>2</sup> "America, with" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Jackson Bond (b. c.1799).

<sup>4</sup> For an account of Eleanor Bond's short return to Ireland in 1810 see Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 192–93 and Madden, *United Irishmen*, Fourth Series, Second ed., 166–69. The latter reference bears the fruit of Madden's search for information about Mrs Bond.

& on farther inquiry I was told that Lady Tennent, wife of Sir Ja<sup>s</sup> Emerson Tennent, would surely know, & when I had my letter ready,<sup>5</sup> I found she was gone to Italy, but how she could be found there[,] I could not find out & am truly sorry I have been so unfortunate in the pursuit[.] The work[,] when finished[,] will no doubt[,] like the former, be both interesting & instructive, shewing the certain evil, & uncertain good of attempting political changes by force of arms, as has been still more fully

exemplified by what was called, & at the time considered[,] American independence[,] which in place of entitling the country to be considered the "Land of the free & the brave" may more properly be styled "The Land of the tyrant & the Slave["] – The horrors of which seem to be increasing every year, but the hatred of the system seems to [be] increasing also, & I hope the rising generation may see an end to it & also to war, tho' neither event will be apt to take place in my day, but may not those in a happier state of existence be

[Fol. 2a]

allowed to rejoice in the happiness of those they had

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>5</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent [London], c. August or September 1858.

left behind; in the meantim[e]<sup>6</sup>  
my dear Doctor[,] I would be gla[d]<sup>7</sup>  
to know how you, M<sup>rs</sup> Madd[en]<sup>8</sup>  
& all a~~t~~ who are dear to you bo[th]<sup>9</sup>  
are, & also how near the book is  
^of^ making its appearance, & in  
what manner, if[,] as the form[er,]<sup>10</sup>  
in different series & volumes o[r]<sup>11</sup>  
whether sold in separate vol[umes.]<sup>12</sup>  
I was told lately that there wa[s]<sup>13</sup>  
a life of Lord Edward Fitzger[ald]<sup>14</sup>  
by a Lady[,] I think it is a ~~daughter~~  
near relation of his Lady, b[ut]<sup>15</sup>  
I [...]<sup>16</sup> Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

---

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The page has been cut and a new piece of paper (cut from an old draft letter in MAM's hand), attached, on which the letter continues.

166. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 26–c.28 October 1858<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/88

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums, blue paper patch attached to right side of Fol. 1a,<sup>2</sup> blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 1a and Fol. 4b, missing envelope

Belfast 26<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1858

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I got a copy of [T]he Nation<sup>3</sup> a few days ago thro' the Post office directed in a Lady's hand, probably M<sup>rs</sup> Madden[,] giving any account of the second edition of the United Irishmen[']s Lives & Times & am sorry I had not been able to procure the informatio[n]<sup>4</sup> you wished for in proper time & which I still expect[,] tho' now too late – Respecting the Nelson

---

<sup>1</sup> On Folio 4a MAM wrote, "I began this several days ago."

<sup>2</sup> Madden has written on this fragment, "The Neelson family."

<sup>3</sup> *The Nation* (15 October 1842–1900), weekly Irish nationalistic newspaper printed in Dublin, founded by Charles Gavan Duffy, Thomas Davis and John Blake Dillon. See Ann Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by the blue paper binding.

family; Anne<sup>5</sup> was the elder & wa[s]<sup>6</sup>

2

[Fol. 1b]

born in Jan<sup>y</sup> 12 1786, I remember<sup>7</sup>  
it from the circumstance of its  
being a fortnight before the  
birth of the child of a cousin of  
my own[.] Sophia was next[,] she  
is now M<sup>rs</sup> John McAdam &  
is handsome still[.] Jane was  
next who is now in America  
US –<sup>8</sup> W<sup>m</sup> was next & I think  
was about two or three years old  
when his father was taken  
up, he was a fine child & grew  
up a talented young man & died  
in the West Indies[.]<sup>9</sup> Mary[,]<sup>10</sup> the young[-]  
est was born when her father  
was in prison & was married to

---

<sup>5</sup> Agnes “Anne” Magenis née Neilson (b. 12 January 1786), eldest daughter of Samuel Neilson. She “married a Mr D. Magenis from Armagh on 1 May 1818 and took up residence in Philadelphia.” Kenneth L. Dawson, *The Belfast Jacobin: Samuel Neilson and the United Irishmen* (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2017), 207.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by the blue paper binding.

<sup>7</sup> ^One daughter of S. Neilson Anna the eldest was^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>8</sup> Jane McAdam née Neilson (b. 9 September 1791), third daughter of Samuel Neilson. She married George McAdam of Belfast on 4 May 1813 and emigrated to New York in 1836. Samuel Neilson’s biographer tells us that, “at the ripe old age of ninety, [Jane] attended the interment ceremony for her father at the Rural Cemetery in Poughkeepsie in 1880.” Dawson, *The Belfast Jacobin: Samuel Neilson and the United Irishmen*, 207.

<sup>9</sup> William Bryson Neilson. See Letter 117 (TCD MS873/534).

<sup>10</sup> Mary Hancock née Neilson, (b. c.1795–27 July 1857), youngest daughter of Samuel Neilson. Two letters from Mary Hancock to Madden can be found within his papers. The first was written at Lurgan and dated 11 April 1842 (TCD MS873/189). The second is undated and incomplete (TCD MS873/190).

M<sup>r</sup> Hancock[,]<sup>11</sup> a quaker ^&^ died

3

[Fol. 2a]

about a year ago I think it was  
& Anne died many years ago[.]  
[S]everal of Mary[']s sons<sup>12</sup> are living  
in Belfast, & her daughter<sup>13</sup> was  
married to a M<sup>r</sup> Thomson<sup>14</sup>  
whose father was a celebrated  
mathematician –<sup>15</sup> I never met  
with a family in which there  
was such profound respect  
for a parent, & such cordial  
affection among all the members  
^as the Nelson family,^ but all this it is needless to  
mention now – [O]n looking over  
the advertisements I was sur-  
prized at not finding the book  
among the number – I was  
sorry to see in the paper[,] a pain-  
ful account of cruelty & injus-

4

[Fol. 2b]

tice of a Landlord to his tenants[.]  
[H]ow disgraceful to the coun-  
try & what a pity of the ten-  
ants, I had hoped that im-

---

<sup>11</sup> William John Hancock (15 September 1791–29 August 1848), a Quaker of Lisburn, a land agent and later an assistant poor law commissioner.

<sup>12</sup> William Neilson Hancock (22 April 1820–10 July 1888), John Hancock (b. c.1814), Charles Brownlow Hancock (b. 1831), Louis Perrin Hancock (b. 1833) and William John Hancock (1836–22 June 1904).

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Thomson née Hancock (d. 1892), who married James Thomson in 1853.

<sup>14</sup> James Thomson (16 February 1822–8 May 1892), of Belfast, Professor of Engineering.

<sup>15</sup> James Thomson (13 November 1786–12 January 1849), Irish mathematician.

provement in the spread of manufactures thro' the country would have raised the price of labour & that the landlords would also <sup>^would^</sup> have also improved. Another painful statement was respecting the horrid cruelties perpetrated in India under British rulers – I had been indulging in the hope, from the extraordinary changes [...] I had witnessed[,] many of things more like magic than anything in real life, that the

5

[Fol. 3a]

that the [sic] rising generation (if not myself) would witness the millen[n]ium when all mankind would be living in peace & harmony[,] loving each other & in all things obeying the commands & imitating the example of ~~who~~ him whose followers the[y] profess to be – I do not however[,] entirely approve of the style of the Nation[;] it does not tend to promote a feeling of good will among people of different religious creeds I <sup>^but I^</sup> do not <sup>^think^</sup> any one has a right to be displeased at another for endeavouring to

6

[Fol. 3b]

bring them round to the opinion which they thought the

surest to promote their future  
happiness, though I would not  
make the attempt myself lest  
I should only disturb their  
mind & perhaps render them  
infidels[,] as was the effect ~~it~~  
that a change of opinion had  
on Godkin,<sup>16</sup> & having known  
many catholics whom I con-  
sidered as near perfecti-  
on as human is capable of[.]  
[N]either should we think all  
virtue was confined to our own  
country, I think I told you of  
the Englishman<sup>17</sup> who was low in  
stature & slender, & who endured

7

[Fol. 4a]

two ^hundred^ lashes rather than give  
information against my bro=  
ther Harry, & you also remem-  
ber the ~~four~~ Scotch soldiers  
who refused to fire on the  
four Irish soldiers & you  
no doubt [remember] the lines written on  
that occasion[.] I began this sev-  
eral days ago but ere finishing  
learnt that Sir James Emerson  
Tennent<sup>18</sup> had passed thro Bel-  
fast last ^week^ & had heard that his

---

<sup>16</sup> James Godkin (1806–May 1879), Congregational minister at Armagh, author and journalist.

<sup>17</sup> William Thompson. See Letter 53 (TCD MS873/91).

<sup>18</sup> Sir James Emerson Tennent (7 April 1804–6 March 1869), of Belfast, 1st baronet of Tempo Manor, County Fermanagh, lawyer, author, participant in the Greek War of Independence and politician (Whig until 1832 and Conservative until 1869). His other roles included Secretary to the Board of Control, Colonial Secretary of British Ceylon, secretary to the Poor Law Board for 1852 and secretary to the Board of Trade from 1852 until 1867. He married Letitia Tennent in 1831.

Lady could no doubt give the  
information you wished for  
respecting Oliver Bond[']s fam-  
ily[.] I got my letter despatched  
thro his attorney or rather di-  
rected by him & dropped into the

8

[Fol. 4b]

Post office by my own messe[n-]<sup>19</sup>  
ger —<sup>20</sup> I was surprized at no[t]<sup>21</sup>  
seeing any any [sic] advertise-  
ment of the book in [T]he Natio[n.]<sup>22</sup>  
I hope that you & Mrs Madde[n]<sup>23</sup>  
& all who are ^dear to you are^ in good health &  
happiness & may long contin[ue]<sup>24</sup>  
so[.] Maria & her family[,] exce[pt]<sup>25</sup>  
the one invalid[,] are well & he<sup>26</sup>  
is somewhat better[,] being in  
good bodily health, but his d[e-]<sup>27</sup>  
lusion in respect to Maria  
still continues but his Doct[or]<sup>28</sup>  
does not consider his case h[ope-]<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>20</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent [London], c. August or September 1858.

<sup>21</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> William McCleery.

<sup>27</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

less & I am better than I was a  
year ago[.] [W]ith love & kind wis[hes,]<sup>30</sup>  
in which Maria cordially unit[es,]<sup>31</sup>  
I am my Dear Doctor[,] ever yours  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

**167. Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent [London] to Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]**

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source 1:** Madden, *United Irishmen*. Fourth Series, Second ed., 169–70.

This letter does not appear within the Madden Papers

**Source 2:** Extract quoted within Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81)

**Date:** 26 October 1858. The year can be deduced from the content of two other letters dated 1858. Firstly, Letter 165 (TCD MS873/77), dated 3 September 1858, wherein Mary Ann explains to Madden that she has readied a letter for Lady Emerson Tennent but as she has gone to Italy and she does not know how to contact her. Secondly, in Letter 166 (TCD MS873/88), dated 26 October 1858, Mary Ann tells Madden that she has now found a way of delivering it. Therefore, Letter 167 is a reply to the referenced letter from Mary Ann to Lady Emerson Tennent

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Attachment:** A letter from Henry Jackson to Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent

**Source 1: Madden's transcription<sup>1</sup>**

Warwick-square, London, 26th October.

MY DEAR MISS M<sup>C</sup>CRACKEN –

A dear friend of mine who knew Mrs. Bond most intimately, and who esteemed and loved her with all her heart – though unfortunately she cannot tell much in relation to the inquiries of Mr. Madden – suggests that Mr. M. should write to Mr. Oliver Bond of Derry, nephew to the late Oliver Bond, who could give every information on the subject.

I trust ere I close this letter I may hear from my cousin Washington Jackson,<sup>2</sup> who was also a relative of Mrs. Oliver Bond,

---

<sup>1</sup> Madden prefaces this letter, "In a recent letter of Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent to Miss M<sup>C</sup>Cracken of Belfast, in reply to some inquiries of mine respecting Mrs. Bond, made at my request to that lady, the daughter of Mr. Tennent. From that communication I venture to make the following extracts." See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Fourth Series, Second ed., 169.

<sup>2</sup> Washington Jackson (1784–1865), son of James Jackson and Mary Steel.

and who I think will be able to give us full information, as he lived for a long period of his life in America. I feel that I should myself be able to answer your queries, for when I was a girl I had the privilege of passing a month with dear Mrs. Bond when she came over to Ireland for the health of her daughter Eliza, and was then residing at Buncrana.<sup>3</sup> She had been greatly attached to my mother,<sup>4</sup> and for her sake gave me a large portion of her affection, and after her return to America corresponded with me regularly till her death. Still I did not often hear her speak of her sons. She was devotedly attached to her invalid daughter, who was a most superior person, and who died only a few years ago. Mrs. Ellicott,<sup>5</sup> her second daughter, visited this country about sixteen years ago, and I saw her frequently, and I shall never forget the impression she made on me, which was that she was one of the cleverest women I have ever met, and most agreeable. Her mind was highly cultivated, and in every way she seemed worthy of being the daughter of dear Mrs. Bond, who was a woman in a thousand, and whose equal in ability I have rarely met. I only wish I had known her later in my life, when I could better have appreciated her rare qualities, and when I might have learned from her many particulars of her strange and eventful life. But to me she never spoke of her husband - it seemed too sacred a subject - and I was too young to ask her any questions, though often I wished to do so.

I assure you, dear Miss M'Cracken, it quite pleased me to see your familiar name in a letter to me, for though we have not met since the old, old days, when your name was as a household word in my family, still I have very often thought of you, and inquired for you, and have talked about you to my children<sup>6</sup>, telling them of your beautiful daily life and your Christian character. . . .

---

<sup>3</sup> Buncrana, a town in County Donegal.

<sup>4</sup> Eleanor Tennent née Jackson (18 January 1781–18 January 1807), of Ballybay, County Monaghan who married William Tennent in March 1805.

<sup>5</sup> Harvey Margaret Ellicott née Bond (1798–14 June 1881), who married Evan Thomas Ellicott (6 December 1793–January 1867), a hardware merchant of Baltimore, on 18 February 1820.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Letitia Emerson Tennent had three children; Eleanor Emerson Tennent (6 July 1832–14 March 1916), Sir William Emerson Tennent (14 May 1835–31 December 1940) and Sarah Edith Emerson Tennent (27 June 1840–1851).

I hasten to send you the information I have just received from Mr. Jackson<sup>7</sup> on the subject you wrote to me about. He writes: 'Oliver Bond of Dublin had two sons in America. Henry Bond,<sup>8</sup> the eldest, lived in Tallahassee, Florida; but I think he died some years since. Thomas J. Bond<sup>9</sup> resides in New Orleans, where I think a letter would find him. Mrs. Ellicott's address would be –Mrs. Evan T. Ellicott, Baltimore, Maryland.'

With kindest wishes, dear Miss M'Cracken, faithfully yours,  
L.E.T.

## Source 2: Letter 169

I fear you have me quite unmindful of your kind letter & the request it contained, but as I could not answer D<sup>r</sup> Maddens queries myself, I had to apply to my cousin Washington Jackson who resides near Maiddeburn & he very kindly wrote off to another cousin of ours Henry Jackson who is a nephew of dear M<sup>rs</sup> Bonds & his letter which I have ^only^ just received I now enclose to you, Henry Jackson as you will perceive from his letters is quite a character but a very excellent person & should D<sup>r</sup> Madden wish for further information I am sure he will be most happy to give it to him he resides somewhere near Dublin but was I believe born in America which is now the home of so many of my relations; his address I shall try to give you ere I close this, I was very sorry to hear D<sup>r</sup> Madden had such affliction in his family, but I trust his son may be spared to him & that he may live long himself to write the sad records of our Country.

---

<sup>7</sup> Henry Jackson, of Linden Tower, County Dublin and nephew of Mrs. Bond. Madden explains that Mr Jackson "resided many years in American, and I believe resided with Henry Jackson's family in Baltimore at the time of Mrs. Bond's death."

<sup>8</sup> Captain Henry Jackson Bond (1795–5 February 1858), married Jane Lefferts Lloyd.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Jackson Bond (1792–June 1878), married Caroline Franklin.

168. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 2 February 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/80

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums stitched together with white thread, embossed design, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a, two blue paper binding patches along right side of Fol. 4b, missing envelope

Belfast 2<sup>d</sup> Feb 1859  
Bankmore

[Fol. 1a]

My Dear Doctor

I received your printed letter yesterday,<sup>1</sup> & am much [---] ^a-^ ggrieved at its contents[,] partly as from former experience I, when valuable lives were at stake, I suffered from the attempt[.]<sup>2</sup> [W]hen Russell was taken & some others were to be tried for their lives, he wished to ^make^ no defence but was prevailed on to allow it[,] in hope it be serviceable to the others[,] consequently[,] I got a message from

---

<sup>1</sup> Missing printed letter, Madden [Dublin] to MAM [Belfast], received 1 February 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, the printed letter was an appeal to the authorities to return MAM's money, which had been intended for TR but which was taken by a turnkey to Dublin Castle where it remained in the Chief Secretary's office. In his attempt to retrieve the money, Madden made the following appeal to Lord Eliot, "what has become of that money; if it be still in your office, restore it to its rightful owner, Miss Mary M'Cracken of Belfast. If your predecessors have improperly disposed of it, redeem the credit of the Irish government – recommend the restitution of this money which appears to have been withheld." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 248–49.

John Magennis<sup>3</sup> ^& another^ who were then confined in our old Market House in

in [sic] a most deplorable state, against whom there was no charge but mere suspicion & the want of accommodation was such that the slop bucket[,] without being washed[,] was used to put their food ^in[.]^ [O]ne of their wives who was allowed to visit her husband brought me a message that many would be willing to contribute to the expense but no man dare venture to ask for the money, but ^I^ might with perfect safety & my brother John engaged an Attorney whom he had known from childhood & highly esteemed[,] having frequently employed him, & who offered to undertake it without any reward on

[Fol. 1b]

his own account, & therefore hoped that all would go on well but the lawyers would not come down from Dublin for less than £100 each, ^& as^ we dared not at that period send any letters thro' the Post office but such as might be public ~~to~~, as all were opened but as we sent our muslins by the mail coach[,] they were in such demand, & our factor knew how to answer them,<sup>4</sup> & wrote to me that the young man in embarress[-]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> John Magennis, of Baleely or Ballela, United Irishman, the leader of the County Down Defenders, County Down representative at the Catholic Convention, linen merchant and brother-in-law of CHT.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably referring to James Orr.

ed circumstances<sup>5</sup> for whom I was interested could be quite relieved by an hundred pounds, I therefore requested he would advance that amount & I would repay him, this

was for the purpose of effecting his escape which had been promised, but M<sup>r</sup> Russell was sent down to the north at 12 o'clock at night & handed the money to Counsellor Mason to give to Miss Russell when <sup>^she^</sup> should call to see her brother in the morning & M<sup>r</sup> Mason[,] fearing the money should be <sup>^found^</sup> in his possession[,] gave it to one of the turnkeys to give it to Miss Russell, & the man carried it to the Castle as a proof of his honesty[,] who was rewarded for his professed fidelity with the money, & afterwards got the government of a prison to which he was considered fully competent[.] [T]he loss to me did not end there[;] the factor soon after

[Fol. 2b]

<sup>^requested me^</sup> to advance him £300 altho' I had no security from him but his name on paper, but he had muslins from me which were then in great demand, but I did not think I could refuse him & complied & every bill which I drew on him afterwards[,] he required me to renew until it ruined both my brother & my sister & [my]self & all I got from the public was

[Fol. 3a]

---

<sup>5</sup> TR.

about [£]80 which were absorbed  
by the unavoidable expenses  
of conducting the defence[.] [T]here  
had been £14 more received on  
account by a M<sup>r</sup> Coulter<sup>6</sup> who had  
been in the south but before he  
had an opportunity of bringing ^it^  
to Belfast[,] M<sup>r</sup> C was killed in

his own Mill by the machinery  
& the money never reached me  
& when there was such a care-  
lessness & [...] of action  
when a least one valuable  
life was at stake, known &  
highly esteemed by many who  
were rich, & when his poor  
sister was left desolate &  
received into a private Retreat  
at Drumcondra, when her sup-  
port had to be provided for  
& whom he<sup>7</sup> had recommended  
to his country saying she had  
^always^ trained him in the paths of re-  
ligion & virtue, I had much  
difficulty to prevail on [...] ^his Belfast friends^ to  
contribute 5/0 p[er] week & all did  
not continue it during her life[.]

[Fol. 3b]

Such [...] & indiffer-  
ence is painful to contemplate  
& not creditable nature to  
human nature. I suppose  
you have published the state-  
ment in the different papers  
thro' the country to give the  
fact publicity & speed but I

[Fol. 4a]

---

<sup>6</sup> John Coulter, United Irishman and linen merchant.

<sup>7</sup> TR.

much fear its success –  
I wrote to M<sup>rs</sup> Lady Tennent to inquire about M<sup>rs</sup> Bond[']s death but not for some time after I received your letter[,] in consequence of smallpox being in the house as a cousin of M<sup>r</sup> McCleery's who boards here had got smallpox[,]<sup>8</sup> he did not know how & I found that no Lady would venture to enquire at the door & therefore I would not venture to write to anyone

while there could be the most distant fear of danger, perhaps you are aware how to prevent the face from being marked which was recommended by a Belfast D<sup>r</sup> & ^I^ have known its efficiency in four cases & never heard of its failure, it is by covering the face with a thin wet piece of muslin[,] about half ^a yard^ square & letting it fall over the outside of the bedcloth[e]s, having 4 or 5 in a basin of water & when each comes off[,] put it into another basin of water & when all are used but the last[,] let the solid ones be taken away & washed & brought back in clean water, this had the desired effect both with W.H. Orr & also with Mary McCleery some years ago – Let me know how your son is[,] I was fearful he was worse from not having heard from you[.] I sincerely hope & pray for his recovery, with love to you & all dear to you

M A McCracken

[Fol. 4b]

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<sup>8</sup> William Henry Orr (1840–1922), William McCleery's cousin.

169. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 13 February 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/81

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 folio, embossed design, blue paper binding along right side Fol. 2b & 3b, missing envelope

**Missing attachment:** Letter 167

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 1859

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

I have just received the the [sic] enclosed from Lady Tennent in which she says "I fear you have me quite unmindful of your kind letter & the request it contained, but as I could not answer D<sup>r</sup> Madden['s] queries myself, I had to apply to my cousin Washington Jackson who resides near Maiddeburn [sic] & he very kindly wrote off to another cousin of ours Henry Jackson who is a nephew of dear M<sup>rs</sup> Bond['s] & his letter[,] which I have ^only^ just received[,] I now enclose to you[,] Henry Jackson[,] as you will perceive from his letter[,] is quite a character but a very excellent person & should D<sup>r</sup> Madden wish for further information I am

information I am [sic] sure he will be most happy to give it to him[.] [H]e resides

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "!!!"

somewhere near Dublin but was[,] ~~born~~  
I believe[,] born in America which is now  
the home of so many of my relatives;  
his address I shall try to give you ere  
I close this[.] I was very sorry to hear  
D<sup>r</sup> Madden had such affliction in his  
family, but I trust his son may be  
spared to him & that he may live long  
himself to write the sad records of our  
Country –” [At] the end of her letter she adds[,]  
H. Jackson Esq<sup>r</sup>[,] Linden Town[,] Grove  
Avenue[,] Stillorgan[,] Dublin[.] I would  
have enclosed you his letter but for  
two reasons[;] one was that part of it  
was respecting our mutual relatives  
& a message to one[,] a connection of hers ^&^ a  
niece of mine,<sup>2</sup> the other[,] that like one  
of yours, it was too flattering[.] I have

no pretension whatever to any  
superiority over others; an unmar-  
ried woman who has no family du-  
ties to attend to, is the happier of hav-  
ing some interesting occupation[.] ~~to~~  
~~at~~ [E]xercise in the open air is necessa[-]  
ry to promote health & I know many  
such, who devote the most of their time  
to similar objects, not one of whom is  
so entirely free from pain as I am,  
& consequently it is my peculiar  
duty to endeavour to be useful while  
I can, & from long habit, ^& tho’^ unsteady in my  
gait if alone, & much stooped & bent to one  
side, ^yet^ I can walk for an hour sometimes  
without once sitting down, & be out for  
two or three hours of almost every  
fair day without feeling any inconveni-  
ence – I have been very uneasy at not

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>2</sup> Presumably, Eliza Tennent.

having received a letter from  
you lately[,] fearing that your son  
was worse & that you had gone to  
see him – You will [see] I have  
drawn a stroke under a wor[d,]<sup>3</sup>  
not being sure if it be righ[tly]<sup>4</sup>  
spelled –<sup>5</sup> Respecting the la[te]<sup>6</sup>  
Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr McCartney[,]<sup>7</sup> I shou[ld]<sup>8</sup>  
have told you that a[t] the dea[th]<sup>9</sup>  
of my dear brother Frank[']s dea[th]<sup>10</sup>  
from his long illness[,] that his  
business had been deranged [...binding...]<sup>11</sup>  
that I of course would have no m[ore]<sup>12</sup>  
of support[.] [H]e called on a Lady [...binding...]<sup>13</sup>  
whom he knew I was intimate &  
requested her to let him know if it  
was so & he would raise me 50 £s  
for life[.] [D]o I not owe his memory

[Fol. 2b]

much gratitude[?] [H]e only knew  
me as a collector for public char-

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>3</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Maiddeburn."

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>7</sup> Reverend Arthur Chichester Macartney (1775–16 May 1843), yeoman and vicar for Templepatrick and Belfast. In 1796, he assisted with the arrest of William Orr (his father, Dr Reverend George Macartney, the vicar of Antrim and a magistrate, having issued the warrant for Orr's arrest).

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. MAM has mistakenly written "death" in place of "time."

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Most likely, "&."

<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>13</sup> Most likely, "with."

ities[,] for one of which I had to call on himself & being also one of the Committee of Ladies to attend to the comfort of the women & the education of the girls in our Old Poorhouse[,] the first Public charitable Institution in Belfast & which had been originated by my uncles Rob & Henry Joy – Maria had been at a boarding school with his sister<sup>14</sup> for five years at Ballycraig & they were very fond of each other & both were general favourites in the school –<sup>15</sup> Mr M<sup>c</sup>C was one of the Poorhouse

Committee of Gentlemen[.]  
I fear I have trespassed  
to[o] long on your time & pa[rt]<sup>16</sup>  
with best wishes for you[r]<sup>17</sup>  
health & happiness & all w[ho]<sup>18</sup>  
are dear to you[.]

[Fol. 3b]

Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
I write when nearly da[rk.]<sup>19</sup>  
Pray date your letters  
inside as when it fal[ls]<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> McNeill states that this “one-time school friend of Maria’s” was the only daughter of Reverent Arthur Chichester Macartney, not his sister. McNeill, *Life*, 260.

<sup>15</sup> Ballycraig, a townland in County Antrim.

<sup>16</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

[...] out of the envelo[pe]<sup>21</sup>  
I am at a loss for the date[.]

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

170. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 22 February 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/82

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums, embossed design, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a and Fol. 4b, missing envelope

Belfast 22<sup>d</sup> Feb 1859

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

Having this day since  
[e]ight[,]<sup>1</sup> forwarded you ~~forward-~~  
~~ed you~~ the information which  
Lady Tennent procured for you[,]<sup>2</sup>  
I should have been very uneasy  
lest your silence had been caus-  
[e]d<sup>3</sup> by your son's increased illness[,]  
had I not heard of you thro' the  
[.binding...] Miss Dobbins, but having  
[d]elayed<sup>4</sup> acknowledging her Lady-  
[s]hip[']s<sup>5</sup> letter until I should hear  
from you[,] I would be glad to  
know if you are satisfied or if there

be any thing more required[.]

[Fol. 1b]

I fear my last letter may  
be be misunderstood respect-

---

<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 169 (TCD MS873/81).

<sup>3</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

ing the embarrassments I experienced in the past misfortunes of our country, in which no person was to blame, ~~but~~ as all arose from unavoidably adverse circumstances, I mean respecting the deficiency of funds, the time being so short & as I made no appeal to the public ^afterwards^ I believe it was not generally known that I was such a loser[.] I was not aware at the time that it would have caused such injury to others, or I should have

have felt it a public duty to seek for compensation, & no ^doubt^ I should have obtained it[.] [A]t the time of my dear brother Frank's death we were much embarrassed by the house we were living in at the time,<sup>6</sup> of which he had taken a lease[,] ~~five~~ ^eight^ years of which were unexpired & house-rents had fallen considerably from the time it had been taken, the Landlord refused to take it off my hands without being paid £200, altho' my brother had laid out that sum in adding to its conveniences & contributing to its comfort & had kept it up in good repair, neither would he

[Fol. 2a]

allow it to be set for a business[,] to which most of the houses in that street are now devoted, and therefore to extricate us from

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>6</sup> This refers to 80 Donegall Street.

our difficulty[,] ^a number of our friends^ made up the re-  
quired amount as a testimoni-  
al to ~~his~~ ^my brother[']s^ memory, bestowing  
it in the most delicate manner  
so as not to hurt our feelings[,]  
therefore I have nothing to com[-]  
plain of! My pecuniary losses &  
difficulties were owing ^to^ my too  
sanguine temper, in overrating  
my own abilities, I was not fit  
for the position I assumed[,] for tho  
I excelled in the beauty of our ma-  
nufacture & was the first in some  
of

of the fancy articles so that  
some others in the business sent  
~~for~~ to me for information on  
the subject which I gave them[,]  
not being able to supply the  
demand, yet when a depressi-  
on in business occurred[,] I could  
not think of dismissing our work[-]  
ers because nobody would then  
give them employment & then  
we could not tell when a reviv-  
al should take place what would  
be most required, but I am  
ashamed of my egotism[,] both in  
this letter & also in my last but  
please ~~to~~ recollect[,] ~~it is~~ ^both are^ strictly  
confidential[,] not to go farther & the

[Fol. 3a]

present ^is^ to prevent misconcep-  
tion of the others – I believe there  
are few, who when advanced in  
life[,] do not regret many errors  
into which they had fallen, but  
no mistake is so painful as  
having been a cause of suffer[-]

[Fol. 3b]

ing & sorrow to others – [P]ray  
excuse my trespassing so long on  
your time & patience & believe  
me[,] with best wishes for your  
welfare & happiness, & all who  
are dear to you & prayers for your  
son[']s recovery my dear Doctor[,]

Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 4a, blank]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>7</sup>

[Fol. 4b]

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<sup>7</sup> "From Mary McCracken/ 22 Feb<sup>y</sup> 1859."

171. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 21 June 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/89

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 3 bifoliums & 1 folio stitched together with white thread, blue paper binding along lower right side of Fol. 7b, missing envelope. Additional folio adjoined to Fol. 1a by Madden with blue paper binding along left side and a metal eyelet at upper left side, the punched eyelet buttonhole follows throughout all subsequent folios

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Madden's Fol. 1a]

[Madden's Fol. 1b, blank]

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 21<sup>st</sup> June 1859

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

On looking over Russell[']s life lately[,] I observed one or two trifling errors which I cannot recollect whether I mentioned them before, & therefore M<sup>rs</sup> Madden can look over what I now write to save your time & let you know any thing worth notice – Page 145 – 11 lines from the bottom[,]<sup>3</sup> Miss Goddard[,] tho' originally from Newry[,] was not living there when Russell was acquainted with her, but she & her brothers & sister were under the

---

<sup>1</sup> "From Mary McCracken/ 21 June 1859."

<sup>2</sup> "1. sheet."

<sup>3</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 145.

care of her aunt Rainey whose husband<sup>4</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> Goddard<sup>5</sup> were both in the Belfast Customhouse & both families lived together in a house called Green Ville[,] within two miles of Belfast[.]

Compressed lip is not correct, that would express contempt, which I never saw in his countenance[.]<sup>6</sup> [H]is mouth was the most beautiful, particularly when he smiled[,] I ever saw & so perfectly truthful[,] as if so truthful ^himself^ that he never suspected desceit [sic] in others[.] I never saw a mouth resembling it but one, not quite its equal – Notwith[-] standing that[,] he was remarkably reli[-] gious[,] he frequently broke the third commandment by exclamations, a bad habit, at that time, prevalent but not [in] general by presbyterians, & which surpris[-] ed me in one of his character & I had great inclination to speak to him on the ^subject^ but the stateliness of his manner prevented me – [T]his is not for publication[.] ~~but more demonstrative of~~ Respecting his his situation

[Fol. 1b]

situation [sic] as Seneschal while in Dungannon[,] I heard him express his compunction at the number of soldiers he had trusted while there – Page 224 –<sup>7</sup> the papers ~~mentioned~~ which I lost were not stolen, I mean the papers entrusted

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> Henrietta Maria Rainey née Hutchinson (c.1757–1790) and her husband William Rainey (c. 1745–12 June 1803), of Greenville, a customs official.

<sup>5</sup> John Goddard (d. 1807), a customs official.

<sup>6</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 146.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

to my care by Miss Russell, but no doubt I mentioned before that I had weakly & from pity[,] contrary to my dear sister[']s advice[,] lent them to Charles Teeling & shall never cease to feel the most bitter self-reproach for having done so – I think you have copied one of these from Teeling[']s [P]ersonal [N]ar[r]ative, as it was called; I never knew why as I understood he never took up arms in the cause & I heard at that ^time^ those whose families had lost members by the first movement were not asked to join the second & his family had been the most severe sufferers & the most truly patient & christian – There was a mistake about D<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Donnell being of different political opinions from Russell, I met the D<sup>r</sup> one

evening at ~~when~~ tea with the Templetons when the D<sup>r</sup> said to M<sup>r</sup> Templeton, I think you ought to become a United Irishman, M<sup>r</sup> T. said[,] I take no part in politics[.] [Y]ou ought ^not^ to consider it a matter of politics[,] said the D<sup>r</sup>, but a matter of morality[.] [A]re you a United Irishman yourself[?] said Miss Templeton (afterwards Mrs Magee)[.] [O]h[,] replied the D<sup>r</sup>[,] that would not answer one in my ^public^ situation – This was however early in the business, before recourse to arms was thought of. Reform of Parliament was then the object, & hoped for by argument with out other force than reason – The second time my sister & I visited Kilmainham we were told that John Dunn<sup>8</sup> was nephew to Richardson the Goaler, & who we were ^afterwards^ told about the £100 given to him as part payment for allowing Russell

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>8</sup> John Dunn, the jailer at Kilmainham.

to escape. I heard that he took it to  
the Castle

2<sup>d</sup> sheet

[Fol. 3a]

Castle [sic] as a bribe given to him &  
[as] a reward for his pretended fidelity[,] he not only was allowed to keep  
£100, but was also rewarded by  
being appointed governor of another  
prison<sup>9</sup> but I never for one instant  
^attributed^ any want of principle to M<sup>r</sup> Mason  
~~for~~ but considered him rather timi-  
d in fearing the £100 should be found  
in his possession, & supposed that he[,]  
thinking that the money had been lost  
thro' his mismanagement[,] had said  
that he would make it up, but no doubt  
his circumstances having ^been^ injured by  
confinement[,] he had not the means –  
On looking over your first publication  
I was quite ashamed of the high praise you  
bestowed on many of my actions, which  
had been suggested by my dear sister  
who[,] with a warm heart[,] had a cold & reserved  
manner[.] She was ten years older than

me[,] was very handsome & had a fine  
tall commanding ~~manner~~ ^figure^ but kept  
herself always in the background[,] al-  
ways pushing me forward, who was  
her inferior in every thing but cheer-  
fulness & hopefulness, the latter of which  
was most ruinous, ^& the consequence of^ which has been an-  
other cause of painful & unceasing  
reproach – It was my sister[,] I think[,] who  
suggested the idea of John Green[']s as a  
safe place of concealment ^for Russell^ when he return-

[Fol. 3b]

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<sup>9</sup> It was the turnkey George Dunn who took the £100 to the castle.

ed to Ireland[.]<sup>10</sup> [H]e had indiscreetly stopped  
at a public house & sent to ask me to meet  
him ^there^ which I told his messenger[,] Char-  
les Scott, would betray him, & that I  
must consult my sister, that we had  
but one heart but she was my superi-  
our in understanding, ^& presence of mind[.]^ [S]he it was who  
proposed me taking ten guineas & also the  
ring that had been bespoke for Frank when

he was going to America with Harry's [Fol. 4a]  
hair – The ring he accepted ^but refused the money[,]^ not being  
in want of it at that time, till afterwards  
when he was sending [---] ^two^ messengers to Dub-  
lin, one of ~~him~~ ^whom^ was the publican[']s son  
where he had stopped, & then it was found  
what an injudicious place of refuge it  
had been, as the publican had occasion  
for £30 which had to be supplied[.] [T]he  
Greens were pious Covenanters ^who^ went every  
Sunday to the nearest place of worship  
they had ^which was^ at Newtownards, leaving their  
daughter of 12 years of age to keep the house[;]  
a remarkably plain girl ~~pock-marked~~  
whom Mr Russell would not allow to burn  
her face in toasting his bread, but toasted  
it himself – It was my sister also who  
proposed my sending money to Mrs Ham-  
ilton[.]<sup>11</sup> I expressed my surprize to her at  
Ladies who had seen Mrs Hamilton in the  
latter end of 98 & pitied her, young & hand-  
some

& unprotected visiting her uncle ^&^ lodging [Fol. 4b]  
in a dressmakers, & working for the woman  
of the house for payment of the rent, & as  
I thought the Ladies might have invited

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<sup>10</sup> John Green's house located near Cave Hill.

<sup>11</sup> See Letter 56 (TCD MS873/97).

her to come & reside with them, my  
sister replied[,] you might assist her  
without doing so[.] [H]ow[?] I replied[.]  
[B]y sending her some money[.] [T]his had ne-  
ver occurred to me & I of course was much  
gratified with the proposal, & as Tho<sup>s</sup> Hughes  
was going up to Dublin[,] I put up 18 guineas  
in a little pillbox[.] I wished to have sent 20  
but ^had^ not so much on hand, I did not put  
my ^name to the^ note[,] not wishing her to know who it  
came ^from but^ lest she should fear it had been  
from some person that she would  
wish to be obliged to & therefore I gave her  
to understand that it was from females  
but Hughes bungled the matter & let out  
the secret, he was a warm ^hearted^ creature but  
thoughtless & imprudent & often involv-  
ed himself in difficulties, which were  
more than he could stand as he ought[.] [A]t one  
period[,] before he was a [---] ^resident^ of Belfast[,]

3<sup>d</sup> sheet

[Fol. 5a]

he had been sent down to Belfast while  
he was in Kemmis's office[,] a number of  
young men with whom he was spending  
the evening, put a few guineas under his  
glass which he refused to accept of, not  
being in immediate want, but after-  
wards when residing in Belfast he  
became involved in difficulties & mis-  
applied the ten guineas, which I had  
given him for ^the^ stonecutter for Russell[']s  
Grave, ^&^ it had to be paid over again[.]  
[I]t was himself who suggested the  
inscription, as there were people in  
Downpatrick of the name of Russell  
& he thought that as there had been  
a ~~few~~ few lines with that title that  
had been generally read, it would be the

best distinction –<sup>12</sup> The ring was among the things left by Russell & was sent to his ^sister^ & no doubt was in her possession at her death or perhaps was disposed of as I was then called on for £1.06 for

her funeral expenses – It was not I who obtained Miss Russell admission into the Retreat at Drumcondra[,]<sup>13</sup> which was supported ~~but it~~ ^by a few ladies &^ was not a public Institution & only afforded lodging[,] firing & washing to the inmates, & the inmates were mostly old servants & two slept in the same bed, but some Dublin friend had given Miss Russell a bed to herself ^&^ before she was there & while keeping the school[,] she required assistance & still there ^were^ friends in Belfast on whom I called occasionally<sup>14</sup> to help, & M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Ramsey always when in Dublin ~~always~~ visited & assisted her, & Miss Fanny Hincks[,] sister to the widow (who is still living) of the late D<sup>r</sup> Drennan,<sup>15</sup> called on me & proposed accompanying me to call on

[Fol. 5b]

some of M<sup>r</sup> Russell[']s friends to ask them to subscribe a trifle each[,] weekly[,] to make up 5/0 a week for her

[Fol. 6a]

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<sup>12</sup> The inscription reads, "The Grave of Russell/ 1803."

<sup>13</sup> The Retreat, located in Drumcondra, Co. Dublin, was a charitable asylum "for aged and indigent persons of respectability suffering under some sudden emergency." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, or, Dictionary of arts, sciences, and general literature*. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1842), 243. MAM was correcting Madden's statement that Miss Russell "had gained admission into that asylum through the exertions of Miss McCracken." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 278.

<sup>14</sup> "called, occasionally" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>15</sup> Fanny Hincks, a cousin of Sarah Drennan née Swanwick (1770–1870).

support as she was then past  
doing any thing for herself, we did so  
but all did not continue but shortly  
after several had declined, assistance  
came unexpectedly from another quar-  
ter, a son of Mrs Hamilton[']s who had been  
entirely neglected by his father ~~after~~  
~~the latter had returned from~~ while his mother was in France  
where she[,] Mrs Hamilton[,] had been left  
without support for herself or child[,]  
except what she received from one in  
Bonaparte[']s employment[,] I think De-  
noux was his name[.] [H]e dined with her  
on Sunday & left some money in the  
drawer of a little work table & she  
& her daughter had to live as they could  
tho' had Hamilton written her one letter[,]  
she would have received support either

either [sic] as his wife or widow. I do  
not know which & where she did get  
the means to return to Ireland[,] she  
found her son's<sup>16</sup> education had been  
quite neglected & always when any  
friend called to see her[,] his father was  
for ordering him out of the room, which she  
would not allow but introduced him as  
her son & soon polished his manners, & when  
his father sent him down to Belfast to  
distribute Lottery squibs, he Hamilton being in  
employed in the office of the Dublin Evening Post[,]<sup>17</sup>  
the lad spent the evenings in learning  
Latin without a master, & about the year 1819  
or 1818 he entered into the East India  
Company's service as a private & soon rose  
as high as was consistent with the rules of the  
service, which was conductor of ordnance[,]

[Fol. 6b]

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<sup>16</sup> Johnston Hamilton. See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

<sup>17</sup> *Dublin Evening Post* (10 June 1732–21 August 1875), founded by John Magee.

which was equal to <sup>the</sup> pay of a Lieutenant but not the Rank & then <sup>he</sup> remitted to his mother thro' me[,] all but the first yule[,] £50- quarterly & £8- to his aunt Miss Russell & then continued till he got leave of absence for three

4<sup>th</sup> sheet

[Fol. 7a]

for three [sic] years to take possession of a small landed property which <sup>fell</sup> to him in right of his father ~~to him~~ at the death of an old lady[,] the relative[']s widow[,] ~~on~~ the first remittance was for £50- & afterwards the same amount came in quarterly payments & also at each quarter £2- for his old grand aunt Miss Russell[,] which was continued during the old Lady's life - Perhaps I have given you this information or part of it before but it won't take as much time to read as it has <sup>done</sup> to write it, & if there is anything more wanting let me know[.] I have felt reluctant to take up so much valuable time & therefore delayed sending it but if there [is]

any thing more I can do for you please let me know [&] if the book reach[-] ed you[.] [P]ray excuse me for taking up so much of your valuable time - I had the pleasure lately[,] by a Lady who had been lately in Dublin[,] that your son had returned home in perfect health on which I most sincerely congratulate both you & M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & with best wishes for you all three[,]

[Fol. 7b]

for your happiness here & hereaf-  
ter[,] I remain my dear Doctor

Yours most truly

Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

**172. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent [Belfast]**

**Date:** 21 June 1859

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/8

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand, pencil]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 21<sup>st</sup> June 1859

Bankmore

My dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

I heard with much pleasure lately that you had obtained the fee simple of the Shankhill property[,] for which I am your tenant & shall be much obliged by your informing ^me^ how I could obtain the same, & what would be the expense[?]² I had the pleasure of seeing your your [sic] youngest son & daughter lately on visiting their aunts Margaret & Jane, & would have had the pleasure of visiting your family since their arrival at Rush Park, long ere this, but for distance & my various avocations. With sincere  
gøød ^regards^ & best wishes for the welfare & hap[-]  
piness of ^yourself^ [&] all who are dear to you[,]

I remain my dear Mr Tennent

[Fol. 1b]

yours very truly

Mary Ann McCracken

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<sup>1</sup> "held over/ in consequence/ of bustle & clearing out/ of H[ercules] Place."

<sup>2</sup> Fee simple, a legal term meaning absolute ownership.

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>3</sup> "Bankmore, Belfast –/ 21. June 1859/ Miss Mary Anne M<sup>c</sup>Cracken/ – ab<sup>t</sup> renewal of Shankhill/ lease/ ✓."

173. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 22 June 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference codes:** TCD MS873/84 and TCD MS873/78

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 watermarked bifolium (TCD MS873/84) & 1 folio (TCD MS873/78), blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, Fol. 3a and left side of Fol. 3a, missing envelope. Fol. 3 was originally a partial draft of this letter, however, when Mary Ann came to write a postscript, she used what space remained on Fol. 3a, striking through the draft sign-off above. Evidently, she forgot to strike through Fol. 3b as well.

Belfast 22 June 1859

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear

Since I wrote on the 8<sup>th</sup>[,]<sup>1</sup>  
I thought the post was the safest  
way of sending the picture & book  
& therefore posted them on monday  
& hope they have reached you in  
safety —<sup>2</sup> I believe I mentioned  
in my last some trifling errors  
which I observed in Russell[']s life  
but am not certain —<sup>3</sup> I found an old  
sheet of paper containing them  
but am not certain whether I copied ^it^  
as I am apt to write so dif[f]usely  
& circumstantially that I frequent-  
ly write my letters over again ~~by~~  
with the intention of shortening[,] in

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, MAM [Belfast] to Madden [Dublin], 8 June 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Monday 20 June 1859.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably referring to Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89).

which I do not always succeed[.]  
I had the pleasure of learning  
a few days ago[,] from a Lady who  
had been lately in Dublin[,] that  
your son was returned home quite  
recovered from his late illness[,]  
on which ^I^ sincerely congratulate you  
& M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & hope you may  
all be spared to each other for  
many years & that your son may  
succeed you in virtue & talents[.]  
I am also glad to inform you  
that M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cleery is apparently  
much improved in health since  
the date of my last letter & with  
best wishes for the health & happi-  
ness of yourself & all who are dear to  
you[,] I am my dear D<sup>r</sup>

Yours most truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 1b]

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Fol. 2b, blank]

I forgot to say that I was well aware  
of the sterling worth of M<sup>r</sup> Sturge[']s<sup>4</sup>  
character but I am sorry to say  
that Belfast[,] once so celebrated for  
its love of liberty[,] is now so sunk  
in the love of filthy lucre, that there  
are but 16 or 17 female antislavery  
advocates for the good cause, pay-  
ing 2/6 yearly, not one man, tho' several  
Quakers in Belfast & none to distri-  
bute papers to American Emigrants  
but an old woman within 17 days of

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Sturge (1793–14 May 1859), English abolitionist, activist and Quaker. Madden and Joseph Sturge were friends and so Madden must have written to MAM about his recent death.

89 —<sup>5</sup> M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cleery had been apparently  
progressing towards recovery since  
I last wrote to you but seems not quite  
so well these last two days but I  
am considerably better than for ~~some~~  
than for [sic] some years past[,] [E]ver yours[,]

M A M<sup>c</sup>C

I mentioned in my last[,]<sup>6</sup> a few  
trifling errors which I perceived in  
looking over M<sup>r</sup> Russell[']s life[,] I  
think I mentioned some of them &  
particularly my regret & self re-  
proach at having lent Charles  
Teeling the papers committed to  
my care by Miss Russell but there  
^are^ various other matters which I found  
in an old paper which[,] if M<sup>rs</sup> Madden  
would take time to look over[,] I  
would send them to you, but res-  
pecting the engraving of Harry's  
picture[,] I never contemplated your  
being at the expense, that would  
be very unjust indeed but I would  
like to know the expense & would not  
scruple at ~~it~~ any thing reasonable.  
I shall trespass no longer on your  
time at present but with kind regards  
& best wishes for yourself[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Madden<sup>8</sup>

[Fol. 3b]<sup>7</sup>

~~your son & all who are dear to~~

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>5</sup> This confirms Fol. 3 as being a postscript to Letter 174 as MAM turned 89 on 8 July 1859, thus making the date on which she wrote this, 22 June 1859.

<sup>6</sup> See Letter 171 (TCD MS873/89). This reference to the contents of her previous letter to Madden further supports the claim that Fol. 3 was a postscript to Letter 173.

<sup>7</sup> This is a partial draft of Letter 173 which MAM forgot to erase before writing her postscript on Fol. 3a.

<sup>8</sup> ^signed M. M<sup>c</sup>Cracken^ [Madden ed., ink]. Evidently Madden was unsure of the nature of this folio.

you I remain my Dear Doctor  
Yours most truly  
M A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

174. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 23 June 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/79

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b, missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 23<sup>d</sup> June 1859

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

I have just received your letter & am truly sorry to find you have had such additional difficulties & disappointments in your present publication, I think you are well entitled to compensation from Government for a work so instructive on the evils attending an attempt to change the government of a country ^by force of arms[,]^ so certain of producing evil & the uncertainty of doing good – Respecting the inquiry about Mr McCartney[,] I think you mistook or rather misunderstood what I told you[,]

which was that<sup>2</sup> from my brother Frank[']s long illness previous to his death, & his unsuccessful at-

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "M. Re offer of an annuity/ On the part of Rev<sup>d</sup> McCartney vicar of ^Belfast^."

<sup>2</sup> "was, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

tempt at getting the Ropewalk set, it was feared that there would not be means left for my support, & therefore Mr McCartney inquired of Miss Stevenson,<sup>3</sup> with whom I was, & still am, intimate, if it were the case, & asked her to find out if it were so, & he would raise thro' Belfast, £50 a year for life for my support. I assured Miss Stevenson that it was not necessary, however my brother had unfortunately taken a lease of the house where we were then living, in Donegall Street, at sixty guineas a year, eight years of which were un-

expired & there were only Maria & myself to occupy it. [The Landlord was an avaricious & ill-tempered man, & tho' my brother had laid out £200 on rendering it more comfortable & kept it in very good repair, he required £200 for taking it off my hands, & various people having told Maria that I was not accountable for the rent, (I knew that I could not but my brother's property was liable) & I had nothing more but the furniture, which Maria sent out of the & left the house, but Mr Suffern would not receive the key nor make any abatement in the rent his demand & therefore some of my brother's friends, or rather men of business who knew & esteemed him, made

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> A 'Miss Stevenson' is listed as Secretary for the Belfast Ladies' Society for Clothing the Poor for 1843, alongside 'Miss McCracken' as Manager. See *Post-Office Directory Appendix, Public Institutions &c, &c. of Belfast within Post Office Belfast Annual Directory for 1843-44* (Belfast: Wilson, 1843), 16.

up the sum required[.] One<sup>4</sup> gave  
£20[,] each 17 £10 & three £5 each, making  
up the £200 & £5 costs, this was set-  
tled

[Fol. 2b]

& handed to me in a letter with  
the names of each & the sum[s]<sup>4</sup>  
subscribed by them, the letter  
saying it was a loan to be  
paid at my convenience bu[t]<sup>5</sup>  
the letter was out of delicacy  
lest I should scruple to acc[ept]<sup>6</sup>  
it, & I was told they had in-  
tended to have given a tes-  
timonial to my brother[']s m[emo-]<sup>7</sup>  
ry & it was considered the b[est]<sup>8</sup>  
way they could do so in ass[ist-]<sup>9</sup>  
ing us[.] [O]n my sister[']s death in 18[29]<sup>10</sup>  
some friends urged my brother [...binding...]<sup>11</sup>  
make a settlement on Maria[,] par[tly]<sup>12</sup>  
that thro' procrastination she mig[ht]<sup>13</sup>  
^be^ unprov[id]ed ^for^ which ^he^ did & settled £2 [...binding...]  
on her but not till after all his

---

<sup>4</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Most likely, "to."

<sup>12</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

debts were paid, which was str[ick-]<sup>14</sup>  
ly just & it was so settled afterwar[ds]<sup>15</sup> [End]<sup>16</sup>

<I shall speak  
to some of the  
Quakers about  
M<sup>rs</sup> Sturge[.]<sup>17</sup>>

[Fol. 1a]

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. See "Report of the Committee of Transfers for 9<sup>th</sup> Decem<sup>r</sup> 1842" which states, "The Committee of Transfers reported that there was no legal objection to the transfer of M<sup>r</sup> Francis M<sup>c</sup>Cracken's share to his adopted niece Maria M<sup>c</sup>Cracken." Memorandum of Chairman of the Committee of Transfer, RBAI correspondence, Royal Belfast Academical Institute, School Records, PRONI SCH/524/7B/36/43. It is signed "James McCleery, Chairman of the Committee of Transfers." It is quite likely that this James McCleery was Maria's father-in-law.

<sup>16</sup> ^signed M.M. McCra[cken]^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>17</sup> Mrs Hannah Sturge neé Dickinson (1816–1896), Quaker, philanthropist and author who married the widower Joseph Sturge in 1846. Joseph Sturge died on 14 May 1859 and so MAM is possibly responding to a request from Madden to appeal to the Quakers of Belfast to assist or send their condolences to his widow.

**175. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Robert James Tennent [Belfast]**

**Date:** 4 July 1859

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/387/9

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, missing envelope

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Belfast 4<sup>th</sup> July 1859

Bankmore

My Dear Mr Tennent

Having learnt some time ago that you had obtained the fee simple of the Shankhill property, for which I am your tenant, I wrote to you on the 21<sup>st</sup> of last month<sup>2</sup> requesting you would have the goodness to advise me how I could obtain the same, & also the best & cheapest manner of doing so[,] for which I am more anxious as Mr Abbot who holds the Ropewalk is urging me on the same subject, & I shall therefore be

extremely obliged if you will favour me with an answer at your earliest convenience –  
With kind regards & best wish-

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> “✓/ 11<sup>th</sup>” This would suggest that RJT sent a letter of reply to this epistle on 11 July 1859.

<sup>2</sup> See Letter 173 (PRONI D1748/G/387/8).

es for yourself & family[,] I remain  
my dear M<sup>r</sup> Tennent

Yours very truly  
Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

[Fol. 2a, blank]

[Endorsement, RJT's hand]<sup>3</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

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<sup>3</sup> "Bankmore, Belfast/ 4. July 1859/ Miss Mary Anne McCracken/ -ab<sup>t</sup> renewal of  
Shankill/ lease/ ✓."

176. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 13 July 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/85

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 folio, white paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a with a metal eyelet at upper left side, the punched eyelet buttonhole follows throughout all subsequent folios, resulting in some tearing, missing envelope

Belfast 13 July 1859

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

I received your letter respecting the death of the truly inestimable Joseph Sturge,<sup>1</sup> which is a loss not only to his own family but also to the ^whole^ human race, & which of course we may all deplore & truly sympathize with his affected widow, & family[,] if he had any; if not[,] her case is still the more deplorable, her only consolation will be that<sup>2</sup> her loss is his ~~ease~~ ~~is~~ his great gain[,] that every day that passes over her head brings her a step nearer ^to the end of his^ her wearisome journey where they will be reunited[,] never more to part[.] I called[,] as you desired, on one of the most esteemed Quakers in Belfast but he said such

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Sturge (1793–14 May 1859), English Quaker, businessman, philanthropist, abolitionist and founder of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society which continues today as Anti-Slavery International.

<sup>2</sup> “be, that” [comma omitted (ed.)].

things were never done by them, ^unless to intimate friends[,]^ ↵  
 [...tear...]³

mean respecting an address of [co]n-<sup>4</sup>  
 dolence to his widow[.] [T]his was  
 Mr Pim[,]⁵ his brother was from  
 home but I was told he had quit that  
 sect, so have several others – [Y]ou  
 inquired in a former letter about  
 Miss Fanny Hincks, I forgot the ques-  
 tion but what I do know of her is that⁶  
 while poor Miss Russell was in the  
 Retreat, where she died, Miss Hincks  
 was on a visit to her friends in Belfast  
 ^&^ she called on me & kindly offered to ac-  
 company me in calling on a few such  
 as I thought would contribute what  
 would amount to 5/0 p[er] week, which we  
 got accomplished & rather more, but  
 some soon withdrew; but soon after[,]  
 I cannot recollect the exact date but I  
 know it was soon after the account of

Hamilton[']s death, when I was trying  
 to raise funds to enable Mrs Hamil-  
 ton to join her daughter in America  
 & a letter came her ^from^ Johnston⁷ who was  
 then in the East India Company's service  
 ^in^ which he had entered as a private &  
 had speedily risen to the rank of Con-  
 ductor of Ordnance, the pay of which  
 I believe was that of a Lieutenant, but

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³ Most likely, "I."

⁴ Partially obstructed by a tear.

⁵ Either John Pim (1800–1865), J.P. for Belfast, or one of his sons.

⁶ "is, that" [comma omitted (ed.)].

⁷ Missing letter, Johnston Hamilton to MAM [Belfast], c. 1825.

the rank was not equal; but on his having obtained leave of absence to take possession of a small property which fell to him in right of his father, he had such interest here, that he obtained a Lieutenant[']s Commission & is now a Major & had been in the Burmese war[.] I have been in regular correspondence with him ever since, being the medium of communication between him & his sister Mrs Teeinan,<sup>8</sup> whose husband

is far from being what a husband ought to be[,] neither has she been very fortunate in her children[,] her youngest & most affectionate son has made a most unfortunate marriage & she herself is in ill health & of course her brother[']s letters are her greatest comfort & I generally hear from him four times on each year & sometimes oftener[.] [H]e has six daughters living, two of whom are married to Capt<sup>ns</sup> in the army[,] one of whom ^J.H[']s son[-]in[-]law^ had been in England for his health & had left two of his daughters at a boarding school in Bath; Major Hamilton has the highest esteem for his son[-]in[-]law & they seem to be a family strongly united by esteem & affection thru which nothing

[Fol. 2b]

nothing [sic] can be more conducive

[Fol. 3a]

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<sup>8</sup> Mrs Teeinan née Hamilton, daughter of William Henry Hamilton and Mary Ann Hamilton née Russell.

[...tear...]<sup>9</sup> [hap]piness –<sup>10</sup> ^Tho'^ I have trespassed  
so much on your time & patience  
~~but~~ ^I^ cannot conclude without in-  
forming you that such a great  
improvement has taken place  
in Mr McCleery's health that  
we have much reason to hope  
for his perfect recovery, he has de-  
termined to exert himself for  
the benefit of his family ^& began by^ by [sic] writ-  
ing for a friend[,] by which he has  
earned £2 – [H]is writing is<sup>11</sup> as  
good as formerly, & he went alone  
one day to the post office with a  
letter, his daughter Anna followed ^him[.]^  
I had the pleasure of hearing  
lately[,] by a lady who had been in  
Dublin[,] that your son has returned

home & in perfect health on  
which I most sincerely congratu-  
late you & Mrs Madden[,] it  
must cheer & comfort you in the  
midst of your other disappoint-  
ments & vexations which I hope  
you will get some arrangement that  
may enable you to get over the dif-  
ficulty – You did not say if the  
book reached you[,] nor where [to find] your  
advertisement respecting the forth[-]  
coming vol –<sup>12</sup> With best wishes  
for the welfare of yourself & family  
& best respects to Mrs Madden[.]

[Fol. 3b]

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<sup>9</sup> Most likely, "to."

<sup>10</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>11</sup> "writing, is" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>12</sup> Referring to Madden's, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, Second edition, which was published the following year.

I remain my dear Doctor  
Yours most truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

177. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 2 August 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/83

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums & 2 folios, embossed design, white paper binding along right side of Fol. 6b, missing envelope

1 Belfast 2 aug<sup>t</sup> 1859 [Fol. 1a]  
Bankmore  
My Dear Doctor

I rec<sup>d</sup> the prospectuses you sent me of your forthcoming publication & have left copies of them in two of the most eminent of them, ^publishers^ but unfortunately this is a most inauspicious period, as a number of very weighty failures have lately taken place of<sup>1</sup> men considered very rich but now are many thousands behind their engagements, & no one can guess how much the evil may spread, or how they themselves may be implicat- ^involved^ ed in it, but after some time the panic will subside, & matters will come round to their usual course – The document however[,] seems to me rather deficient in taking no notice of the two first volumes ready for sale[;]

2 [Fol. 1b]  
should it not have been stated that they were ready for delivery & & [sic] when they might be had[?] [M]ay not this omission lead to the

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<sup>1</sup> “place, of” [comma omitted (ed.)].

idea that they are ^all^ already sold[?]²  
Tho' I gave such ample details  
of Russell[,] I omitted one little  
trait in his character[,] proving  
his freedom from selfishness, &  
consistent advocate [sic] for Liberty[;]  
he was one of the number who  
who [sic] in the days of Wilberforce[,]³ joined  
in ~~the~~ abstaining from the use of  
slave labour produce until slave-  
ing [sic] in the West Indies was abolish-  
ed, & at the dinner parties to which  
he was so often invited & where  
confectionary was so much used[,]  
he would not taste any thing that had

3

[Fol. 2a]

sugar in it, neither ^in^ tea or coffee.  
I am both ashamed & sorry to think  
Belfast has so far degenerated in  
regard to the Antislavery cause[.]  
I wish the people of Dublin would  
endeavour to rouse them, no doubt  
you are aware that the men of Belfast  
gave the matter up more than three  
years ago, all but the late Capt<sup>n</sup> Cal-  
der<sup>4</sup> who was one of the most perfect  
of human beings, & worthy M<sup>r</sup> Stan-

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<sup>2</sup> Referring to Madden's *United Irishmen*, First Series, Second Edition of 1857 and the subsequent Second Series, Second Edition of 1858.

<sup>3</sup> William Wilberforce (24 August 1759–29 July 1833), English philanthropist, abolitionist, independent MP for Yorkshire from 1780 until 1825 and Evangelical Christian.

<sup>4</sup> Commander Francis Anderson Calder (1787–7 November 1855), born in Edinburgh, Royal Navy sailor who worked his way up the ranks during the Napoleonic Wars, agent for the Sunday School Society of Ireland, founder and Honorary Secretary of The Belfast Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and joint secretary to the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society.

field<sup>5</sup> who is now so lame that he is unable to walk about as usual ^formerly^, who had noticed them monthly for two years[,] regularly to attend the monthly meetings[,] during which[,] not a single member made their appearance & now there are but 16 or 17 Ladies who meet occasionally & are the only advocates in Belfast of the

4

[Fol. 2b]

good cause[.]  
[I]n my brother[']s life[,]<sup>6</sup> I observed a trifling mistake respecting my father, the ship called the Hawk of which he had the command for about 13 or 14 years, had been built in Liverpool under his own inspection, & he had a small share in her from the first, but never more[.] [H]e was remarkable for making quick voyages, which did not conduce to his interest as<sup>7</sup> he got but half the sum when on shore as<sup>8</sup> when at ^sea[.]^  
Once on going thro' Garmoyle[,]<sup>9</sup> he passed a vessel & asked[,] what are you doing there Capt<sup>n</sup> Moore[?] [T]he other replied[,] waiting for a wind[.] [M]y father said[,] I am going out to look for one[.] [O]n his return[,] having

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<sup>5</sup> James Stanfield (c.1782–4 January 1867), grocer, member of the Evangelical Alliance, committee member of the Belfast Charitable Society and joint secretary to the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society.

<sup>6</sup> Madden, "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken," *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 389–506.

<sup>7</sup> "interest, as" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>8</sup> "shore, as" [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>9</sup> Pool of Garmoyle, where ships often had to wait for a high tide.

discharged one cargo & taken in

5

[Fol. 3a]

another, he found Cap<sup>t</sup> Moore<sup>10</sup>  
still in the same place, waiting  
for a wind, which place is called  
Moore[']s Hole to the present day[.]  
My father would never suffer any  
of his people to smuggle any thing  
^for him[,]^ not only from his holding an oath  
sacred, but because he thought it un-  
just to the fair dealer, but all these  
particulars are not for publication[,]  
only to correct the error[.] [P]age 404[,]  
you speak of Harry[']s power of  
giving confidence, it was not  
an exertion of power, but an in-  
tuitive appreciation of his char[-]  
acter which I have observed  
sometimes even in the lower  
animals, children & animals  
were all fond of him –<sup>11</sup> No doubt I  
told you that when on his way to London

6

[Fol. 3b]

& stopping on Sunday at a town in  
England[,] he went to a presbyte-  
rian place of worship, & was  
taken by a young gentleman into  
his own seat & ~~taken~~ invited to  
go home with him to dinner  
where there were only the gen-  
tlemen & his sister, they had  
prayers before separating, &  
I believe neither knew the name  
of the other – 496[;] when the girl

---

<sup>10</sup> Possibly Captain Thomas Moore (1750–1808), of the Isle of Man, commander of the Fame privateer.

<sup>11</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 404.

was sent to the prison for the bed  
&c which had been sent there for  
Harry's accommodation[,] the sol-  
diers boasted of their honesty  
in giving the things all up, &  
she of course spoke of the man  
coming to ask for the bottle of whis[-]  
key & half guinea, which caus-

7

[Fol. 4a]

ed the girl to be sent for to give  
evidence of the fact, which  
greatly annoyed the family[.]<sup>12</sup>  
I do not know whether I ever  
mentioned that an Italian had  
opened a picture shop in High-  
St- (I cannot recollect the exact  
date) but the proprietor talk-  
ed politics very freely, & spoke  
very brutally & shewed some  
drawings of his pupil Mr  
Newell - [M]y brother John[,] whom  
nature had fitted for a painter[,]  
despised the drawings & thought  
the violent language was intend[ed]  
to cover the bad drawings; more  
likely it was intended as a trap  
to catch the unwary[.] [A]n appren-

8

[Fol. 4b]

tice of my brother John[']s, ne-  
phew to Sam Nelson[,] had been  
taken ^in^ by ~~Nelson~~ Newel[1]; the  
lad[']s name was John Gordon[,]  
he had buried a number of  
pikes in the Cowhous[e] & when  
my brother John was in Dublin[,]  
a guard of soldiers came during

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 496.

the night[,] accompanied by New-  
el[1] as was believed[,] his face  
being blackened[.] Mrs M[-]  
Cracken was then a very beautiful  
young woman, but fortunately  
Gordon had taken some alarm  
& the pikes were not found –<sup>13</sup>  
You enquire about the revivals[,]<sup>14</sup>  
you may judge of them from  
the fruits, many public houses  
have been shut up, many who

9

[Fol. 5a]

who [sic] had been in the habit of  
cursing & swearing have giv-  
en this evil habit up, the night  
Constables say they have little  
to do now, & an instance occur-  
red of a woman[,] far advanced in  
life[,] who had many years ago sto-  
len some flour, has made compen[-]  
sation with interest, these cir-  
cumstances I have heard from  
good authority; but all this  
family have observed a great im[-]  
provement in the manners of  
the girls coming out of the  
mills which we pass almost  
daily going thro' Bedford Street[,]  
both in their dress & manners[,]  
formerly their dress was ~~formerly~~  
loose & immodest & their language

10

[Fol. 5b]

^whom^ & manners ^had been^ bold & offensive,  
now ~~they~~ ^they^ appear modest & quiet

---

<sup>13</sup> See Letter 13 (TCD MS873/152).

<sup>14</sup> In 1859, Presbyterian revivals swept through Ulster with many meetings taking place in Belfast.

which is certainly a proof of a change for the better – There are two sects[,] the two most opposite to each other ^who^ are rather against it, but we never make it a subject of discourse to our catholic servants, whom we look on as friends & would not wish to hurt their feelings, neither would I think of attempting to change their religious opinions, lest I should only turn them from being christians, to be infidels, which effect it had ^at^ first on Godkin who published the account of ^his^ conversion under the title of[,] a guide from the Church of Rome to the Church of Christ[.]<sup>15</sup> [W]e look on our servants as treasures, one had been William[']s nurse, ^Nelly Dowds<sup>16</sup> from he [was]

12

[Fol. 6a]

a year & a quarter old, & by the latter end of this month he will be 16 years old[.]<sup>17</sup> [S]he is a kind[,] affectionate & judicious nurse[,] tender & ^loving[.]^ [H]er brother Dan, who

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<sup>15</sup> Rev. James Godkin, *A guide from the Church of Rome to the Church of Christ* (Dublin: John Robertson & Co., 1836).

<sup>16</sup> Nelly Dowds subsequently came into the possession of, what was believed to have been, the coat Henry Joy McCracken wore at his execution. Historian Guy Beiner explains that “in 1948, the coat was owned by 78-year-old Catherine McPeake of Belfast, who had inherited it from her aunt Sarah Dowds, who in turn had received it from her sister Nellie.” Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 278.

<sup>17</sup> William McCleery Junior.

was about M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cleery's father<sup>18</sup>  
for many years, & with this fami[-]  
ly ever since we came here &  
works as hard to make the land  
productive as ^if^ it was all his  
own, & he & his sister Nelly  
are as honest as steel –  
& now I have the pleasure to  
tell you that M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Cleery has  
made such a rapid improvement  
latterly, that we have every reason  
to hope he will soon get quite  
well, he has at last determin-

11

[Fol. 6b]

-ed on exerting himself for the  
benefit of his family, can write  
a very find hand, & has already  
earned something by his  
writing, & has frequently been  
out in the morning before  
breakfast – Anna[,] his eldest  
daughter[,] who had been his  
principal ^attendant^ walking with him  
in the garden, & reading to him[,]  
has had a serious attack of ill-  
ness which confined her to bed &  
rendered a Doctor[']s attendance ne-  
cessary, was frequently visited  
by her father ^who read to her^ but now she is  
considerably better & able to come

---

<sup>18</sup> James McCleery (c.1775–17 January 1852), of Portaferry, engineer and surveyor. He was secretary to the Lagan Navigation Company and Belfast Water Commissioners, the Ulster Canal and the Belfast Charitable Society. A letter written by James McCleery to John Tennent (care of Oliver Bond) dated 17 November 1795, reveals that James McCleery was a friend of HJM and John McCracken Junior at that time and was sympathetic to their politics. See James McCleery, Belfast, to John Tennent, Dublin, 17 November 1795, Correspondence of John Tennent, Tennent Papers, PRONI D1748/D/1/2/1. It remains unknown if he was a United Irishman or if he was involved in the 1798 rebellion, however, his sons William and James were citizens of the United States and so it is possible that he was forced to flee Ireland and returned some years later.

down stairs & we all look forward  
with ^hope &^ with kindest regards to you & yours  
dear Doctor, yours most truly

M A M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

178. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 4 November 1859

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/87

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 2 bifoliums, embossed design, blue paper binding along right side of Fol. 2b and Fol. 4b, missing envelope

Belfast 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 1859

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore

My Dear Doctor

When last writing to you I quite forgot to say that I would consider it a great waste of money that might be better laid out, than in a new engraving of my brother[']s picture which[,] notwithstanding the trifling defect, is one of the most striking likenesses in the publication of any whom I had ~~sen~~ seen & which any one who had known him would immediately recognize[;] so we may let the matter rest –<sup>1</sup> I had the pleasure some time ago to see your friend Miss ^Caffrey who^ called with kind remembrances from you and M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & the agree-

able intelligence not only that you were both well but also that your son was returned from abroad quite restored to health[,] on which I most sincerely congratulate you, & hope he may be

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> The engraving can be found within Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 388–9.

spared to soothe your declining years & that we may all meet hereafter where all tears shall be wiped from every eye, never more to part – Miss Caffrey could not inform me how the first vol was going <sup>^off^</sup> & from the prospectus you sent me of the 2<sup>d</sup> vol taking ~~of~~ the no notice of the first, one might suppose that it was all disposed of, or nearly so, which I hope is the case[,] both for your

your [sic] sake & the good of mankind[.] [I]t is so full of instruction & warning to those whose excess of benevolent feeling to<sup>2</sup> their fellow creatures is liable to lead to their own destruction & what is still more painful to reflect on, to be production of evil in place of good to others – As I am not sure whether I mentioned to you before, several trifling errors which I observed in the first edition[,] I may repeat them now, & M<sup>rs</sup> Madden may look over this, & point out to you any thing I had omitted –  
Page 391 My father was never entire owner of the ship Hawk but was a partner in the vessel

[Fol. 2a]

from the first –<sup>3</sup> ~~from the first~~  
[I]t had been built in Liverpool under his own inspection & was a remarkably fortunate ves-

[Fol. 2b]

---

<sup>2</sup> “feeling, to” [comma omitted (ed.)].

<sup>3</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 391.

sel, he was never shipwrecked  
& never lost a man – I think he  
commanded the vessel about ten  
years from about 1765 ^or 6^ till 1775  
~~but these latter are irrelevant~~ & he  
always made speedy voyages[.]  
Page 406 Miss Tomb's name  
is not right spelt –<sup>4</sup> Page 479  
John Brice was the ~~name of the~~  
name of the man at whose house  
we stopped ^near the Cavehill^ on our way in search  
of my brother –<sup>5</sup> Page 394 In speak-  
ing of those who were so enthusi-  
astic at night over a battle[,] it

it [sic] was not of northerners  
he spoke but of southerners whom  
he said were not like northerners  
at all[,] perhaps he was too par-  
tial to the latter[.]<sup>6</sup> Page 481  
Leith was the name of the thought-  
less being who was one of our  
escorts to the Bowhill mount-  
ain, he seemed to have per-  
fect confidence in the country  
people[,] calling to every one he met[,]  
are you up[?] & similar expressi-  
ons, & I heard that he was assist-  
ed afterwards with means to  
emigrate & that in a few years he  
sent double the amount of what

[Fol. 3a]

he had received to pay his

[Fol. 3b]

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 486 and 489. Madden's misspelling being "Toomb" in place of "Tomb." However, MAM gave Madden the incorrect page reference.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 479. MAM's correction for "John Brier."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 394.

debt, such was his gratitude[.]<sup>7</sup>  
I forgot to say at 481 that  
nine o[']clock was the hour that  
Harry arrived[,] in place of seven[.]<sup>8</sup>  
[P]age 496 – Young[']s [N]ight [T]houghts  
was a favourite book of my  
mother[']s but not of Harry's[.]<sup>9</sup>  
Page 496[,] 8 last lines from  
the bottom[,] it was not the  
soldier that first spoke to the  
servant respecting the half  
guinea & bottle of whiskey but  
when the soldiers boasted of  
their honesty in giving up the  
things that had been sent there  
for my brother[']s accommodation

& she[,] being young & incon-  
siderate[,] mentioned the cir-  
cumstance which caused  
us so much annoyance as  
we could never feel pleasure  
in having pain inflicted on  
others[,] whatever might be their  
their [sic] conduct –<sup>10</sup> Respecting the  
hair I took off my brother[']s  
head, I had first taken off some  
& put it in my pocket & then[,]  
wishing for more[,] ^I had^ just taken  
it off when Fox entered the room  
& demanded it – [T]he next day  
I wrote to Col Barber requesting  
he would have it restored to

[Fol. 4a]

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 481. Madden mistakenly gives the name "Smith."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 485. MAM gives the wrong page reference.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 496.

^me[,] to^ which I received a polite an-  
 swer saying he was sorry to  
 inform me that the hair had  
 been immediately thrown into  
 the fire & consumed – I am  
 happy to inform you that Mr  
 M<sup>c</sup>Cleery has made a consi[d-]<sup>11</sup>  
 erable progress towards reco[v-]<sup>12</sup>  
 ery of late[,] so that we may now  
 indulge hope of his being soo[n]<sup>13</sup>  
 being [sic] entirely well & the rest ar[e]<sup>14</sup>  
 all in tolerable health[.] [T]he seas[on]<sup>15</sup>  
 has set in so suddenly severe  
 that I am the only [one] entirely [free] from a[che]<sup>16</sup>  
 or pain[,] or sickness[.] [F]or such e[x-]<sup>17</sup>  
 traordinary health at such an age  
 I cannot be sufficiently thankfu[l.]<sup>18</sup>  
 [W]ith sincere love to you & yours [...]

Mary Ann M<sup>c</sup>Cracken

---

<sup>11</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

179. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 1859<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/90

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, blue paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a and right side of Fol. 1b., missing folio/s, missing envelope, additional folio adjoined by Madden

**Attachment:** Letter 53 (TCD MS873/91)

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Madden, Fol. 1a]

[Madden, Fol. 1b, blank]

[Missing folio]

There are several letters and papers of Dr W. Drennan which ↵

<sup>3</sup>never appeared but in the newspapers[,]

[Fol. 1a]

I remember them being compared to Junious' [sic] letters[.]<sup>4</sup> [H]is widow is still living & tho' there is but one month between her & me (I forget on which side) she is handsome still & fully entitled to the beautiful lines he addressed to her in two different pieces which no doubt you have seen – I shall enclose you the

---

<sup>1</sup> Despite being undated, the contents of this letter is similar to that of two others, both of which date from 1859. In the current letter MAM points out inaccuracies in the Madden's "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken," *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, which she also does in Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83), dated 2 August 1859 and Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87), dated 4 November 1859.

<sup>2</sup> "Letter to Miss Mary McCracken/ from William Thompson of Belfast/ who received 200 lashes in 1798/ for refusing to give information against / Henry Joy McCracken. See note/ of Miss McCracken subjoined."

<sup>3</sup> ^There are several letters and papers of Dr W. Drennan/ which^ [Madden ed., ink]. Madden has presumably copied the start of MAM's sentence from a missing folio.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters of Junius*, a series of letters published in a London newspaper between 1769 and 1772, attacking King George III's government.

note I received from W<sup>m</sup> Thompson the  
man who received 200 lashes which he  
might have escaped had he given such  
information as was in his power against  
my brother Harry – [H]is wife came to me  
for some old linen & told me of a severe com-  
plaint which the flogging had produ-  
ced[,] for which I presented a cure which  
had the desired effect, for which he & his  
wife were only too gratly grateful. [P]lease  
return me the note & let me know how  
your son[,] M<sup>rs</sup> Madden & yourself are<sup>5</sup>

[Maria] cordially unites my Dear Doctor[.]  
Yours most truly  
Mary Ann McCracken

[Fol. 1b]

Inaccuracies in first publication[:]  
Page 391 Henry Joy was older than  
Robert Joy[.] [S]ame page[:] my father was  
never entire owner of the ship he com-  
manded, the Hawk which was built  
in Liverpool under his own inspecti[on]<sup>6</sup>  
& ^was^ remarkably fortunate ~~page 303 both~~  
but he gave up the command to attend  
to rope making <sup>-7</sup> 303 both my uncles  
were at one period connected in the  
cotton manufacture[.] [P]age 304 Harry  
spent ^only^ one summer in Hollywood on a[c-]<sup>8</sup>  
count of his health & was accompanied  
by my sister & sometimes I was ther[e]<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> ^well^ [Madden ed., ink]. The folio has been cut, removing a subsequent line of text, of which the top of several characters remain.

<sup>6</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>7</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 391.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by the binding.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

for a day or two[.]<sup>10</sup> ~~page 404 last line~~  
~~but 4 who was it that boasted of having~~  
~~700 defenders at command, Harry~~

---

<sup>10</sup> MAM has given an incorrect page reference. It should state "Page 394." Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 394.

**180. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]**

**Date:** 23 February 1861

**Archive:** RIA

**Reference code:** 24 O 10/ 48

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, embossed design, missing envelope

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Bankmore Feb 23

Belfast 1861

My Dear Doctor

I would have answered  
your last letter long ere  
this<sup>2</sup> but in hope of being  
able to procure you the in-  
formation you wished for  
respecting the destruc-  
tion of the Northern Star  
premises, all I could  
learn was from blind  
Mr Alex<sup>r</sup> Mitchell<sup>3</sup> who  
informed me that it took  
place in 1794 & that he

happened to be in Belfast  
that day & thinks it was  
in spring, you are aware  
that it took place ~~in spring~~

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "From Mary McCracken to R.R.M/ in her 90<sup>th</sup> year."

<sup>2</sup> Missing letter, Madden to MAM, c. 1860/1.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Mitchell (13 April 1780–25 June 1868), born in Dublin, he moved to Belfast's Pine Hill with his family in 1787, blind engineer, musician, member of the Natural History Society, inventor of "Mitchell Screw-pile and Mooring," Associate of the Belfast Anacreontic Society and member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

by Government orders  
& of course, there could not  
be any law proceedings on  
the subject[.] I have just  
learnt that the young Lady[,]  
your relative[,] is at present  
in Belfast whom I purpose  
calling on,<sup>4</sup> & will try to get  
access to a copy of that year[']s  
News Letter & see if there is  
any notice whatever of the affair[.]  
I shall also learn from her  
how you & all who are dear to  
you are &c &c – I am glad to tell

that M<sup>r</sup> McCleery is much  
better & appears to be gain<sup>ing</sup>  
ground <sup>daily</sup> so that we have  
now much cause of hope  
of his perfect recovery.  
I am in better health than  
for many years previously &  
entirely free from bodily  
pain ~~I cannot~~ for which[,]  
at 90 years of age[,]  
I cannot be sufficiently thankful[,]  
tho' my sight & hearing  
are greatly impaired & I  
stoop much & lean to the  
one side but am still able  
to go out on a fine day to  
collect for four public chari[-]  
ties

[Fol. 2a]

charities [sic] & sometimes for  
cases of private distress[,]  
all which gives an unspeakable  
charm to life, & now I have

[Fol. 2b]

---

<sup>4</sup> Presumably Miss Cogan.

the brilliant hope of the  
approaching abolition of  
American slavery –<sup>5</sup>  
With kind regards to you[,]  
Mrs Madden, your son &  
all who are dear to you[,]  
in which my niece most  
cordially unites[.] I remain  
my Dear Doctor[,] ever yours  
Mary Ann McCracken

---

<sup>5</sup> The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on 6 December 1865, seven months before MAM's death.

### 181. Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]<sup>1</sup>

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 190–91

**Date:** Unknown, sometime during her correspondence with Madden (1842–1861)

**Delivery status:** Presumably, McCleery was quoting from an undelivered draft

**Material features:** Unknown

...but the fact is, that what I did on that occasion was neither entitled to praise or blame; it was merely obeying a call to duty on such sacred importance that no person similarly situated could have resisted; for how was it possible to shrink back when told that human lives were at stake, which my exertions might be instrumental in saving, and that no other person dared make the attempt? Would it not have been to incur the endurance of self-reproach through life? And though I have never seen or known any of the party but Mr. Russell, yet even had he not been of the number, I would have felt it my bounden duty to go forward in the business, and, once having undertaken it, there was no question of drawing back from pecuniary risk...to save such a life as Russell's – one of such importance to the country – who, in the changes that were still expected, would not have used every exertion to stop the effusion of blood and to prevent all possible suffering? Who would have hesitated to supply the means when within their reach? There was then no time for deliberation. As if Providence favoured the plan, we had received near £90 that day from a man whom we had sent to sell muslins through the country, business in Dublin being quite at a stand. Thus situated, we were led on alike from a sense of duty and of inclination. I say we, as my sister and I had but one heart, though she always kept in the background and left me to act – frequently on her suggestions – although considerably my senior in years and much my superior in understanding. I had also a dear enthusiastic friend, a sister of –, to

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the recipient is not specified, the letter's contents would suggest it was intended for Madden as it touches on matters often discussed within their correspondence.

stimulate me, had it been necessary.<sup>2</sup> Pardon my egotism, as it is alike due to truth to disclaim either undue praise or blame...

---

<sup>2</sup> MAM is referring to Eliza Templeton, a sister of John Templeton.

## 4.1 Conclusion

This collection marks the first attempt to compile a complete edition of the McCracken correspondence and is based on original archival research carried out over a seven year period. It brings to light many overlooked letters within Trinity College Dublin's Madden Papers, the Royal Irish Academy's Madden Collection (including Mary Ann McCracken's final extant letter of 1861), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland's Tennent Collection and a transatlantic correspondence housed within the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. Much effort has been made to ensure that the letters are arranged sequentially, calling for several methods of deduction to be employed in the case of undated or partially dated letters. A close examination of intertextual references has yielded a cache of letters which were written and sent, but for which there remains no physical evidence. Furthermore, the project has extensively documented and interpreted the distinctive material features of each piece of correspondence (including watermarks, sealing methods and postal marks), from which further information has been deduced. No comparable research has been carried out on these letters. The thesis has attempted to place Mary Ann and her correspondence within a context of new perspectives on cultural memory, uses of the past and literature. It is hoped that these new findings will provide a new and definitive resource for historians, historical linguistics, biographers and gender scholars working on Ireland and on the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This work has opened up the possibility of further research into correspondence brought to light during the course of archival research but which did not warrant inclusion within the appendices. For example, letters pertaining to the McCracken family which were not directly relevant to Mary Ann and a mine of nineteenth century letters found within the private collection of John Orr McCleery might be fruitfully explored elsewhere. There is also much to be done in connection with Mary McNeill's previously untapped papers held within PRONI and QUBSC. Another area of exploration might be reception history. Mary Ann McCracken is a figure whom Belfast has repeated "re-discovered" over the decades, as can be traced through various newspaper articles and other media. Furthermore, it could be argued that there is a growing tendency in public history towards uncritically promoting such rediscoveries at the risk of sweeping

previous scholarship (often, ironically, by women) under the carpet. This trend in itself merits study as part of the dynamic legacy of this historical figure. Mary Ann's connection with Belfast and her movement across the town will be the focus of a future book chapter entitled "'The Moving Spirit': Traversing Mary Ann McCracken's Belfast," within Olwen Purdue (ed.), *To Do the Needful: A History of the Belfast Charitable Society* due to be published with Irish Academic Press in 2022.

The thesis hopes to add to our knowledge of women's history in Ireland and also to the significance of letters in managing information, emotions and historical memory in Ireland. It further contributes to our understanding of the United Irishmen and their means of communication, in addition to the epistolary networks which collected, preserved and disseminated historiographical discourse around the Rebellion. The materials presented in the thesis also go some way to clarifying the often-perplexing changing political attitudes to the Union among Belfast's citizenry. My research (as disseminated through various conference papers) has drawn attention to the "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster, September 23rd 1846," which has since become a text of significant interest for other scholars in this area.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the letters provide a valuable resource for studying the historical urban geography of Belfast and for tracing the growth of the town across the late eighteenth century into the later nineteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> "Address from the Committee of the Belfast Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association to the Ladies of Ulster, September 23rd 1846," Boston Public Library, accessed 12 March 2014, <https://archive.org/details/addressfromcommi00unse>.

# 5. Appendices

## 5.1 Appendix A: Letters

### 5.1.1 Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Thomas Russell [Newgate Prison, Dublin]

**Date:** 18 July 1798

**Reference code:** MS873/645

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript of Letter 48 (NRA 620/16/3/8)<sup>1</sup>

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final manuscript (Letter 48) was a postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, tears, two rectangular paper patches running vertically through the centre of Fol. 1b and Fol. 2b respectively. The patch on Fol. 1b was originally adhered along the tear on Fol. 2a (the same tear being patched on Fol. 2b). However, at some point it has become stuck to the opposite folio, uncovering the tear on Fol. 2a

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>2</sup> 1

[Fol. 1a]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>3</sup>

In obedience to the last request of a much loved brother[,] I write [to] you who were his dearest & most valued friend to inform you of his death which took place yesterday in pursuance of a sentence by Court Martial, finding him guilty of being a Commander of the Rebel army in the ~~action that took place in~~ battle that was fought in ~~County~~ Antrim on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June last[,] tho the two witnesses who swore against him contradicted each other in some material points, & one

---

<sup>1</sup> A copy extract of this draft, written in Madden's hand, can be found within his papers. See Richard Robert Madden Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, TCD MS873/157.

<sup>2</sup> "Original letter from Mary McCracken."

<sup>3</sup> "To Thos Russell 18 July 1848 1798."

of them declared the other to be a man of infamous character, & not deserving of any degree of credit. I should have informed you, as perhaps you do not see the public papers, that he was taken ^on^ the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, with two others by two ~~or three~~ of the Carrick yeomen[,] a short way out of that town, & depending on a pass which had been procured for him in a feigned name[,] he did not think of making his escape until it was too late[,] ~~such~~ ^he^ & his companions [---] ^being^ quite unarmed & ~~had~~ ^having^ no ^[---]^ means of defence whatever, I am thus particular because

<interesting & afflicting particulars><sup>4</sup> [Fol. 1b]

his enemies accused him of cowardice in suffering himself to be taken at the same time that he had no possible means of resistance, he was confined in the Jail of Carrickfergus in a cell ~~from~~ until yesterday ^monday^ morning, when he was brought up to Belfast

& and got notice of his *trail*, which came on yesterday at twelve o[']clock

& at which I was present, that I might have it in my power to bear testimony to his conduct, which was cool[,] collected & composed during the whole day[.] [H]e took notes of the trial and remarked on the contradictions of the witnesses tho at the same time he was certain of being convicted as the trials here are mere matters of form, not one having been yet acquitted. I was also present when he rec<sup>d</sup> sentence & was told that he was<sup>5</sup> ordered for immediate execution at which he neither changed countenance or colour, but still retained his usual cheerful composure, for tho he wished to live to serve his friends & his Country[,] he was resigned to die. I accompanied him to the scaffold, where I wished to remain till the last, but was not even permitted to have that gratification but was forcibly torn from<sup>6</sup> him by the General[']s orders (at least so I was told)[.] I should not however have been so easily hauled from him, but that I [Fol. 2a]

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<sup>4</sup> This marginalia forms part of the opening sentence in the final draft. See Letter 48 (NRA 620/16/3/8).

<sup>5</sup> rec<sup>d</sup> sentence/ & was told that he was [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>6</sup> forcibly torn from ^commanded to leave^ [MAM later ed., ink].

feared disturbing his mind in his last moments by such a contest, I was therefore obliged to leave him<sup>7</sup> & have been since informed that Major Fox (who took some hair from me just as I had cut [it] from Harry[']s head[,]) as ^he was^ going to be taken out) came up to him at the scaffold foot, & asked him for the last time if he would give any information, at which he smiled & told Fox that he wondered how he could suppose him such a villain, but since they were about to part forever he would shake hands with him[.] I was also told that when he ascended the scaffold he attempted to address the people, but the noise the horses was so great that he could not be heard – A few minutes put him beyond the reach of his enemies & robbed his friends of a treasure they can never in this world recover. [N]ever did I see him look so well or in such good health as yesterday & the night before – [O]f his character I need not speak to you who knew his heart so well [End]

[Endorsement, MAM's later hand]<sup>8</sup>

[Fol. 2b]

---

<sup>7</sup> ~~leave him~~ ^obey^ [MAM later ed., ink].

<sup>8</sup> "Interesting paper."

## 5.1.2 Edward Bunting to Francis McCracken

**Letter form:** Missing manuscript

**Source:** Young, *Old Belfast*, 278

**Date:** c. 1809

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** Unknown

1st. Campbell .. .. .	£50
2nd. Harp engraving (paid for) .. .. .	10
3. Frontispiece, "Hempson" .. .. .	15
4. Title .. .. .	15
5. Title for the outside in same manner as Moore & Stevenson's.. .. .	8
6. Paper at from £3 10S. to £4 0S. 0d. per ream for 50 reams, which will only print 96 pages per 1000 copies	200
7. Engraving Music plates with Irish titles, &c., 90 plates at 12/6 .. .. .	62
8. Working off at press at 5/- per cent. .. .. .	<u>50</u>
	£400
Allowance to Music dealers, 33 per cent. .. .. .	<u>300</u>
	£700 without the letterpress. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Young described this document as an "annexed estimate of the cost of production of 1000 copies of his book...taken from a letter of Bunting's addressed to Frank McCracken." Young, *Old Belfast*, 278.

### 5.1.3 John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] to Charles Hamilton Teeling [Down]

**Date:** 12 January 1837

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/651

**Letter form:** Either the original manuscript, given to Madden by Charles Hamilton Teeling or a copy of the original made by John Alexander Russell and sent to Madden

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 folio, red wax seal on Fol. 1a, tuck and seal letterlocking

Chas. Teeling Esq<sup>r</sup>

Down. 12. Jan<sup>y</sup> 1837.

[Fol. 1a]

During a recent interview with Miss McCracken, that Lady was kind enough to hand over to me all the documents she held relating to my late uncle, & informed me that at the time you were preparing the first number of the Ulster Magazine, she had entrusted to your care, several other important documents of his –

Finding it necessary at this moment that I should be in possession of those papers, I shall feel obliged by your forwarding them to me, by the earliest possible convenience. I remain dear

Sir[,] truly yours –

J A R

Both of these men ^who^ have rendered such essential  
~~my heart~~ services to their country –

[Fol. 1b]

My heart smites me now for the levity with which I have spoken of my poor Russell in these memorandums, under the name P.P – Well that levity exists no longer, it is time now to

think of other matters –  
I see that they behaved in a manner  
worthy of themselves & of the cause to which  
I fear they will both fall victims  
[“]Russell & Neilson surrendered themselves  
voluntarily –”<sup>1</sup>

Extracted from London Edition in 2 Vol  
of Memoirs of T. W. Tone, written by himself[.]

London Henry Colburn

8 New Burlington Street

-1827-

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<sup>1</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, *Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, ed. William Theobald Wolfe Tone, vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 451.

#### 5.1.4 John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Date:** 27–28 February 1843

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/670

**Letter form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, white thread binding, watermark, missing envelope

Carlisle 27 Feb 1843 –

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Sir

Your letter of 23<sup>d</sup> Inst reached me to day<sup>1</sup> & I am happy to find by it that the information I can give relative to T.R. may still be of use to you. From the unsettled state I have been in for some months, it was only recently that I could get at the documents I possess on the subject & from seeing the advertisement of your work in the Times, I feared that the unavoidable delay had rendered the information of no avail, therefore I determined to wait untill I could get a sight of your Book, however your letter sets all this at rest. I shall be most happy to give you all the details &c I can on the subject; feeling that I could not place them in better hands than yours, your being so favourably known as an author & a man of integrity – I must premise that as my Father felt severely the loss of his ^favourite^ Brother, which happened when I was barely 2 years old, all mention of him was avoided in the family & I knew little until some 10 years ago I obtained some of my later Father's papers & among them some documents in the hand writing of TR bearing on the events from 96 to 98 – In 1836–7, when stationed at Downpatrick, my attention was drawn, by several friends of T.R. to a vile article, in Fraser's Mag<sup>e</sup> Vol.14, Nov<sup>r</sup>./36, N<sup>o</sup> 83,

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<sup>1</sup> Missing letter, Madden to JAR, 23 February 1843, received on 27 February 1843.

headed "Secret Hist<sup>y</sup> of the I. Insurrection of 1803" – [T]he article was[,] I have reason to think[,] furnished by Crofton Croker[,] founded on garbled stories collected from or suggested by a low fellow named McSkimmins of Carrickfergus –  
 Therefore, being stationed[,] as I observed[,] on the Spot (being in Command of a Detaill [sic] at Downpatrick where T.R. was brought to ^trial^ in 1803, tried & executed) I made personal enquiries of many Gentlemen who had known T.R. & obtained several facts and I had also the advantage of seeing my half-sister M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton who was brought up with my Uncle T.R. & the excellent Miss McCracken & James Hope – I then wrote to M<sup>r</sup> Fraser to inform him that the article he had published was nothing less than a gross libel & that I intended to prosecute him – His answer was that he was sorry he had unwittingly allowed his Mag<sup>e</sup> to become the channel for propagating an untrue & ingenious state[-]ment & in proof of his sincerity, said he would publish in full any account I might wish to send him [...] the reasons why he did so publish them – In shewing this letter to my friends, their opinion was, that as some months had elapsed & no notice had been taken in any of leading periodicals &c. of the above article, it would not perhaps be worth my while as a military man, to draw particular attention to it, by publishing what might be looked upon as a mere refutation, therefore it were best to let it die a natural death. Now to your letter – The only likeness of T.R. that I am aware of, was one that with other articles was taken from my sister M<sup>rs</sup> H. when robbed in the "Newry Fly" in 1813–4 – [I]t came afterwards

into the possession of the notorious Major Sirr, who refused to give it up, perhaps it might be possible still to trace it – Could I see the likeness you have, I could[,] by comparing it with others just ^of our^ family[,] form a judgement of its correctness. I myself am said to bear a strong family likeness to my uncle T.R. & many persons in Downshire & afterwards at Fort George [...] recognised me as "so like him" –

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<sup>2</sup> See Thomas Crofton Croker and Samuel McSkimin, "Secret History of the Irish Insurrection of 1803," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 14, no. 83 (November 1836): 546–67.

I wish I were aware exactly of the extent of your information respecting T.R. or of what you are deficient in – I have various notes relative to him – I could give them & you could correct them so as to suit your book –

The most important document I have [is] in the hand writing of T.R. from Fort George, sent through the Gov<sup>t</sup> Office to my late Father – [I]t is a succinct narrative of what passed between T.R.[,] the principal State prisoner[, ] & the then I. Gov<sup>t</sup> & contains some facts that will startle you – [I]t commences from 96, concludes at the exportation to Fort George.

I have a copy of a letter from T.R. for M<sup>r</sup> Fox & in T.R.'s hand writing, giving the account of the dying moments of his[, ] T.R.'s[, ] friend Lord G. Fitzgerald, from whom he was removed by a Gov<sup>t</sup> order[.] [T]his letter contains a lock of L<sup>d</sup> E's hair intended for M<sup>r</sup> Fox –<sup>3</sup>

A copy of T.R[']s speech in manuscript after his trial –

A letter from Clerk of the Crown, Down<sup>k</sup>, with precis of the trial of T.R. –

Mem<sup>a</sup> from persons present at the last moments with T.R. –

I have the pamphlet written by T.R. in 1796 – “An address to the people of Ireland” by T.R. a [...] which led to his arrest – Also, T.R[']s work refuting Tom Paine[']s Age of Reason – These last I have not yet got hold of but they are somewhere amongst my Baggage –

With regard to your list of queries, I could not reply to one fourth of them but I will send you as many facts as I can

[Fol. 2b], ↵

in reply to those questions as ^that^ refer to my Uncle, but as I have said before, they will be in the shape of notes, without any attempt at arrangement – [T]hey may be of use in enabling you with the other knowledge you may possess to put the name & memory of a truly good man in its proper light[, ] for it has been a sad misfortune that in the few works where T.R. has been mentioned, he has been sadly misrepresented, for instance, in Russell's Modern Europe, speaking of 1803 & its actors, Emmett & Russell it is said “There appeared to be men of some education,

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Fox Fitzgerald (10 October 1794–25 January 1863), Lord Edward Fitzgerald's only son.

something above the ordinary masses" ( I quote from memory)<sup>4</sup>  
[T]his of T.R.[,] a classical scholar who always used his Tes-  
tament in Greek! – [I]t is now in Downpatrick – Then Tone[']s  
memoirs – How Tone would have stared could he have  
seen the use made of his notes by his Son<sup>5</sup> who pub-  
lished the mem's jocular expressions, taken as facts,  
expressions that have served as the foundation for  
attacks on the religion & sobriety of a man Tone would  
have died for, but young Tone knew nothing of the per-  
sons he wrote about & his mother Mrs Tone[, ] a vain[, ] weak  
woman who guided her Son in the work, wished Tone  
to be the Hero of the political Drama, the others, the mere  
subsidiaries – As to the nicety of that Lady's feelings,  
when, the Tone family was in question, I will give you  
a specimen – My late Sister M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton was staying  
with the Emmets in N.Y.<sup>6</sup> when a Play was brought

out by young Tone and puffed up as "a production  
of native American Talent –" M<sup>rs</sup> H. with the E family  
went to the first representation, after a few scenes  
M<sup>rs</sup> H. recognised the play as one she had seen years  
before in My Father[']s papers, among others of his works  
& turning to Mrs E said, why they have got a copy of  
that from my Father & listen, there is to be a song – I  
remember these are the words, & she repeated them  
to M<sup>rs</sup> E. before the song was sung from the Stage –  
From this you will see that every thing in young Tone's  
mem's of his Father must not be taken "au pied de  
la lettre" – I have a copy of Fraser N<sup>o</sup> 83 & have  
marked all the falsified stories in it & appended  
marginal notes, this I can also send you, it may  
be of use –

[Fol. 3a]

I will proceed to copy the manuscript  
from Fort George as the most important for you to know –

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<sup>4</sup> William Russell, *The History of Modern Europe*, 7 vols. (London: F.C. and J. Rivington et al., 1822).

<sup>5</sup> William Theobald Wolfe Tone (29 April 1791–11 October 1828), soldier in the French army and his father's biographer.

<sup>6</sup> New York, U.S.A.

When I hear from you I will forward it and  
all else you may  
desire -

I remain Dear Sir  
Your very affecty  
John A. Russell

28 Feby

I have to apologise for  
this vile scrawl, not having  
time to correct it as I do not wish to lose the  
post. J.A.R

[Fol. 3b, blank]

## 5.2 Appendix B: Letter Attachments

### 5.2.1 Feigned letter from the “Commander of the Augereau Lugger” to John Shaw [Belfast]<sup>1</sup>

**Attached to:** Letter 130 (MS873/692)

**Date:** 1798

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/161

**Letter form:** Fragment of original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio, 2 binding patches along tears on Fol. 1b, red wafer seal on Fol. 1b, tuck and seal letterlocking

[Endorsement, Madden’s hand]<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Augereau Lugger off the Mull Cantir<sup>3</sup>

Sir,

His Majesty the Emperor and King Bonaparte has commanded me to acquaint you with my arrival on the coast of Ireland, he does not lose any opportunity of reiterating his assurances of the unalterable devotion he has for the distressed inhabitants of Ireland whos[e] rights occupy His Majesty[’]s most anxious thoughts. I have on board my Lugger[,] Ten thousand stand of arms which the Emperor trusts will be another profe [sic] of his desire

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<sup>1</sup> There is no address written on this letter, yet Madden endorsed it as being addressed to Rose Ann McCracken’s brother-in-law, John Shaw (her sister having married John Shaw on 26 February 1795). In Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692), MAM explained that this was a further fragment of “the French letter,” the other part of which she had previously sent to Madden. Although the other fragment does not exist within the Madden’s Papers, it was presumably from it that Madden acquired the recipient’s name.

<sup>2</sup> “This letter was addressed to John Shaw of Belfast, a connection of the McCrackens/ a woollen draper – This letter was a feint on the part of the authorities for the purpose/ of finding out the disposition of the people.”

<sup>3</sup> Mull of Kintyre, Southwest Scotland.

to give Liberty and freedom to your countrymen. You may daily expect the arrival of the army of[f] Brest, who are already Embarked, which our friends in the North have before been made acquainted with the Landing Main Top mast Head which will be my signal and you may then come off to me and in a Night when I let of[f] one Sky Rocket, be quick and acquaint our friends at Coleraine and Deny with the arrival of my vessel on the coast and give dem [sic] our private signals as I may be driven by de [sic] winds as far as Louch [sic] Swilly. I will myself sometimes ^be^ in Red Bay

and at others off Giant[']s Causeway. I shall be most anxious for the arrival on board my vessel of some of your Guides. We have mostly your country[-] men on board and will answer you in Irish, the Name of my Lugger is Augereau and [we] have been three weeks from Ferrol where our friends Alex<sup>r</sup> Lowry & O'Connor are Embarked coming to your assistance. For fear of this falling into the hands of the Enemy, I had better conclude and say no more till we meet, only once more let me entreat you may rouse our friends on the Shore to exert themselves and let as a Signal for a friend be taught by any who you send[.] [...tear...]<sup>4</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>4</sup> Obscuring the sign-off, which MAM stated read, "signed commander of the Augereau Lugger." Letter 130 (MS873/692).

## 5.2.2 The Anti-Union Newspaper Article

**Attached to:** Letter 57 (TCD MS873/98)

**Date:** 19 January 1799

**Document form:** Newspaper article

**Title:** "To the Electors of Ulster" within *The Anti-Union*, no. 11

**Author:** Henry Joy

### The Anti-Union

Price 2D. Saturday, January 19, 1799. No. XI.

TO THE ELECTORS OF ULSTER.

"Light sorrows speak - great grief is dumb."

How well the poet understood human nature, appears from your conduct. When your causes of complaint were trifling, you rent the air with your cries. Now that you are about to be sacrificed on the altar of British aggrandizement, a single murmur does not escape your lips. The magnitude of the attempt deprives you of motion - the swelling of your heart chokes your utterance, and you stare in silent astonishment at the hand which is raised against your life. To what else am I to impute it, that when the existence of Ireland is at stake the voice of the North has not yet been heard? When a constitution was to be carried by the sword, you stood proudly forward in the foremost ranks — when abuses had crept into that constitution, you were ready to shed your best blood for their reform — yet now that your parliament is about to be extinguished, and the right of legislating for Ireland is; like its crown, to be inseparably annexed to the *crown* of Great Britain — now that that constitution which you earned in the field, is about to be filched from you in the cabinet, and the very name of Ireland to be blotted out from the catalogue of nations — you stand, the mute, and as if indifferent spectators, of the scene. But perhaps you are ignorant of the nature of the act which your silence is about to sanction. Perhaps you imagine that the surrender you are called upon to make, is temporary, and that you may again resume your rights at pleasure — Let me undeceive you.—The decree which is to establish the the

political ideosy [sic] of Irishmen, and to vest *for ever* in the *crown*, the disposal of their persons and property, is *irrevocable*. Convinced then, of the great awfulness of the occasion, how shall I impress that conviction on your minds? In what words shall I address you, by what ties shall I conjure you to spare to your afflicted country, the miseries of internal war? And you, who so lately in the cause of reform, thought “no risk too great, no sacrifice too much,” how shall I rekindle in your breasts that flame, which seems to have consumed itself by its own heat? Is then that constitution, which you so eminently contributed to gain, no longer dear to you? Has liberty lost all its charms, or is the existence of your country become an object of indifference? Were your efforts in the cause of reform, the last convulsive throes of an expiring patriotism? Or is it excessive sensibility, which I mistake for apathy? Is it, enthusiastic in the cause of reform, you abandon, in disgust, a constitution whose abuses you have in vain laboured to correct? Look into the political history of your country, since the year 1782; you will there read, that scarce a year has gone by, without adding something to the beauty or solidity of the structure, which your exertions then reared. Believe me, my friends, the most perfect state of rational liberty, is not so remote as you may imagine. It requires no exertion for its attainment. Public virtue grows spontaneously out of private independence. Even now, whilst I write, the secret operations of nature, are silently working that reformation, which the impatient hand of [art?] in vain endeavours to precipitate.

But let us for a while stifle every honest feeling; and consider the question of an UNION, as dispassionately as an *Irishman* can—let us compare your present political condition, with what it will be when the intended *revolution* shall have been effected:—You have now a native parliament fitting in your country—possessing the *power*, when it has the *will*, to promote the welfare, or protect the liberties of Ireland. A parliament, whose conduct you can witness, whose motions you can watch, whose determinations in great national questions, you have ever controlled, whose interests are the interests of Ireland;—You will then have no parliament—the few individuals whom the *minister of England* will cull out to qualify with the title of your representatives, will not have the *power*, if they have the *will*, to protect your interests; the assembly which you will have invested with the absolute right to dispose of your property and your persons, will fit in a foreign country, its conduct you cannot witness, its motions you cannot

watch, its determinations you cannot control, its interests will not be the interests of Ireland—its members will not be Irishmen. In the *British House of Commons*, which will then consist of 656 members, ninety-eight are to fit *under the name* of the representatives of Ireland;—should each of those ninety-eight, possess all the public and private virtues of a Charlemont, or the commercial knowledge, and steady patriotism of a Foster, it would not avail; in all questions where the interests of England and Ireland should clash, there would be a clear majority of 460, against your country. What then must be the case, when the whole corrupt influence of Great Britain and Ireland, is concentrated almost in a point, and brought to bear upon 98 individuals, divested of national partiality, regardless of national fame, not condemned to witness the melancholy effects of their prostitution, or to meet the reproachful eye of their indignant constituents? Such an arrangement is grossly miscalled, when it is denominated "*an Union.*" It is not the *whole* Irish parliament, jointed to the whole British parliament, possessing each a negative voice where the interests of its peculiar country are concerned, and uniting their common wisdom for the common benefit. It is not a delegation, from the *existing* parliament of Ireland meeting a proportionable delegation from the parliament of Great Britain, invested with equal powers, on the confines of the two kingdoms, to concert measures for their mutual safety, and mutual advantage. No. It is a selection by the *minister of England* of a few individuals from the Irish parliament, (which is thenceforth to cease to exist) to be melted down into the entire mass of the British legislature. Should ninety-eight natives of Ireland happen to fit for England boroughs in the British House of Commons, what would you think of the Irishman who should, on that account propose the total abolition of the legislature of Ireland? Yet believe me, your condition would then be infinitely preferable, enjoying, as you would, the British constitution in its purity, to what it will be if, by an Union, you put one-sixth of the representation of Great Britain and Ireland at once into the hands of a minister already too powerful. But you are told tranquillity will be restored, all parties satisfied, property secured, and the connection between the two kingdoms cemented by such an arrangement. Will universal discontent produce universal tranquillity? Will it satisfy the Catholic to be shut out for ever from that which has so long been the object of his most earnest wishes? Will the total extinction of parliament, and the transfer of its legislative authority to the *crown*, content the moderate reformist? or will the

establishment of absolute monarchy reconcile the zealous republican? Will property be secured by an universal desire for change, or the connection between the two kingdoms cemented by alienating the affections of one of them? These are questions to which I require no answer. Commercial advantages are next held out to you. On this subject I ought to speak with diffidence, conscious that I am addressing men, whose extensive and varied commerce, and whose residence in a manufacturing country, must necessarily render them the best possible judges of the commercial interests of Ireland—but there are some facts which I know that tricks have been practised to impose on the ignorant, to deceive the credulous, and to allure the selfish; and that these, in some places, have had their effect—but I apprehend not that effect from them with you. When you are told of commercial advantages, you will naturally ask “from whom are we to derive them?” And when you are answered, “from Britain”—that Britain, which is to lose precisely as you gain, and which now tries every paltry artifice to lure you into a connection by which she is to be so much injured. When you are informed, that it is Britain that so anxiously presses you to accept this extension of trade, this amelioration of constitution:—Britain, from whose dead gasp you were forced to wrest whatever you have gained of commerce, or of constitution When you are told, that it is the British merchant who calls upon you, in all the overflowing of his generous heart, to share in his profits; are you not, my friends, led to suspect the nature of the gift, from the known disposition of the giver?—But what are the commercial advantages which are to be the price of your independence? The ports of the two countries are to be laid open:—Those of England are already so to our provisions, to our linens, and to colonial produce going from this country;—With what can we supply the English that we do not already? On the other hand, except our linen, our other manufactures exist but under protecting duties, and must perish as soon as those are taken off. Large capital, long credit, plenty of money, and the consequent lowness of interest, superior industry, and superior skill, give the English a decided and uniform advantage:—Add to this, the influence of another cause, which, though occasional in its immediate operation, is lasting and fatal in its remote effects. In the English market, there happen frequent gluts;—when these take place, which is always when credit is lowest, manufactured goods will be poured into Ireland, and as it will be an object to the English manufacturer, to get his money on any terms,

they will be sold at an undervalue, to the lasting ruin of the Irish manufacturer. Nor will your linen trade escape unhurt;—that linen trade, for the security of which you gave up the woollen, but which the Union still purports to secure, and for which you are still called upon to make further sacrifices. You all know that the poor linen weaver can scarce subsist on his present wages.—The immediate consequence of the Union, as (besides the acquisition of inordinate power) it is the cause of it, will be an enormous increase of taxes. The necessaries of life must rise in price prodigiously. The wages of the weavers must rise with them—or he must starve—many, no doubt, will do so. The linen merchant cannot lay the additional price on his invoice—the trade will not bear it—his profits must be reduced—and this reduction must increase every year with the increase of taxes, which is the cause of it:—This will operate doubly against him; for in proportion as from the increased price of everything, his expenses increase, in the same proportion must the profits of his trade be diminished. To the importing merchant I need say little:—It will naturally occur to him that his trade must suffer in proportion as manufactures fail, and consumption decreases. His cotton woll, his Barilla, and all the other articles which an industrious and thriving country requires, must then lie locked up in his stores. Add to all this, the continued drain of money out of the country, by absentees, at present admitted to exceed a MILLION, annually! but which must then infinitely increase. Figure to yourselves, then, my friends, the appearance of this country—figure to yourselves a miserable and neglected peasantry! knowing nothing of their landlord, but by his exactions! and tracing his periodical progress, like that of the hurricane, only by desolation he carries in his train!—Figure to yourselves, fields uncultivated, villages deserted, your streets swarming with half-famished wretches, imploring a miserable subsistence from the charity of that country, which their industry might have contributed to enrich, and their ingenuity to adorn!—figure to yourselves these things, my friends, and you will have a faint idea of the consequences of an Union—consequences of which the citizens of Dublin have already expressed their unanimous and unequivocal sentiments. They eyes of Ireland are fixed upon the NORTH! May its ancient spirit re-animate its breast! May its deliberations be tempered with the same wisdom, and its conduct sustained by the same firmness!—May the voice which spoke at

Dungannon again be heard!—And may Ireland once more hail, as the  
Saviours of the Country, the Men of Ulster!  
Dublin, 15th Jan. 1799. HJ

### 5.2.3 Andrew Leitch [Charlottesville, Virginia] to Mary Neilson, % Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast]

**Final version attached to:** Letter 115

**Date:** 20 April 1830

**Archive:** Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, University Library

**Reference code:** MSS 9200, Box 1

**Letter form:** Draft manuscript within Leitch's Letterbook

**Delivery status:** Undelivered. The final version was addressed "c/o Mary Ann McCracken" and was hand delivered by Mrs Roseanna Gorman to Mary Ann, along with Letter 115. In turn, Mary Ann passed this letter on to Mary Neilson

**Material features:** 1 folio, tears

Charlottesville Ap[ril]<sup>1</sup> 20 1830 [Fol. 1a]

Dear Madam

A private opportunity has presented itself by the bearer M<sup>rs</sup> Gorman (for several years a resident of this place) which puts it in my power to forward you a profile of your late husband. It is the only article that I reserved of an appropriate character to present you with – With the exception of his letters and papers[,] that of course belong to me as executor and which it is my duty to preserve and keep in my possession[,] there is nothing besides remaining with me, else I should have sent this to his other relatives there. I mean his brothers and Sisters, but only having this single ornament I have thought fit to give it to you on account of your tie being the closest – The likeness I consider very good and although personally unknown to you, yet the value you place upon it[,] I hope will be a partial apology for troubling you with this epistle. Accept Madam my compliments and wishes for your welfare and happiness. While I remain

Yours &c.

Andrew Leitch

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<sup>1</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

M<sup>rs</sup> Mary Neilson  
Belfast Ireland

#### 5.2.4 Mary Ann McCracken [Belfast] to Dr Madden [Dublin]

**Attached to:** Letter 130 (TCD MS873/692)

**Document form:** Original manuscript

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/587

**Date:** 19 May 1842

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio

[Endorsement, Madden's hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Prostrate unarmed no more alive  
Had ceased Kilwarden's breath  
The savage strife was then to give  
A death wound after death

When Emmet self convicted stood  
In fate already hung  
Plunket longed to taste the blood  
And piked him with his tongue

Now which of these barbarians say  
Waged the most bloody War  
The savage of the bloody fray  
Or savage of the Bar

By Doctor Drennan

(In the hand writing of Mary McCracken)<sup>2</sup>

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>1</sup> "Lines by Drennan on Plunkett's speech on the trial of/ Robert Emmet." William Conyngham Plunket (1 July 1764–5 January 1854), prosecutor at Robert Emmet's trial.

<sup>2</sup> Bracketed text is written in MAM's hand.

## 5.2.5 Dr Gray [Dublin] to John Alexander Russell [Carlisle]

**Attached to:** Letter 134 (TCD MS873/662)

**Date:** 14 April 1843

**Reference code:** TCD MS873/699

**Letter form:** Original manuscript. In Letter 134, John Alexander Russell had asked for this letter to be returned to him however, as the letter still exists within the Madden Papers, it must be assumed that Madden failed to return it to John Alexander Russell

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery within Letter 134

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 folio, stitched together with white thread, missing envelope

Sion Lodge[,] Booterstown [Fol. 1a]  
Dublin

April 14th 1843

Sir

The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Sirr has just handed me a letter written by you in which you evince much anxiety about the Portrait of Thomas Russell, your relative. The tone of your letter breathing as it does not only affection for your martyred relative but respect for his character[,] induces me to communicate with you on a subject that may be of some interest to the Nephew of the ill[-]fated but noble Russell.

I may promise that I never heard of the portrait you allude to and I am inclined to think that were it in Major Sirr[']s collection I would have heard of it through his Son[.] It is just possible however that it may have come to his hands and has been lost from not knowing it to be the portrait of "General Russell" as we of the popular school of politics call him[.] The object of my present communication which I trust you will receive in the spirit in which it is penned, is to inform you of my intention to write a memoir of your uncle and having laid before you my lines of his character[,] to ask you whether you would give me some aid in perfecting the work I have

[Fol. 1b]←,↓

undertaken. Of course you will understand that I allude to information

when I speak of "aid".

You may have imagined from hearing of me through the son of Major Sirr[,] who tells me that you are already aware of my intention[,] that a memoir from the pen of his friend must prove other than friendly to ~~you~~ the memory of your uncle. I know not what your political principles may be but I can see from your letter that you feel as becomes a relative and friend of Russell[,] that you value his private worth and estimate his abilities and it may be qualifying to you to know that my first determination to write the life of Russell has come to from a conviction that he did not hold that high position to which his merits justly entitled him. You and I may differ in our estimate of his political principles but in our estimate of the man I believe we entirely agree. I hold that Russell has Right in all his political opinions (save only his hostility to the monarchical form of government) you may believe him wrong, but if you even differ with me in that you will see that our difference in that matter is ~~an~~ almost a more secure guarantee to you than were our coincidence on the other[,] that your uncle[']s fame has not fallen into unfriendly hands.

I look upon the accidental meeting with your letter as being [Fol. 2a] perhaps I might say without [...] providential. I was not aware of there being a living relative of Russell[']s and though I have been in communication with many political friends of his[,] I am yet without a perfect history of his private life. I take you to be the son of John Russell[,] Capt<sup>n</sup>[,] of the Brother and political friend of Tho<sup>s</sup>. Am I right? – If so[,] you must have many of your uncle['] private and even political letters and you will see how much you could add to my means of doing justice to his memory by putting me in possession of all matters connected with him. I must tell you that I have taken the matter in hand rather as the advocate than the indifferent biographer and will use all documents you give me with a view to place Russell in his true light, a disinterested lover of his country. There are many private family affairs that I am in possession of which I need hardly say are of no interest to the public and will of course not be used by me.

It unfortunately however happens that I know very little that can be used, though I am in daily expectation of

much valuable information from the widow of T Wolfe [Fol. 2b]  
Tone with whom I am in correspondence.

D<sup>r</sup> McDonnell of Belfast and D<sup>r</sup> Stokes of Dublin are also correspondents of mine on this subject but the most interesting portion of my materials will be found in the private letters &c from your uncle many of which I have.

I may add that I am a protestant of the democratic school – I am one of the proprietors of and a principal contributor to the Dublin Freeman's Journal[,] an ultra Irish organ. It is as a political writer I ~~talk~~ have taken up your uncle[']s case – My sole object is to rescue his memory from the oblivion of friends[,] the obloquy of foes. In preparing such a book for the press I have no object to serve but the one, I have not even the hope of being able to cover my expenses by the sale of it. I may advance the popular cause somewhat but if I succeed in elevating Russell to his proper rank, I will be content. Tone had a son to do him justice. Mr Nevin[,] Emmett[,] O'Connor and other men lived to right themselves – Orr[']s name was the rallying cry of his party – Russell also seemed destined for allusion, he seemed to me to be friendless, as he was childless and having the means of doing justice to his memory I undertook the task when I thought no relative of his would ever hear of it or of me –

I have now introduced myself, you know who I [Fol. 3a]  
am and what I am – If you think me desirous of acting the friend to the dead and that you chose to aid in rescuing your relative from the ~~obloquy~~ ^obloquy^ that has been heaped upon his name[,] you can communicate with freedom and under the seal of the most honourable secrecy with me. I know your position as a military officer ^may^ prevent your sympathy as I do with your uncle[']s fate and may make it prudent that you do not appear to

have aided me in the prov[id]ing of materials for  
his posthumous defence. Should this be so[,] you  
may rely implicitly on my never revealing your name.

I remain with every sentiment  
of respect  
your M<sup>t</sup> Humble Sev<sup>t</sup>  
John Gray

PS

The favour of a reply is earnestly requested  
Please direct to me thus

~~Doctor Gray~~  
John Gray MD  
Sion Lodge  
Booterstown  
Dublin

Private

[Fol. 3b, blank]

## 5.2.6 John Alexander Russell [Carlisle] to Dr Gray [Dublin]

**Attached to:** Letter 134

**Date:** 16–22 April 1843

**Reference code:** TCD MS873/669

**Letter form:** Original manuscript. John Alexander Russell sent this letter to Mary Ann as an attachment so that she and Madden could read over it before returning it to him. Once it had been returned to him, John Alexander Russell intended to post the letter to Dr Gray. However, as the letter still exists within the Madden Papers, it must be assumed that Madden failed to return it. Therefore, John Alexander Russell may have written another version of this letter which he posted directly to Dr Gray

**Delivery status as an attachment:** Presumably postal delivery within Letter 134

**Material features:** 1 bifolium & 1 folio, stitched together with white thread, missing envelope

Carlisle 16 April 1843  
to 22 April

[Fol. 1a]

Dear Sir

I was favored this morning with your letter of 14 Ap<sup>l</sup> which was not altogether expected as I was apprized by the Rev<sup>d</sup> Sirr's letter (received yesterday) that he had advised a friend of his, who intended to become the Biographer of my Uncle T.R. to communicate with me, & I can infer from the manner in which he names the subject, that although, personal friends, you differ from each other in your political sentiments, from this & what you state to be your motives in writing to me, and from the very hand[-] some & feeling manner in which you allude to "Tho<sup>s</sup> Russell" I feel assured that, as his Biographer, you would do your best to place in its proper position, the memory of a man, whose character has been sadly misrepresented even in the memories of a professed friend, and vilified in the garbled statements of writers who belonged to a few different school of Politics: placing implicit truth

in your motives, allow me to assure you that I would  
with great pleasure afford you all the information  
I possess on the subject, were it not that I have been

[Fol. 1b]↵

been [sic] ^already^ applied to for the selfsame purpose, by a  
Gentleman

who is engaged in writing "the Lives of the U.I. Men & their  
Times" & who was introduced by letter to me by some  
of T.R.'s sincere friends as a person, who would ~~do~~ at  
last ^do^ justice to T.R.'s sincerity in his political views  
& to the purity of his moral character. This Gentle[-]  
man is Dr R.R. Madden. 2 Vol's of his work have already  
appeared & another is nearly ready - To him I have sent  
all the documents I held & what information I could  
supply - as you premised - I am the son of Cap<sup>t</sup> J Russell  
(the eldest brother of Tho<sup>s</sup> who loved him devotedly, but as  
to any political connection between them I can say  
nothing, for as I was a mere infant in 1803. I was of course  
for many years ignorant of all those events & my Father  
never alluded if possible to the name of T.R. or to the affairs  
in which he had been engaged. I was taught to associate  
his name as ^that of^ a lamented relative, without any reference  
to his political life or opinions, and even to this day I  
am ignorant of a good deal of his political causes for  
my Father finally left Ireland in 1792 or 4 & I never  
visited it until the winter of 1835 when my Reg<sup>t</sup> was  
ordered over from England to Dublin & it was only in  
1836-7 when we moved north & I was stationed at Downpatrick

& after that at Belfast, that I became personally acquainted [Fol. 2a]  
with many of T.R.'s friends & ascertained a good deal rela-  
tive to the latter period of his life -

You say you are in correspondence with M<sup>rs</sup> Tone - Tone was  
an intimate friend of both my Father & of Tho<sup>s</sup> R. & it was through  
T.R. that he was introduced to the Belfast politicians, as T.R. knew  
his talents & it was considered that his legal acquirements would  
be of use in ^the^ drawing up the various political documents.  
But to return to M<sup>rs</sup> T- Allow me to point out to you that in  
the Memoirs of Tone, published by her & his Son, T.R. has been  
^very^

much misrepresented – One of the peculiar features of that work is to make Tone appear the Leader, the founder of the U.I. society & all others, the mere subsidiaries in the political drama. Tone's jokes and epithets are stated as if they were realities, and thus a man proverbial for his very strict religious feelings and sobriety, is ~~thus placed~~<sup>depicted</sup> to those who knew

him not, in the light of a man of loose morals and an habitual drunkard – But the Tones were by no means scrupulous & even went beyond that, to bring themselves forward – A play was brought out & performed in the States/ New York I believe (as a “production of native talent” from the pen of young Tone.” – Now it so happened that my half-sister, the late Mrs Colonel Hamilton, was on a visit to the family of Hy [...] Emmet & was induced to go with them to witness the first representation of it. Soon after its commencement Mrs Hamilton recognised it as the work of her Father written many years

[Fol. 2b], ↵

years [sic] before & turning to Mrs T told her so & repeated some of the

songs that were to follow, & in corroboration of what she the stated let me add that the play in manuscript has been in <sup>the possession of</sup> our family these forty years and I hold it now –

My opi

nion of this, is simply, they imagined that none of my family survived & therefore that their [...] [...] handsome appropriation of the play would never be discovered. From this you may judge how far Mrs T. is likely to give you disinterested information.

Now with regard to Dr McDonnell of Belfast it is true, he was well esteemed as a friend of both Tho<sup>s</sup> R & my Father, but it is also true, that in 1803 - after T.R.'s political disappointments, he was one of the first to come forward & put his name to the Belfast loyal subscription of £500 (in [...] of the Government reward –) which was to brand the name of his friend, as a Traitor, and to consign his person to the executioner – I am only speaking of Dr M<sup>c</sup>D. as related to his conduct to T.R., what he may be in private life I know not but I can not even look upon him as a

person likely to do justice to the memory of T.R –  
You say you hold many private letters to & from T.R. [I]n a  
communication from him in 1800, to his brother, I find the  
following passage (I say as well as I can recollect from this)  
– “before daylight my room in Newgate was entered by a  
Mr Carlton attended by Soldiers & all the papers I had there

[Fol. 3a]

there [sic] he seized by order of Gov<sup>t</sup> – among them were copies of ↵  
all my letters to Gov<sup>t</sup> and their answers & I have never been  
able to procure their restoration since, nor one of those seized  
ci. 1796 by the Maquis of Down – tho none of them were of  
any consequence but to myself” – Do the letters you hold form  
any part of those alluded to in the above [...]?

The Rev. Sirr in his letter very kindly informed me that  
he also holds several legal papers which seem to have  
belonged to T.R. & which he had preserved to restore to any  
relative of his & has offered to send them to me – I expect  
shortly to receive them – If among the private family  
affairs in your possession, there be any that you deem  
would be of personal interest to me, I need hardly  
say, I shall esteem it a great favour to be made ac-  
quainted with them.

With regard to the miniature, it is certain that it was  
at one time in Major Sirr’s keeping, altho’ the Rev<sup>d</sup> Sirr  
was not aware of the circumstances or of the very existence  
of such a thing, for I was informed that M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton  
some time after the Robbery ^of the passengers in the Newry Fly^  
made application to Major

Sirr for its restoration & the reply was, “He declined to give  
it up, as it was better that the likenesses of such people  
should be consigned to oblivion – I intend to avail  
myself of ~~the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Sirr~~ [’]s suggestion & write to the Mr Farrel

he names in the hopes he may be able to remember [Fol. 3b]  
something about it & give me a clue that may lead to its recovery.<sup>1</sup>

Allow me once more to thank you for your friendly  
interest in my Uncle’s memory & to assure you that  
the information I was able to give to D<sup>r</sup> Madden would

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 133 (TCD MS873/658).

have been equally at your service, but it is only fair to mention, that I found no political letters among such of my late Father's papers, as I was able to recover & that I myself could afford no political information as I had been brought up in total ignorance of the Irish politics of the period – Permit me to offer you my thanks for the very friendly tone of you letter & to subscribe myself, yours very sincerely

JA: Russell

PS. You will see that this letter was commenced some days since, I have unavoidably been prevented from completing it until now By the bye, in a letter from Mr M. dated London 18 Ap<sup>l</sup> I find Dr Madden was then in Dublin – Mr Ratten Librarian of the Dublin Society is a mutual friend of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Sirr of Dr M. & knew T.R intimately, he might be able to introduce you to Dr M. should you desire it – Yrs JA:R

John Gray. Esqr. MD –  
Sion Lodge  
Bootertown Dublin

## 5.2.7 Pension for the widow of Mr Bunting

**Attached to:** Letter 146 (PRONI D1748/G/387/1)

**Date:** November 1849

**Archive:** PRONI

**Reference code:** D1748/G/767/29

**Document form:** Original manuscript

**Delivery status:** Delivered

**Material features:** 1 folio

[Fol. 1a]

The late Mr Edward Bunting, Professor of Music, undertook, at the ↵ early age of nineteen, to collect the ancient Melodies of Ireland, with a view to their preservation and publication, at a period when they existed only in the tra- ditional recollections of the peasantry or of the few surviving itinerant harpers, and must have otherwise ere long become extinct. To effect this object he devoted a large portion of his time, and was at much expense in travelling through those parts of the country where they were likely to be still found in their original purity, and also employed paid agents to assist him in his researches. The melodies thus collected were published by him successfully in three volumes, and he was pre- paring a new and complete edition of the series, when he was cut off by a sudden death, leaving behind him a family in straitened circumstances, whose means of subsis- tence have been still further diminished by the death of his only son, a young man of great promise, who fell a victim to cholera, in the commencement of the present year, at the age of twenty-nine. It is most respectfully submitted that, as Mr Bunting's ^labours^ have not

only preserved and perpetuated the native melodies of the country,  
but have also  
perpetuated their title to a high degree of merit in the department of  
musical  
science, his surviving family, a widow with two daughters, has an  
equitable claim  
to participate in the Royal bounty, appropriated by her Majesty, at the  
commence-  
ment of her reign, to aid the families of those who have devoted their  
time and talents  
to the promotion of objects of national interest, or of scientific and  
literary research.

Name	Address
Robert James Tennent M.P.	Belfast —

Endorsement, RJT's hand<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> "November 1849 -/ - for a pension to the/ Widow of Edw<sup>d</sup> Bunting -."

## 5.3. Appendix C: Biographical Accounts written by Mary Ann McCracken

### 5.3.1. Elizabeth “Betsy” Grey

**Date:** Unknown

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/163

**Document form:** Original manuscript, possibly enclosed within a letter to Madden

**Material features:** 1 folio, lined paper

[Endorsement, Madden’s hand]<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

Elizabeth Grey<sup>2</sup> of Killinchy<sup>3</sup> went to the camp at Edinavaddy[,]<sup>4</sup> beside Ballynahinch[,] with clean linen for her brother<sup>5</sup> and lover<sup>6</sup> on ^the^ saturday before the battle,<sup>7</sup> where there she remained and rode to battle on a white pony[,] carrying a stand<sup>8</sup> of colours on Wednesday[,] the day of the fight at Ballynahinch[.] [A]fter the people

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<sup>1</sup> “Elisabeth Grey / of Killinchey [sic] Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken’s / account of.”

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth “Betsy” Gray (d. 13 June 1798), a heroine who is said to have fought alongside her brother and lover at the Battle of Ballynahinch, only to be shot and killed during the retreat. Her story passed into folklore, causing historians to question Gray’s role in the battle and, in some cases, her very existence. For a thorough examination of Gray’s legacy see Guy Beiner, “Intra-Community Remembering and Forgetting: Commemorative Possessiveness and Envy in Ulster,” 1 April 2014, in *UCD Humanities Institute*, podcast, 1.01.53, <http://historyhub.ie/guy-beiner-intra-community-remembering-forgetting-commemoration-ulster>.

<sup>3</sup> Killinchy, a village in County Down.

<sup>4</sup> Ednavady Hill, Ballynahinch, County Down.

<sup>5</sup> George Gray.

<sup>6</sup> Willie Boal.

<sup>7</sup> 9 June 1798.

<sup>8</sup> Standard or flag.

were defeated[,] she and her friends fled ^and^ in their retreat they were overtaken by a party of the Hillsborough<sup>9</sup> yeomen belonging to M<sup>r</sup> Mussenden[']s Corps at the back of Magheraknock hill[,] within a mile and a half of Hillsborough[.]<sup>10</sup> [T]he young men were at a little distance from the girl[, looking for an easy place for her to cross the river, and could easily have escaped, but hastened to her assistance and endeavoured to prevail on the men to spare her life[, offering themselves as sacrifices in her stead; their pleading was in vain[;] ^the three were shot[.]^ [T]he men who perpetrated this brutal act, were a man of the name Little, and Thomas Neilson of ^the Parish of Anahilt^ –<sup>11</sup> [T]he young woman was the first who suffered, Neilson shot her thro [the] right eye, her brother and lover were then dispatched, and their dead bodies stripped ^&^ Little[']s wife [was] afterwards seen wearing the girl[']s ear-rings and green petticoat – [T]heir bodies were found and buried by their friends, and the particulars told by the yeomens['] companions – [A]n officer of the Regulars came up with the party soon after, and reprobated their conduct in the strongest terms[, saying he would not for fifty guineas they had committed such an action – [T]hese particulars were communicated to me by a man on whose veracity I could entirely depend[, whose friends had been at the battle and who lived in the neighbourhood of the yeomen[.]

M A. M<sup>c</sup>C

[Fol. 1b, blank]

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<sup>9</sup> Hillsborough, a village in County Down.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Mussenden (c.1746–22 December 1829), of Larchfield, Lisburn, County Antrim, lawyer, High Sherrif of County Down, Captain of Yeomanry during the rebellion of 1798 and MP for Killyleagh.

<sup>11</sup> Anahilt, a village in County Down.

### 5.3.2 James Witherspoon

**Date:** Unknown

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/690

**Document form:** Original manuscript, possibly enclosed within a letter to Madden

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, white paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a and right side of Fol. 2b

Particulars respecting James Witherspoon.<sup>1</sup>

[Fol. 1a]

James Witherspoon was a man of extreme simplicity of manners, and character, but of the strictest integrity – [H]e was by trade a weaver and had a few acres of land in the parish of Knockbracken in the County Down, he had been at the ~~Antrim~~ <sup>Ballynahinch</sup> fight which he thus described – “at the first fire we all dunked” <sup>^or ducked^</sup> (that means stooped their heads like ducks going under a gateway) “but one officer shamed us, calling us cowards, and bid us look a[t]<sup>2</sup> that young woman[,] how bravely she stood firm, and did not duke like us, and after that I believe that none <sup>^of them^</sup> did better than we did[.]” [O]n being asked how it was that he[,] who was so tender hearted that he could not kill a chicken for his wife when she was sick, but preferred going to the market town several miles <sup>^off^</sup> for meat, could turn his hand against the life of a fellow creature, his reply was that it was the spirit ~~that was~~ within him that enabled him to do it, no doubt he meant the spirit of patriotism[.] [T]he <sup>^courageous^</sup> young woman most probably was Elizabeth Gray, as an[-] other female was spoken of as having been at that battle

as far as I have learned – Mr Russell had known and esteemed this man previous to his arrest in 96 and removed from the house of John Green, near the Cave hill where

[Fol. 1b]

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter 68 (TCD MS873/656).

<sup>2</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

he first stopped in 1803 and went to Witherspoon[']s where ^he had called on his way from Dublin^ &

^where I^ think he remained until the distribution of the proclamation which was the only movement made in the North,

not a single copy of this proclamation is now to be found –

After the [...], & failure[,] M<sup>r</sup> Russell removed to Daniel Rabb[']s of Ballysallagh who was the very counterpart of

Walter Scott's Dandy Dinmont, & his wife[,] a woman of

[s]uperior<sup>3</sup> intellect & courage, quite a heroine.<sup>4</sup> Wither-

[s]poon<sup>5</sup> however became an object of suspicion and his

[fa]mily<sup>6</sup> greatly annoyed by the nocturnal visits of the

military which he wished much to get rid of, and ^as^ several

of his neighbours who had fled to America in 1798 and

wished ^afterwards^ to return had obtained leave by applying to

Capt<sup>n</sup>

Skinner<sup>7</sup> thro' his agent Garr or Gare, a Catholic ^but not an honest man[,]^

James was advised to apply to him to obtain protection

which he did, acknowledging the fact of Russell

[h]aving<sup>8</sup> been in his house[.] [T]his was after M<sup>r</sup> Russell

had left the North, and Witherspoon was assured that

he should have no farther annoyance and that he

[s]hould<sup>9</sup> not ~~suffer~~ be the worse of his candid ac-

knowledgment, but as soon as the news of M<sup>r</sup> Russell's

arrest arrived in the north[,] Witherspoon was taken pris-  
oner and Skinner and David Gordon[,] Crown Attorney[,]

[Fol. 2a]

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Dandy Dinmont, a character in Sir Walter Scott's 1815 novel *Guy Mannering*, who could be described as a cheerful and honest farmer.

<sup>5</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Cortlandt Skinner Junior (1766–1842), born in America, Captain of the British 70th Foot Regiment, commander of the Belfast cavalry in 1798, J.P. for County Down and Antrim and a juror at TR's trial.

<sup>8</sup> Partially obstructed by a tear.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

proceeded to question him for the purpose of extracting information, but to no purpose; they could obtain nothing further than that Russell had been at his house – [P]re-  
 suming on his simplicity of character and his reli-  
 gious scruples (he was a strict Covenanter) they thought to terrify him by clapping a bible to his lips, then telling him that having kissed the sacred book, he would be a perjured vil[l]ain if he did not tell the whole truth, a[t]<sup>10</sup> this he replied that “he took the one to witness against no other[,] that it was no act or deed of his” and remained inflexible[.] [H]e [was] ~~lodged~~ taken to Dublin guarded but the carriage was overturned on the road and ^he was^ a good deal hurt tho’ no bones were broken, but met with neither care[,] kindness or sympathy ~~an account~~ but ^was treated^ with the great-  
 est harshness[.] [W]hen arrived in Dublin[,] he was taken to Kilmainham and put into a cell which looked into a yard where M<sup>r</sup> Russell was walking backwards and forwards, whistling under his breath as James said he was asked was that the man who had been in his house[.] [H]e said, it might or it might not be him – [F]inding no-thing could be made of him[,] he was brought back and together [Fol. 2b]  
 with his son John[,] a soft[,] raw kind of lad from whom much ↵ firmness could ^not^ be expected, lodged in Downpatrick Goal but both remained inflexibly true, and [---] ^were kept^ in prison until the following year when, as a great favour[,] they were allowed to transport themselves to America – James had ~~two~~ two daughters & two other sons[;] one called Henry[,] the other Thomas, for my brother and M<sup>r</sup> Russell, but James said he had not the presumption to give the virtue of such names to a son of his, Henry was lame & was ~~trud~~ taught to be a tailor – ^all went to America together^ James and his wife are long  
 since dead – It was while M<sup>r</sup> Russell was in Witherspoon[’s]<sup>11</sup> & before the proclamation[,] that M<sup>r</sup> Russell asked me to ~~said~~ ^tell^ the late M<sup>r</sup> Luke Teeling and M<sup>r</sup> Bunting that he

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

would be glad to see them, it was not on the subject of poli[-]tics that he wished to see either[,] it was private friendship made him wish to see M<sup>r</sup> Bunting & to inquire I believe about the lady to whom he was engaged and the reason he sent a message to M<sup>r</sup> Teeling was that a message that he had intended for a priest[,] Maginnis[,] was thro' mistake given [to]<sup>12</sup> John Maginnis[,] M<sup>r</sup> Teeling's son[-]in[-]law. M<sup>r</sup> Bunting went but M<sup>r</sup> Teeling considered it more prudent to decline, he was not however aware of what was in contemplation, and I was told that it was not intended that any who had suffered loss of near relatives in 98 should be risked further –

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<sup>12</sup> Obstructed by a tear.

### 5.3.3 William Neilson

**Date:** Unknown

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/694

**Document form:** Original manuscript, possibly enclosed within a letter to Madden

**Delivery status:** Presumably postal delivery

**Material features:** 1 bifolium, crossed letter, white paper binding along left side of Fol. 1a

Death of William Neilson in June 1798<sup>1</sup>  
[Fol. 1a]

There was a poor widow Neilson<sup>2</sup> living in the village of Ballycarry beside Carrickfergus who had four sons & two daughters; her second son Samuel had been taken prisoner on account of firearms having been found in the house, but was liberated on the 2<sup>d</sup> June on giving bail – On the memorable 7<sup>th</sup> of June, the people began to assemble for the purpose of going to battle – In the same neighbourhood there happened <sup>^that day^</sup> to be a man from Carrickfergus of the name of Culbert[,]<sup>3</sup> ~~who was~~ a pensioner[,]  
<sup>^who was^</sup> in the house of a man called M<sup>r</sup> Ferran;<sup>4</sup> it was considered unsafe to suffer him to return to Carrickfergus with the news of what was going on, and W<sup>m</sup> Neilson[,]  
a lad of 15 years of age[,]  
being young, ardent & enthusiastic <sup>^in the cause^</sup> which his elder brothers were engaged, offered to be one of a party to go to M<sup>r</sup> Ferran's house to make a prisoner of Culbert, & take him with them to Done-

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<sup>1</sup> William Neilson (c.1783–June 1798), "The Ballycarry Martyr."

<sup>2</sup> Mary Neilson.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Cuthbert, a "loyalist." See Young, *Ulster in '98*, 25. Madden also referred to this man as "Cuthbert." See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 475.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh McFerran. See Young, *Ulster in '98*, 25. However, Madden gave his name as "McTernan." See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 475.

gore Hill,<sup>5</sup> the place where the people assembled previous to their marching to Antrim – W<sup>m</sup> [,] after all was over[,] returned to his mother’s house as tho fear being

entertained by his friends ~~on his account~~ for him as [Fol. 1b]  
from his extreme youth they considered him safe – [H]e however[,] as well as his brothers[,] was taken prisoner and tried by Court Martial, and remanded back to prison. Unconscious of his intended fate, he had been amusing himself in playing jacks, fearless of tomorrow, the day before the awful summons arrived[,] which was at midnight[.] [H]e was then torn from the arms of his eldest brother John who was confined in the same cell and hurried to the new Jail, where his second brother Sam was confined. Every lure of pardon and reward was offered to make him turn informer which he rejected with such dignity and firmness as excited the pity and admiration of those opposed to him – He requested that his own minister might be brought to him, the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bankhead with whom he spent the remainder of the night[.] [I]n the morning he ^begged^ he might be allowed to see his brother Sam, which was granted, and ^he^ strongly urged him to be firm[.] [I]t was expected that he ^Sam^ also would fall a sacrifice – W<sup>m</sup> was then brought to his native village Ballycarry in Broad island[,]<sup>6</sup> four miles

[Fol. 2a]  
from Carrickfergus, ^and^ within a mile of the town[,] he was met by his distracted mother who was then on her way to visit her imprisoned family, she rushed thro’ the soldiery, he caught her hand exclaiming “oh my mother,” he was torn from her, she then threw herself in the midst of the Cavalry at the feet of Rich<sup>d</sup> Kerr Esq<sup>r</sup>[,] her landlord[,] requesting to get one word of her dying child, he ordered her to get out of his way or he would ride his horse over her. Her son was brought to her door but requested he might not die there –

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<sup>5</sup> Donegore Hill, Antrim, the site of the rebel’s camp prior to the Battle of Antrim.

<sup>6</sup> Broad Island parish, containing the village of Ballycarry.

[H]e was then taken to the end of the village, his presence of mind never forsook him, he made a last effort on behalf of his brothers[,] ^begging^ that his death might expiate for them, and that his body might be given whole and entire to his mother, which last request was granted[.] [H]e then said[,] I die in peace with all men and forgive my persecutor – [H]is body was brought home to his ~~distracted~~ mother and strict orders given that none should attend at his wake – At midnight the cavalry surrounded the house regardless of his mother's grief and forbid any to attend the funeral but four men to carry the body – [T]he [---] next morning

morning [sic] being the sabbath, he was followed to the place [Fol. 2b] of interment by his utmost distracted mother, his little brother and two younger sisters; all of his mother[']s family who was not in confinement – His brother John was never brought to trial but had to sign his banish[-]ment for seven years, his second brother Sam[,] for life. W<sup>m</sup>'s death took place the latter end of June 1798 – [H]is brothers sailed from Belfast in May 99 – [T]hey were taken by the french and the passengers[,] being in general exiles[,] were treated with much kindness and received presents for their own use – [T]he vessel was retaken by the English. Sam died before they landed in the West Indies. John continued to make his escape and got to America[.] [T]heir mother had been a school mistress and had got John bound to the first architect in Belfast (Hunter who ^built almost^ all the houses in Donegall Place.)<sup>7</sup> John left a wife & child behind, the latter a year old[.] [H]e was fond of reading [&] wrote a good letter, his style was quite poetic[.] [H]e was employed by some of the first people in America and while engaged in building for President Madison,<sup>8</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Maddison[,]<sup>9</sup> when she got a new publication[,] would bring

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<sup>7</sup> James Hunter, Belfast architect.

<sup>8</sup> James Madison Junior (16 March 1751–28 June 1836), President of the United States from March 1809 until March 1817.

<sup>9</sup> Dolley Payne Todd Madison (20 May 1768–12 July 1849), married James Madison Junior in 1794.

it to him ^in her own hand & give it^ in a manner that greatly enhanced the favour[.]

[H]e died 1827, a few months after he got an account of his daughter's death here, he intended that she & her mother should have gone to him soon[.]

[T]he first part of [Fol. 1a, cross]  
this account was given ^me^ by his sister but I remember his mother telling me that when he was asked to ~~pull the cap~~ ^cover his face[,]^ as was usual [...]

~~his face usual~~ on such occasions[,] he refused, saying he had done nothing to make him ashamed to shew his face[.] [H]is mother represented him as very handsome, fair & blooming, with light hair and with his open shirt neck[,] looking ^much^ younger [...]

[...] than he was – M<sup>r</sup> Kerr offered his mother ten guineas to give up her house which she refused with disdain[,] imagining he offered it as the price of her child's blood whose death she thought was owing to his instrumentality in which she ~~thought~~ ^supposed^ was influenced by a desire

to give a proof of his loyalty – [S]he was at the time extremely poor & obliged

to seek assistance from others – Some time afterwards she left the place

& went to live in Island Magee as every thing surrounding her in the place

of her bereavement daily reminded her of her loss. She was a remarkably

shrewd[,] intelligent & active little woman with very strong feelings –

## 5.4 Appendix D: Dr Madden's Lines of Inquiry

### 5.4.1 Questionnaire for Mary Ann McCracken on the subject of Thomas Russell, completed in Dr Madden's hand<sup>1</sup>

**Date:** Unknown, possibly 24 April 1842<sup>2</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/672

**Document form:** Original manuscript

**Material features:** 1 folio, long tears along left side of Fol. 1a/ right side of Fol. 1b.

**Attachment:** TCD MS873/698

**Note:** Mary Ann's answers are highlighted in red. As the answers were written down in haste, the sentences tend to run into one another and so line breaks have been dismissed within the answers for the sake of clarity

Nº 1

[Fol. 1a]

Where was he born **In Fermoy in the C<sup>o</sup> Cork**

What age was Russell at his death **35**

What religion **Church of England**

What grade did he rise to **Lieu<sup>t</sup>**

What regiment did he serve in **Capt in the 64<sup>th</sup> reg<sup>t</sup> of foot [...]**<sup>3</sup>

~~What religion did he belong to~~

What height **Six feet one inch**

What colo[u]red hair – **Black**

What eyes – **Dark brown and sallow complexion**

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<sup>1</sup> When approaching the descendants of those involved in the events of 1798, Madden often sent out such questionnaires, however in MAM's case, it would appear that it was conducted in person.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter dated 24 April 1842, Francis McCracken Junior wrote to Robert James Tennent, "I met Dr Madden at my uncle's getting all sorts/ of particulars from Miss Mary." Francis McCracken Junior to Robert James Tennent, 24 April 1842, Correspondence of Francis [Frank] McCracken junior, Tennent Papers, PRONI D1748/G/380/82.

<sup>3</sup> At the age of fifteen TR joined the 52nd Regiment and served in India for five years. He returned to Ireland in 1787 and was commissioned to the 64th Regiment in Belfast in 1790.

What personal appearance – Stately and gentlemanlike and of a military demeanour[.] [N]o one could see him without saying asking who that man was

What ^manner^ address – Most fascinating

Did he speak fast or slow – Spoke deliberately

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup> in a loud or a subdued tone In a clear distinct mild and insinuating tone

What was his moral character –

Was he attached to any Lady

Was he attached to Miss M.<sup>5</sup>

Was he attached to Miss Simms

How did he behave at execution With the greatest firmness – he was visited by several of the Country gentlemen [who were] struck with admiration

Was he seen by a clergyman He was and rec<sup>d</sup> the sacrament

Was he a religious man He wrote & pub<sup>d</sup> an answer to Paine's ^Age of Reason^ he could not bear a word against religion[.] In 1795 – a gentleman speaking something slightly on the subject of religion – Russell walked out of the room in McCracken [...tear...] at Hollywood. He had such a veneration for the Scriptures that he began learning the Hebrew for the purpose of reading them in the original language. I asked was not he sceptical – He said not – There was one Society in Belfast all whose members were sceptics – They would not admit Tone because he believed and they gave humour of Paine['s] book which he refused to read.

Who did he believe betrayed him in Dublin at Muley['s][.] the gun smith in Parliament St. He says in his note [to] Miss McCracken “accident alone had led to his apprehension[.]” [A] man in an opposite house had seen a tall man every evening walked backwards and forwards

What sum was offered in Dublin for his apprehension  
£ at Belfast<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Did he speak.”

<sup>5</sup> Presumably meaning “Miss Mary Ann McCracken.”

<sup>6</sup> Madden stated that, “the government had offered a reward of £500 for the apprehension of Russell. The Sovereign of Belfast, Mr Edward May, the brother-in-law of Lord Donegall, on the 11th May, offered a further reward of £500.” Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 228.

Minutes of conversation ^with^ Mary M<sup>c</sup>Cracken  
Respecting Russell.

Russell remained at M<sup>r</sup> Rabb[']s some weeks[,]  
~~These~~ during this time he wrote several notes  
to Miss M<sup>c</sup>Cracken and in one of those  
he said to her[,] tell Hamilton if you  
see him, "I am ready to join any body  
of men ~~you~~ ^I may^ find in arms ~~for~~ ^in^ the cause  
of Ireland[.]" Hamilton and Hope at this  
~~this~~ time were in the neighbourhood not knowing  
where he was.

The above named note was brought to ~~me~~ M<sup>c</sup>[  
Cracken by a young country woman  
in the sole of her stocking.<sup>7</sup> That note was given  
to Teeling.<sup>8</sup> Hamilton<sup>9</sup> subsequently became  
engaged [sic] in the Dublin evening post and  
advocated strongly ^General^ Devereux's S. American  
scheme[;] for this he was dismissed from  
the post and went out to America and  
edited a paper at Baltimore w[ith] Devereux[.]<sup>10</sup>  
[S]ome years subsequently[,] [he] went out to South  
America and died on landing at Bogotá[.]  
[H]is son is in the East India Service  
who met his cousin Russell at their  
uncle[']s grave -<sup>11</sup>  
Miss McCracken at the time of the trials

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<sup>7</sup> Mrs Nelly Rabb.

<sup>8</sup> CHT.

<sup>9</sup> William Henry Hamilton.

<sup>10</sup> John Devereux (1778–1860), of Wexford, United Irishman who took part in the Battle of Ross, exiled in 1800, by the 1810s he had established himself as a merchant in Baltimore, America. Devereaux pledged himself to Simón Bolívar and other South American leaders in their fight for independence from Spain. As an army officer in the Columbian service, Devereaux took to calling himself General D'Evereux. He returned to Ireland to raise the Irish Legion which quickly dissolved upon arrival in Columbia, for which he was widely mocked.

<sup>11</sup> Madden is referring to the meeting of JAR and his nephew (not his cousin) Johnston Hamilton at TR's graveside in Downpatrick. See Letter 156 (TCD MS873/72).

went ~~ago~~ about and collected eighty pounds for defence, applied to Counsellor Bell and Joy – These gentlemen demanded £100 each for coming down – Miss McCracken made up the money and had the Lawyer brought down and defended Russell and the others[.] Joy [...] defended them and tho of opposite politicks said “he never in his life felt so interested for any man.” Joy asked Russell in conversation his opinion of the French government and Russell said, It is a despotic government but it is a new despotism and had overthrown the despotism in America [End]

## 5.4.2 Questionnaire Attachment

**Attached to:** Dr Madden's Questionnaire (TCD MS873/672)

**Date:** Unknown, possibly 24 April 1842<sup>1</sup>

**Archive:** TCD

**Reference code:** MS873/698

**Document form:** Original manuscript written by Mary Ann and given to Madden on the same day as he conducted his questionnaire with her<sup>2</sup>

**Material features:** 1 folio, tears, missing envelope

[Fol. 1a]←↓

A<sup>3</sup> copy of a note<sup>4</sup> from memory ^& which had been^ evidently written in

[...tear...] blue used for doing up linen –

I hope your spirits are not depressed by a temporary damp in consequence of the recent failure, of this be assured[,] of ultimate success I am ~~success I am~~ still certain[,] the failure alone was surprising – Let me beg of you to give the bearer two guineas & write to or draw on \_\_\_\_\_ & he will pay you[.] [D]o not shew this to any creature

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter dated 24 April 1842, Francis McCracken Junior writes to RJT, "I met Dr Madden at my uncle[']s getting all sorts/ of particulars from Miss Mary." Francis McCracken Junior to RJT, 24 April 1842.

<sup>2</sup> Although catalogued as a letter fragment, it is likely that this note was given to Madden by MAM on the day of the interview. The first indicator is that the tearing along the side of the page matches the shape and position of the tearing on Madden's interview folio. The second indicator is that Fol. 1a of this note is labelled "No. 3" in Madden's hand in accordance with the labelling of his interview, whereby Fol. 1a is labelled "No. 1" and Fol. 1b is labelled "No. 2." Presumably therefore, MAM prepared this statement about TR for their meeting and Madden marked it "No. 3" in order to keep it in sequence with his interview notes. The papers were obviously transported or stored together as they have suffered the same material damage.

<sup>3</sup> ^No 3^ [Madden ed., ink].

<sup>4</sup> ^ (to T. Russell from M. McCracken)^ [Madden ed., ink]. Madden has confused the sender and recipient in this insert which should state, "to M. McCracken from T. Russell."

but your sister – [O]f some of the causes of the failure I am yet ignorant, others I know & shall inform you of them when we meet[,] if that pleasure is reserved for me – [B]urn this when you have read it. <sup>5</sup> ~~I did so~~

I did so after reading it several times & it may seem strange that I should remember it after so long a period, but I was much struck with his delicacy & propriety in joining my sister with me ^in his confidence^ & also with his customary politeness [...]  
[...] never forsaking him, observable in the conclusion, I was highly gratified at his appreciating

appreciating [sic] my dear sister[']s character[.]  
[S]he was a fine[,] tall[,] handsome woman, but so dignified & retiring in her manners, that few were thoroughly acquainted with her; she had a very superior understanding ~~to which~~ ^and^ I always looked up ^to her^ & frequently acted on her suggestions ~~that~~ ^while^ she kept herself entirely in the background[.]

[Fol. 1b]

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The following is a fragment of what he had written[,] to be found in his pocket[,] expecting to fall in battle: Should I fall & my country deem my services of any moment, I beg my debts may be paid amounting to between three & four hundred pounds[,] principally incurred for it –  
[H]e also requested that his remains should be laid in the same grave where his parents were buried but I do not recollect the exact words nor the remainder[.]<sup>6</sup>  
Copy of a note from memory written ~~in Court~~ a few minutes before his death[:]

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<sup>5</sup> See Letter 66.

<sup>6</sup> See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 224–25.

Should Mr Ramsey be too much engaged to<sup>7</sup> my funeral  
& Mr Cole<sup>8</sup> be in town[,] let me beg of him to take that office on him  
& either of them apprise my sister of the event —<sup>9</sup>  
Frank had sent a person[,] Tom Hughes[,] who had been in  
Kemmis's office & who did every thing to serve or comfort —

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<sup>7</sup> Missing word, possibly "arrange."

<sup>8</sup> Mr Cole of Dublin, then in Downpatrick.

<sup>9</sup> See Madden, *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 2, 268.

### 5.4.3 Interview: Chapter 24 of Dr Madden’s “Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken” based upon an interview with Mary Ann McCracken<sup>1</sup>

The following account was initially published in Madden’s *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, of 1843, wherein it was indexed as “M’Cracken, H.J., his sister, interview with her.”<sup>2</sup> McNeill claims this record was “written in her [Mary Ann’s] own clear handwriting” which “she sent to Dr Madden” along with “a little packet of folded paper, about two inches square,” containing a lock of Henry Joy McCracken’s hair.<sup>3</sup> However, when quoting from this memoir within her biography, McNeill does not cite the “McCracken Letters,” (where she implies the document resides) but references Madden’s “United Irishmen, 2nd series, vol. II, p. 497.”<sup>4</sup> As no such handwritten account by Mary Ann McCracken exists within Madden’s papers, coupled with the historian’s own assertion that the text derived from an interview, it must be concluded that McNeill overlooked Madden’s index, despite the fact that she accurately referenced his work. It is possible that McNeill was misled by Madden’s rather ambiguous preface to the memoir which reads, “for the following account of the short career of M’Cracken, from the period of his defeat at Antrim to his execution, we are indebted to his sister. And without injustice to his memory, the statement could not be given except in her own words.”<sup>5</sup> Without having read the index entry, the phrase “in her own words,” could easily be misinterpreted to mean that Mary Ann had penned the statement herself. Nonetheless, McNeill’s suggestion that she had seen the account for herself remains problematic.

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<sup>1</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479–99. Madden replicated this memoir in his later publication, *Antrim and Down in ’98*, 66–81. Madden acknowledged the duplication through the extended title, “Complete, from the “Lives of the United Irishmen.” McCleery drew heavily on this account, while McNeill reproduced several extracts within her biography. See McCleery, “Life of Mary Ann McCracken,” 184–87 and McNeill, *Life*, 173–74 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 538.

<sup>3</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 192.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>5</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 479.

Evidence of such an interview occurring can be found within a letter housed at PRONI. On 24 April 1842, Francis McCracken Junior wrote to Robert James Tennent, "I met Dr Madden at my uncle[']s getting all sorts of particulars from Miss Mary."<sup>6</sup> Therefore it is likely that the memoir was based upon the interview Madden conducted with Mary Ann that day. Indeed, her statement within the memoir "My brother Frank and I would now be a desolate old couple without her [Maria],"<sup>7</sup> could not have been made any later than 22 December 1842, the date of Francis McCracken's death.

In both Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83), dated 2 August 1859 and Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87), dated 4 November 1859, Mary Ann provides Madden with a list of corrections to this chapter of the memoir, complete with page numbers. In her biography of Henry Joy McCracken, Edna Fitzhenry regrets the fact that, "the second edition of Dr. Madden's "United Irishmen" was never completed, and the fifth volume, which was to have contained the revised and enlarged "Memoirs" of McCracken and other northern leaders, did not appear."<sup>8</sup> As a result, Mary Ann's corrections never made it into print. In order to present the events as accurately as possible, I have highlighted these corrections within the text through use of footnotes.

#### **5.4.3.1 The Revised Chapter 24 of Dr Madden's "Memoir of Henry Joy McCracken"**

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Some days after the battle of Antrim, not having received any intelligence of my brother, I set out in pursuit of him, accompanied by

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<sup>6</sup> Francis McCracken Junior to Robert James Tennent, 24 April 1842. The uncle he refers to is Francis McCracken.

<sup>7</sup> Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, 497.

<sup>8</sup> Edna Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 7.

Mrs. M—, sister to John Shaw, of Belfast,<sup>9</sup> who wished to get some information respecting her husband and also a brother of Mrs. Shaw. We went towards the White House and made some enquiries in the neighbourhood. In the evening we joined J. M'G.,<sup>10</sup> at the country residence of Mr. John Brown, a banker, then in England, whose gardener, Cunningham, we learned, had given shelter occasionally to the wanderers. At nightfall this man took us to a house near the cave hill, belonging to John Brier, whom I knew a little, where we got a bed that night.<sup>11</sup> In the morning I urged Mrs. M. to return home, which she generously refused, although she had gained the information she required. She insisted on accompanying me. Her

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husband had got safe into Belfast, disguised as a countryman with a basket of eggs, and was then safe in Mr. Shaw's house; he had been at the battle of Antrim also. The next day we continued our search, and at last met with Gawin Watt and another person, who promised to take us to a place in the evening where we would get intelligence. The latter took us to a smith's house, on the lime-stone road leading to Antrim; we then saw a man, who some years afterwards was executed for the murder of a person of another party, against whom it did not appear he previously harboured malice, but in the madness of party rage had way-laid and assassinated.

In the back-room of this man's house we found about eight of the fugitives in consultation as to what should be done. I recommended them strongly to separate and return to their homes, if they could with safety. They replied that there was something in view, but in the event of its not taking place, they would follow my advice. Three of the party undertook to escort us; we travelled up hill, across fields, drains,

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<sup>9</sup> In her biography of MAM, McCleery stated that Mrs M- was Rose Ann McCracken, MAM's sister-in-law. (See McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 183). This would suggest that Madden incorrectly recorded the relationship between Mrs M- and Mr Shaw as the account states that Mrs M- was "sister to John Shaw" when in fact Rose Ann McCracken was his sister-in-law. This can be discerned from Letter 40 (TCD MS873/140), wherein Rose Ann McCracken refers to her "sister Shaw." Furthermore, James Hope states in his autobiography that Mrs Shaw was the sister of James McGlathery, who is known to have been Rose Ann McCracken's brother.

<sup>10</sup> James McGlathery.

<sup>11</sup> "Page 479 John Brice was the name of the man at whose home we stopped near the Cavehill on our way in search of my brother." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

and ditches, for two hours; our companions were Robert Henry, a schoolmaster, William Leith, and Robert Johnston. I had never seen any of the party before, except Johnston, on one occasion, and then only for a few minutes. We had a brisk walk for two hours, when we arrived at the Bowhill, where my dear brother and six others (James Hope one of the number) were sitting on the brow of the hill. Henry seemed surprised and rejoiced at the meeting, and after sitting with the party for a long time, talking over their adventures and escapes, he

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conducted us to a house where we were received in darkness, the woman of the house not daring to light a candle, or make the fire blaze. I insisted on Mrs. M— occupying the only chair for the remainder of the night, while I took a low stool and rested my head on her lap. My brother was to be with us at seven in the morning;<sup>12</sup> we thought the night very long, but when seven o'clock came, and no Harry appeared, we became very uneasy; but still more so when one Smith, a thoughtless fellow,<sup>13</sup> accompanied by the schoolmaster, arrived, and had not met with him, not having taken shelter in the same place. He came at last, having waited for the others till after two o'clock. We then set out on our way home, and he accompanied us a little way, wishing to see M'G., whom we sent out to him. Even then they had hopes of another movement.

The spirit of patriotism and the hope of success was not, I believe, so soon extinguished in the country as in the large towns : in the former it was perhaps partly kept alive by the wanderers whose lives were in jeopardy, and the necessary care and attention of others in their preservation, which was carried to a degree of generous confidence almost incredible, and in some cases exceeding the bounds of propriety; for instance, Biddy Magee, a modest and amiable young woman, who made such efforts in saving her brother's life, in 1803,

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<sup>12</sup> "At 481 that nine o'clock was the hour that Harry arrived in place of seven." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

<sup>13</sup> "Page 481 Leith was the name of the thoughtless being who was one of our escorts to the Bowhill mountain, he seemed to have perfect confidence in the country people calling to every one he met are you up & similar expressions, & I heard that he was assisted afterwards with means to emigrate & that in a few years he sent double the amount of what he had received to pay his debt, such was his gratitude." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

told me that in 1798, (she was then about twelve or fourteen years of age,) a young man in the neighbourhood where she lived, and who seldom ventured to sleep two nights successively in the same house, was frequently allowed to

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sleep in the bed with her and an older sister, in the room with her father and mother : he had fair hair and a fair complexion, like her family. In the event of any alarm, with the disguise of a woman's cap, he was to have been passed off for one of her sisters. Such acts of generous kindness, I believe, were never abused. She also told me that one night she heard the horse patrol pass their door, on the road leading to a house where she knew that some of the wanderers were concealed, about a quarter of a mile off by the fields, but considerably further by the road; that she started out of bed immediately, threw some of her clothes on, darted across the fields, and was just in time to warn the men to make their escape, and returned home in safety. The act was considered as heroic, for the girl was so timid that she dared not venture to the well for water in the dusk of the evening.

Soon after the former interview, I received the following letter from my brother :-

Monday, 18th June, 1798.

Dear Mary, - The clothes came in very good time, as I had much need of a change, having never had that luxury since I left home before. I will endeavour to arrange matters, so that any thing I want will come regularly to me. At present I cannot, as my lodging is the open air, which, with great abundance of exercise, keeps me in good health and high spirits, although my companions are not so numerous now as they were lately. These are the times that try mens souls. You will no doubt hear a great number

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of stories respecting the situation of this country: its present unfortunate state is entirely owing to treachery. The rich always betray the poor. In Antrim, little or nothing was lost by the people until after the brave men who fought the battle had retreated, few of whom fell, not more than one for ten of their enemies; but after the villains who were intrusted with direction for the lower part of the county gave up hostages, and all without any cause, private emolument excepted,

murder then began, and cruelties have continued ever since. It is unfortunate that a few wicked men could thus destroy a county, after having been purchased by blood; for it is a fact, which I am sure you never knew, that on Friday, the 8th of June, all this county was in the hands of the people, Antrim, Belfast, and Carrickfergus excepted. When I see you I will tell you a variety of little anecdotes that have occurred since I left home. Let me have all the news, and when opportunity serves send me newspapers. Remember me to all the family and friends, who I doubt are few, and believe me to be truly yours,

(Signed) 'H. J. M'Cracken'

Shortly afterwards I again went to see him at David Bodle's, beside the Cave hill, but nearer to Belfast. He was a poor labourer, with a wife and three daughters. The girls often rose out of their beds early in the morning, to let the fugitives get rest. I had afterwards an opportunity of materially serving that family, and some others who had done similar acts of kindness. Leith and Henry got safe

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away to America, and Johnston is still living at home. It was on Sunday afternoon, the 8th of July, my birth-day, that we got intelligence that Henry was taken prisoner by four Carrickfergus yeomen, one of whom, Niblock, knew him. John Query and Gawin Watt were with him at the time, and were likewise arrested. Harry had obtained a pass in another name, and was then on his way to the place appointed for embarkation on board of a foreign vessel, with the captain of which an agreement had been made for his passage. At a place where they stopped on the road, Watt contrived to get hold of one of the guns of the yeomen, which had been laid down for a few minutes, knocked out the priming without being perceived, and told Harry to save his life; but seeing the impossibility of doing so without involving his associates in additional danger, he thought it better to try, by other means, to save all. He had a written acknowledgment for a sum of £30 on his person, which was the same as money; and this he offered to Niblock, if he would allow himself and his companions to escape. Niblock refused the offer, but M'Gilpin, another of the yeomen, was willing to let them go. M'Cracken had nearly effected an arrangement when they stopped at a public-house, one of the party

went out unperceived, and brought back with him an officer, who secured the prisoners. Immediately on getting the intelligence of Harry's arrest, my father and I set off to Carrickfergus, and with difficulty obtained permission to visit him; the officer who accompanied us politely standing at a distance, not to prevent our conversation. Harry desired me

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not to use any solicitations on his account; and after expressing to me his wishes on many matters, he desired me to tell my brother John to come to him. My mother had sent him a favourite book of his, 'Young's Night Thoughts,'<sup>14</sup> and I observed a line from it written on the wall of his cell, –

'A Friend's worth all the hazard we can run.'

We remained all night in Carrickfergus, and tried the next morning to see him again; but were not admitted. We saw him, however, through the window of his cell, when he gave me a ring, with a green shamrock engraved on the outside, and the words, 'Remember Orr,' on the inside, presented to him by his friend Thomas Richardson, and which he desired me to give to his mother. Since her death it has remained with me. On the 16th, he was brought in prisoner to Belfast, in the evening. My sister and I immediately set out to try if we could see him. He was then standing, with a strong escort, about a dozen, I think, of soldiers, who were drawn up in the middle of what is now called Castle-place. We could not speak to him there. He was then taken to the artillery barracks in Ann-street, and we hastened to Colonel Durham, who lodged in Castle-place; we knocked at the door, and just as it was opened, the colonel, who had been out, came up; and when we earnestly requested he would give us an order for admission to see our brother, who was to be tried the next day, he replied, that, "If our father and mother, sisters and brother, and all the friends we had in the world, were in similar

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<sup>14</sup> "Page 496 - Young's night thoughts was a favourite book of my mothers but not of Harry's." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87). MAM has mistakenly written the page number as 496, the page on which her next correction comes, instead of 485.

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circumstances, he would give no such order" He had, by this time, entered his hall-door, which he shut against us with great violence. We returned home, and then learned that there was a large party of officers dining at the Exchange-rooms. We hurried there, and sent a message to Colonel Barber, who instantly sent out a young officer to accompany us to my brother; and when we apologized to this gentleman for giving him so much trouble, he said, "He did not consider it any trouble, and would be glad to serve us." I did not learn his name. When we reached the place of confinement, he very kindly stood at a distance from the door of the cell, that we might have an opportunity of conversing at our ease with our brother. Harry then told us that he did not know who would appear against him; that he had been told Samuel Orr, a brother of William Orr, was to come forward; but he could not believe it. He desired that Mrs. Holmes (daughter to my uncle, Henry Joy) and Miss Mary Toomb (his granddaughter) might be requested to attend his trial the next day, to prove the fact of their having advised him to leave Belfast, in order, if no material evidence was brought against him, some advantage might be derived from the circumstance of his friends having endeavoured to persuade him to leave town previously to the Antrim business.

The next morning, at five o'clock, we were knocked up by a soldier, who said he had been on guard at the artillery barracks, and that Henry had sent him for half-a-guinea and a bottle of whiskey, which my sister immediately gave the man. But on visiting

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Henry the same morning she found that no such message had been sent by him.

I arose at six, and set out in a carriage for the place where Miss Toomb<sup>15</sup> was then staying with a lady, near Lisburn. I endeavoured to keep up her spirits as well as I could, fearing from the state of grief and anxiety she was in she would be unable to give evidence. She came with me, and on arriving in town, the 17th of July, I proceeded to the Exchange, where the trial was just commenced. The moment I set my eyes on him I was struck with the extraordinary serenity and composure of his look. This was no time to think about such things, but yet I could not help gazing on him; it seemed to me that I had

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<sup>15</sup> "Miss Tomb's name is not right spelt." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

never seen him look so well, so full of healthful bloom, so free from the slightest trace of care or trouble, as at that moment, when he was perfectly aware of his approaching fate.

I sat very near the table when the trial was going on. Colonel Montgomery was President. The first witness called was Minis, who swore that Harry had called at his house the morning of the battle of Antrim, and forced him to go with him; that he was present at that engagement, and saw M'Cracken taking an active part in it. The other witness, James Beck, a poor miserable-looking creature, swore that he had seen Harry only once before the fight, one evening in the street; that he was pointed out to him at Antrim, and that he knew him by a mark on his throat, which mark was not seen until his neck-kerchief was taken off. Hope informed me that an artillery man, of the

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name of Muldoon, had been on guard the morning of the 17th of July, and had told him that the witnesses who had sworn against M'Cracken did not know him; that he was walking in the yard when an officer pointed him out to them from a window looking into the yard, and told them of the mark on his throat. (This practice of pointing out prisoners to crown witnesses was by no means uncommon in Ireland at that period.)

Immediately preceding the examination of the witnesses, my father, who was just recovered from a severe and tedious fit of illness, and who appeared to be sinking beneath the weight of old age and affliction, was called aside by Pollock, who told him that he had such evidence against his son as would certainly hang him; that his life was in his hands, and that he would save it if my father would persuade him to give such information as Pollock knew it was in his power to do, namely, who the person was who had been appointed to command the people at Antrim, in whose place he (M'Cracken) had acted. My father replied, that "he knew nothing and could do nothing in the matter: he would rather his son died than do a dishonourable action." The tyrant, however, not content with the trial of his virtue, would torture him still farther by calling Harry to the conference, and repeated the same offer to himself, who well knowing his father's sentiments, answered, that "he would do any thing which his father knew it was right for him to do." Pollock repeated the offer, on which my father said, "Harry, my dear, I know nothing of the business, but you know best

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what you ought to do." Harry then said, "Farewell, father," and returned to the table to abide the issue of the trial. After I left him, I was told that Major Fox went up to him and asked him for the last time if he would give any information, at which he smiled, and said, "he wondered how Major Fox could suppose him to be such a villain."

The proceedings went on, and after some time Henry complained of thirst, and asked me to get him an orange or some wine and water. I hastened home, our house being at a short distance from the place, and on my way back I was accosted by the wife of William Thompson, an Englishman, a calico-print-cutter, in my brother's employment; who, refusing to give information against my brother, had two hundred lashes inflicted on him, on a charge of having engraved a seal with the device of a harp and some popular motto. Mrs. Thompson inquired of me about the trial that was then going on. She said if his life was in danger, she would appear as a witness, and swear that she had seen Henry in the street of Belfast the day of the Antrim fight. She followed me to the Exchange, repeated the proposal to Henry and Mr. Thomas Stewart, who was his attorney, who called Harry aside to hear it; they both told her, her proposal could not be accepted. Mrs. Holmes and Miss Toomb attended when called on; the latter weeping bitterly, could scarcely answer a single question. They cross-questioned Mrs. Holmes very strictly. Pollock, the crown prosecutor, who seemed most anxious for conviction, endeavoured to entrap her into contradictions; he inquired why she was so

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anxious for the prisoner leaving the town; she replied, discreetly, that the disturbed state of the town was a sufficient reason for her anxiety about a relative. He strove to make her answers tell against Henry; he asked her, was the prisoner a United Irishman? she said she knew nothing about political societies. He then inquired, did she think he was one, and other similar questions. After the examination of the witnesses, I rose and went forward to the table; I stated what appeared to me to be unlike truth in the evidence that had been given by the witnesses for the prosecution, expressing a hope that they would not consider such evidence sufficient to take away life; the testimony of one witness impeaching the character and credit of the

approver, on whose statements the charge was mainly dependent for support.

Harry had taken notes of the trial, and before its termination he said to me in a whisper, "You must be prepared for my conviction;" all his friends could then do for him was to endeavour to get his sentence commuted to banishment. Before the close of the proceedings, I hastened home with this intelligence, and my mother went instantly to General Nugent's house, and requested an interview, but he refused to be seen. I returned to the Exchange before my mother came back, but found that Henry had been removed. I little expected that any efforts to save him would be successful; but I felt I had a duty to perform – to prevent misrepresentation, and to put it out of the power of his enemies to injure his character while living, or his memory when dead. I followed him to the artillery barracks, where I saw Major Fox just

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going in, and asked his permission to see my brother; he desired me to wait a little, but I followed him, and when he came to the door of my brother's cell I remained behind him at a few paces' distance; the door of the cell was opened, and I heard him say, "You are ordered for immediate execution." My poor brother seemed to be astonished at the announcement; indeed he well might be, at the shortness of the time allotted to him; but seeing me falling to the ground, he sprang forward and caught me. I did not, however, lose consciousness for a single instant, but felt a strange sort of composure and self-possession; and in this frame of mind I continued during the whole day. I knew it was incumbent on me to avoid disturbing the last moments of my brother's life, and I endeavoured to contribute to render them worthy of his whole career. We conversed as calmly as we had ever done. I asked him if there was anything in particular that he desired to have done. He said, "I wish you to write to Russell, inform him of my death, and tell him that I have done my duty; tell him also that the aspersions which were cast on Tom Richardson by his fellow prisoners were false; and, as I knew him well, my testimony, I trust, will be a sufficient proof of his innocence." "Is there anything else you wish me to do?" I asked. "No," he replied, hesitatingly; but, from his look, I judged there was something occupying his thoughts which he did not wish to mention. What was then stirring in his mind flashed on mine like lightning, and vanished at the moment; but subsequent

circumstances recalled it, and the cause of his anxiety became a source of com-

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fort to me, and the means of fulfilling a duty to his memory. He replied, "he would like to see Mr. Kelburne, who was our clergyman." I told him, I feared that Mr. Kelburne would be unable to come, but that if he wished to see a clergyman, Dr. Dickson was then under the same roof, and would come to him. He replied, "he would rather have Mr. Kelburne, as it would gratify his father and mother." He, of course, was sent for, but being confined to his bed by illness, it was a considerable time before he made his appearance. In the meantime Dr. Dickson was brought to him; they retired to the far end of the room, when I observed Dr. Dickson take out his pocket-book and write something in it; he afterwards said, that he never met with any person whose mind was better prepared to meet death. Mr. Kelburne soon after arrived, and when he did, he burst out crying, and said, "Oh ! Harry, you did not know how much I loved you." Mr. K., after some time, endeavoured to assume composure, and, turning to Fox, said, "I hope, Major, you will take care of the arms I sent you; the gun was a fowling-piece of my father's, for which I have a great regard, and would be sorry to lose it." Harry, perceiving the effort at appearing more unconcerned than he really was, looked at Dr. Dickson and smiled. Mr. K. knelt down, as I believe did all present, and joined in prayer; he soon after retired, and wished me to accompany him, which I refused.

During the early part of the day Harry and I had conversed with tranquillity on the subject of his death. We had been brought up in a firm conviction

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of an all-wise and overruling Providence, and of the duty of entire resignation to the Divine will. I remarked that his death was as much a dispensation of Providence as if it had happened in the common course of nature, to which he assented. He told me there had been much perjury on his trial, but that the truth would have answered the same purpose. After the clergymen were gone, I asked for a pair of scissors, that I might take off some of his hair. A young officer who was on guard (his name was George) went out of the room and brought a pair of scissors, but hesitated to trust them into my hand,

when I asked him indignantly if he thought I meant to hurt my brother. He then gave them to me, and I cut off some of Harry's hair which curled round his neck, and folded it up in paper, and put it into my bosom. Fox at that moment entered the room, and desired me to give it to him, as "too much use," he said, "had already been made of such things." I refused, saying I would only part with it in death; when my dear brother said, "Oh ! Mary, give it to him; of what value is it?" I felt that its possession would be a mere gratification to me, and, not wishing

to discompose him by the contest, I gave it up.<sup>16</sup>

The time allowed him was now expired: he had hoped for a few days, that he might give his friends an account of all the late events in which he had taken a part. About five P.M. he was ordered to the place of execution, the old market-house, the ground of which had been given to the town by his great great grandfather. I took his arm, and we walked together to the place of execution, where I was told

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it was the general's orders I should leave him, which I peremptorily refused. Harry begged I would go. Claspng my hands around him, (I did not weep till then,) I said I could bear any thing but leaving him. Three times he kissed me, and entreated I would go; and, looking round to recognize some friend to put me in charge of, he beckoned to a Mr. Boyd, and said, "He will take charge of you." Mr. Boyd stepped forward; and, fearing any further refusal would disturb the last moments of my dearest brother, I suffered myself to be led away. Mr. Boyd endeavoured to give me comfort, and I felt there still was comfort in the hope he gave me, that we should meet in heaven. A Mr. Armstrong, a friend of our family, came forward and took me from Mr. Boyd, and conducted me home. I immediately sent a message to Dr. McDonnell and Mr. M'Cluney, our apothecary, to come directly to the house. The latter came, and Dr. M'Donnell sent his brother Alexander, a skilful surgeon. The body was given up to his family unmutilated; so far our entreaties and those of our friends prevailed.

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<sup>16</sup> "Respecting the hair I took off my brothers head, I had first taken off some & put it in my pocket & then wishing for more I had just taken it off when Fox entered the room & demanded it – the next day I wrote to Col Barber requesting he would have it restored to me to which I received a polite answer saying he was sorry to inform me that the hair had been immediately thrown into the fire & consumed." Letter 178 (TCD MS873/87).

From the moment I parted with Harry, the idea which had occurred to me in the morning that it might be possible to restore animation, took full possession of my mind, and that hope buoyed up my strength, and supported me at the moment of parting with him. Every effort that art could devise was made, and at one time hopes of success were entertained, but the favourable symptoms disappeared, and the attempt was at length given up. I was present when the medical men entered the room where the

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body was laid, and then retired and joined the rest of the family, awaiting the result with indescribable anxiety. My heart sank within me when we were told all hope was over, and that a message had been brought from the general that the funeral must take place immediately, or that the body would be taken from us. Preparations were made for immediate burial. I learned that no relative of his was likely to attend the funeral. I could not bear to think that no member of his family should accompany his remains, so I set out to follow them to the grave.

A kind-hearted man, an enthusiast in the cause for which poor Harry died, drew my arm within his, but my brother John soon followed, and took his place. I heard the sound of the first shovelful of earth that was thrown on the coffin, and I remember little else of what passed on that sad occasion. I was told afterwards that poor Harry stood where I left him at the place of execution, and watched me until I was out of sight; that he then attempted to speak to the people, but that the noise of the trampling of the horses was so great that it was impossible he should be heard; that he then resigned himself to his fate, and the multitude who were present at that moment uttered cries which seemed more like one loud and long-continued shriek than the expression of grief or terror on similar occasions. He was buried in the old churchyard where St. George's church now stands, and close to the corner of the school-house, where the door is.

A most daring outrage, several years after my brother's interment, was committed on the feelings of

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the inhabitants by the Rev. Edward May.\* This churchyard, where the departed friends of the principal inhabitants of the town were interred, the rev. gentleman took it into his head to convert to other

uses. The graves were levelled, the ashes of the dead were scandalously disturbed, and the tombstones torn up. The sacrilege, however, excited such painful and indignant feelings, that the shameful proceedings were stopped, and it was then proposed to plant the levelled yard with trees, and this in some measure tranquillized the public feeling for a time. Mr. May, however, contrived to get a bill hurried through Parliament, which gave a power to certain parties to dispose of part of the ground. This was done, and large yards were thus given to several of the houses in Church-lane; and the burying-ground of my family, where my poor brother's remains now lie, thus disposed of, is now built over.

About two days after the fatal event, a servant girl was sent to the prison for the bed and other things that had been sent there for his accommodation, when one of the soldiers spoke of the man getting the half-guinea and bottle of whiskey; and the day following the girl was sent to give evidence at a court martial, by which the unfortunate man was tried for this offence, and sentenced to receive two hundred lashes.

It was told me as a matter that was calculated to afford satisfaction: it gave me none. I was pained to hear of it.<sup>17</sup> My brother Frank left Belfast for Cork,

\*Mr. Edward May was the brother-in-law of Lord Donegal.

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to embark for Barbadoes, about the latter end of July, and first called to take leave of his acquaintances in the prison of this town, and among the rest visited Dr. Dickson, who expressed a wish to see me. I, of course, attended the summons without delay. The object of it was to

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<sup>17</sup> "496 when the girl was sent to the prison for the bed &c which had been sent there for Harry's accommodation the soldiers boasted of their honesty in giving the things all up, & she of course spoke of the man coming to ask for the bottle of whiskey & half guinea, which caused the girl to be sent for to give evidence of the fact, which greatly annoyed the family." Letter 177 (TCD MS873/83).

MAM repeated this correction in Letter 179: "Page 496[,] 8 last lines from the bottom - It was not the soldier that first spoke to the servant respecting the half guinea & bottle of whiskey but when the soldiers boasted of their honesty in giving up the things that had been sent there for my brothers accommodation & she being young & inconsiderate mentioned the circumstance which caused us so much annoyance as we could never feel pleasure in having pain inflicted on others whatever might be their conduct."

inform me of the existence of an infant child of my dear brother, whose inability to provide for it was the only cause of sorrow which weighed on his mind in his last moments. She was left to our care. Good indeed to us came out of evil. That child became to us a treasure. My brother Frank and I would now be a desolate old couple without her. She is to us as an only and affectionate daughter.

Notwithstanding the grief that overcame every feeling for a time, and still lingers in my breast, connecting every passing event with the remembrance of former circumstances which recall some act or thought of his, I never once wished that my beloved brother had taken any other part than that which he did take.

In justice to the Northern directory, I must remind you that Harry brought the message from Dublin respecting the plan and time of action. He could not be mistaken, but they might have misunderstood him so far, as to have thought that the first signal was only one for preparation, and that it was to be followed by another, giving a certain knowledge of the rising in Dublin having taken place; and this not being the case, they were not warranted in acting; and by being over cautious the opportunity was lost, which never returned; at all events, I do not think

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they were influenced by personal cowardice. The general, who was one of the directory, was, and still continues, a man of most exemplary character, both moral and religious, and a man of such a serious, thoughtful mind, so truly conscientious and well disposed, that he could not be supposed likely to enter into either a dishonest or an impracticable scheme; and his example, moreover, had great influence in inducing others to join the union.

In considering the unsuccessful struggle in which my brother was engaged, many are too apt to forget the evils of the time. The grinding oppression under which the people laboured, the contempt in which public opinion was held, the policy which prevented its expression, and intimidated the press. The only means then existing of stemming the torrent of corruption and oppression were tried, and they failed; but this failure, grievous as were its consequences, was not without its beneficial effects.

Happily a new light has now broken on the world, which is perhaps of all modern discoveries and improvements the most important, that of effecting by reason what was formerly attempted,

and often in vain, by force, and even when successful was dearly purchased by its unhappy and demoralizing results. But another light is no less essential to our efforts for the public good. Religion should also be called to aid the regeneration (if I may use the term) of our political as well as our social and individual character. Its Divine precepts are simple and easily comprehended — to do to others as we would wish others to do to us; to do no evil that good may come of it; to

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love our neighbour as ourselves, and to be guided by the parable of the good Samaritan, to consider all who are within reach of our kindness as our neighbours, however they may differ from us in our religious belief; thus endeavouring to become in reality what we profess to be, true and sincere Christians; for then indeed would this world become a paradise of peace.

Some object to joining religion and politics together; but surely religion should be the ruling principle of every action and of every thought. With such an unerring guide how could we do wrong? The same golden rule that should regulate the conduct of private individuals, should direct the acts of public men; and with such direction no government could inflict the wrongs on a people which ours have endured, and found to be intolerable in 1798.

## 5.5 Appendix E: Mary Ann McCracken's Non-epistolary Writing

### 5.5.1 Genealogical notes by McCracken as quoted within McCleery's "Life of Mary Ann McCracken"

Within her step grand-aunt's biography, McCleery attributes a series of quotations to the pen of Mary Ann McCracken. It is possible that these family anecdotes were composed by Mary Ann when "towards the close of her life...friends requested of her that she would write her remembrances." However, McCleery regrets that although, "she endeavoured to comply with their repeated solicitations...while remembering past events, and able to relate them, she had from failing memory lost the power of composing a sustained narrative, and never got beyond preliminaries."<sup>1</sup> The lines quoted by McCleery are consistent with the preliminaries of such an autobiography, especially one written by, "the least egotistical of human beings," who "could not be made to understand that it was her very own individual experiences in which her friends were especially interested."<sup>2</sup> The excerpts explicitly stated as having been written by Mary Ann are laid out below:

#### 5.5.1.1 An extract on her great-great grandfather George Martin

My grandmother Joy was daughter to George Martin, who was Sovereign of Belfast, and a Presbyterian.<sup>3</sup> It was at that time the custom for the Sovereign and burgesses to march in procession to church, and for the Sovereign to hand Lady Donegall into her seat, from whence she had a view of the

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<sup>1</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 197.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> McCleery explains that owing to some "confusion of dates and persons," George Martin, who served as Sovereign of Belfast in 1649, was in fact Margaret Joy's grandfather rather than father. See McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 175-6. Indeed, George Martin died on 25 July 1678, some twelve years before Margaret Joy's birth in 1690. See Jean Agnew, *Belfast Merchant Families in the Seventeenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), 238.

burgesses' seat. Not seeing the Sovereign there, and, on inquiring as to the cause, finding that he was a Presbyterian, and that when he had performed his official duty he went to his own place of worship, she gave orders that in future none but members of the Established Church should be appointed burgesses; and at that time there were but eleven who could write their own names. This my mother had heard from her mother, and wished very much to see the book in which their names were recorded, and being acquainted with the Town Clerk, she asked him to get her a sight of the book, which he did, and I looked over her shoulder and saw it written – Hugh (his X mark) Doak, brick-layer, but neglected to ascertain the date.<sup>4</sup> My grandmother Joy's Christian name was Margaret; she was the youngest daughter of Mr. Martin, and was born in the year 1690, forty years before my mother. George Martin made a present to the town of a piece of ground on which the old Market House was built. He advanced £2,000 to pay the King's troops (he was Sovereign when King William came to the throne), which was never repaid to him or any of his family.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.5.1.2 An extract describing her brother Henry Joy McCracken

Harry partook largely of all the virtues of both his father and his mother. From earliest childhood he was actively and daringly courageous, amounting to fearlessness; quick as thought in defending a friend, but so good-natured and ready, when at play, to undertake anything that occurred that was difficult or troublesome, that he was a universal favourite with his companions. He had, however, a sort of restless activity, which did not presage the deeply-contemplative character which was afterwards developed. He was particularly distinguished by the utmost quickness of observation, a proof

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<sup>4</sup> According to McCleery, "Hugh Doak was Sovereign in 1647. His signature was appended to various public documents, always in initials in printed character." McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 176.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 175. McCleery prefaced this extract, "Her mother's grandfather was Mr. George Martin, of whom she writes as follows..." After which she surmises, "such was the story related by Mary M'Cracken as a family tradition."

of which was, that when the famous Bristow was here, he detected the secret of almost all his tricks, which he successfully imitated afterwards, to the amusement of his friends. He had the utmost presence of mind, which, added to his manual dexterity, enabled him to be eminently useful on many occasions, particularly when any house in the town took fire, when he was always the first, and sometimes alone, in posts of the greatest danger.

My brother Harry was joined with a few of the industrious class in Belfast in a Sunday-school in the old Market-House, in which writing as well as reading was taught. In two years a young woman had learned both to read and write. They did not presume to impart religious knowledge, but they taught their scholars how to obtain it for themselves, by which every sect might equally profit.

It was afterwards found to be practised in England; and then Mr. Bristow came to the place of meeting with a number of ladies, with rods in their hands as badges of authority, which put to flight the humble pioneers.

The same party who started the Sunday-school also instituted a cheap public library, on becoming a member of which they advanced one guinea, afterwards half-a guinea yearly; and at that time the other libraries charged most exorbitantly for some new publications. I remember one translated from the French so much admired that there were two translations of it, to which different names were given, and for which 10d. a-night was charged, which only the rich could afford. [It was Harry's opinion that] if it had not been for the free quarters and the flogging, there would have been no rebellion after all; "for," said he, "it is not easy to get people to turn out of their comfortable homes, if they have any comfort in them."<sup>6</sup>

### **5.5.1.3 An extract on her family connection to Belfast's Poor House**

There were no men in Belfast esteemed more highly than my two uncles, and I believe they were very deserving of the high opinion the public entertained of them. They were both very

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 187–88. McCleery prefaced this extract, "Miss Mary M'Cracken thus depicts the character of her brother."

charitable; but their feelings were exercised in different ways. . . . My uncle Robert was one year younger than my uncle Harry. He projected our 'Old Poorhouse,' the first in Belfast, for a shelter for the poor. Before that time, rich men who were charitable would leave large sums to be distributed to the poor by their clergymen, lists of which are now to be seen hung round in the hall of our Old Poorhouse at the head of Donegall Street. My uncle Robert paid his last visit to it, when unable to walk, in a sedan chair. From its erection, as long as health was spared him, it had been his constant study to promote the comfort of the inmates in every respect. The husband and wife were not separated, but had curtains round their bed; and he studied to give them variety of food, and in various ways to promote an increase to the means of support, one of which was a shower-bath, and anyone, by paying one guinea a-year, might use it whenever they pleased. The room that is now the girls' school-room was then a ball-room, in which there was a ball once a-month, and for some time concerts once a-fortnight, by the band of the 1st Volunteer Company; but one of the members having died of consumption, which was attributed to his playing on a wind instrument, the music was discontinued, but the dancing for some time went on.

My father had a garden in the neighbourhood, and as soon as I could walk, my mother took me with her to the garden, and we often visited the Poorhouse. Bab was my most beloved cousin, nine months younger than I. She was very benevolent, and most usefully so. . . . About our Old Poorhouse children, she said she never was muffling her own children on a Sunday morning that she did not think of the Poorhouse little girls. At that period there was but one public collection in the year for our old Poorhouse, and the girls had no additional clothing to what they wore in the house in winter. It was scarcely so much, for in the house they had a bedgown which came up to the neck; but in going to the Meeting-house or Church they wore a frock made of linen, woven in the house, and dyed a drab colour, the sleeves of which did not cover the elbow, and did not come above the shoulder. All the additional clothing they had was a small single calico shawl. The way Bab undertook to obtain funds was to go about asking only for the

small sum of 10d., which she thought nobody would refuse; but many might not wish to have their names for a small sum when the one next it might perhaps be for large, and those who wished to give liberally might give as much as they pleased in the names of all their family or any names they chose. There was only one man in all Belfast who refused, and the whole amounted to £9. The thickest and strongest green stuff which could be got was purchased and cut out. The frocks had long sleeves down to the wrists, and they were made up by various young ladies. It was suggested that as straw bonnets were expensive, it would be better to have the girls taught to plat the straw and make the bonnets, which would be a means of support for them when they should leave the house. We followed this advice, and found that it answered very well.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 193–94. McCleery prefaced this extract, “Of charitable institutions, the one with which she was connected from her earliest years, and which she continued to visit as long as strength permitted, was the “ Old Poor-house,” or “Belfast Charitable Society.” The building of this house was commenced in 1771, and of it she wrote when more than 90 years of age.”

## 5.5.2 Minutes of the Belfast Charitable Society's Ladies' Committee

Mary Ann McCracken became Secretary of the Ladies' Committee at the Belfast Charitable Society upon Isabelle Tennent's withdrawal from the post in 1832. Her meticulous records consist of "page after page of minutes written in her plain, sensible handwriting in two very ordinary foolscap jotters, the lines on every page being ruled in pencil."<sup>1</sup> Within these accounts, evidence abounds of Mary Ann's commitment to the needs and wellbeing of the women and children of the Poor House. Numerous examples are discussed within McNeill's biography, such as her determination to establish an infant school, regardless of the disapproval of the Gentlemen's Committee. Indeed, a complete transcript of the minutes of the Ladies' Committee can be found within the McNeill Papers.<sup>2</sup> With a drop off in ladies attending, the committee minutes came to an end in October 1851. After a lengthy stay at the LHL, the Belfast Charitable Society's minute books were returned to Clifton House in 2016, where they were catalogued by archivist Louise Canavan.

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<sup>1</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 286.

<sup>2</sup> See Typescript of minutes of Ladies Committee, Belfast Charitable Society, 1827–1851, Newspaper cutting, notes and correspondence relating to research on Joy and McCracken families, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/4.

### 5.5.3 Mary Ann McCracken's Music Notebook

QUBSC's Bunting Collection holds a music notebook formerly belonging to Mary Ann McCracken.<sup>1</sup> It is inscribed, "Nov. 15th 1808. Miss Mary McCracken Waring St., her book, Belfast." A complete transcription of the thirty-eight page manuscript can be found within Colette Moloney's *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting (1773–1843): an introduction and catalogue*.<sup>2</sup> Moloney describes the notebook as:

a fair copy of airs and hymns written by scribe G (Mary McCracken) and given to Bunting before 1808. The manuscript can be divided into two sections. The first group of items, mainly hymn tunes, are written at the beginning of the book. These tunes are mainly English in origin as the place-names in their titles show. The second group, items written from the back of the book, consists of Irish airs. The source of these tunes is uncertain; it is unlikely, at any rate, that Mary McCracken had sufficient experience with notation to have transcribed them from live performances herself. It is more plausible that these tunes were copied from manuscripts or books or that they were part of her repertory. The exact source of only one tune, 'Callen Deas Roue', is known. The manuscript itself seems to be a rather isolated element of the collection as only a small number of the Irish airs occur elsewhere in the manuscripts or printed volumes.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside Bunting's letters to Mary Ann, the notebook reiterates the significance of her role in and contribution to his work.

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Mary McCracken, Manuscript Psalms and Old Airs, Bunting Collection, QUBSC MS4/19.

<sup>2</sup> Colette Moloney, *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting (1773–1843): an introduction and catalogue* (Dublin: Irish Traditional Music Archive, 2000), 287.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 46–9.

### 5.5.4 Ownership Inscriptions

A handful of books which once belonged to Mary Ann McCracken remain intact. A second edition of Vallancey's, *A Grammar of the Ibero-Celtic, or Irish Language* (1781), inscribed "Mary Ann McCracken" across both the top and bottom of the frontispiece, can be found within Saint Malachy's Church archive. LHL's Autograph Collection contains a third edition of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1822) dedicated, "To Miss Bessie Brown from her companion Mary McCracken." Professor Donal McCracken (Senior Professor of History at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) possesses a copy of Madden's *United Irishmen*, Third Series, vol. 3, which bears the following dedication on the contents page, "The gift of Dr Madden to Mary Ann McCracken." Her signature also appears along the top of the frontispiece.<sup>1</sup> John Aiken McClelland (librarian and archivist at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum from 1967 until his death in 1981 and joint editor of the journal *Irish Booklore*) also owned an inscribed copy of Madden's *United Irishmen* bearing a dedication from the author to Mary Ann and dated 1842. It is interesting to note that many of the pages remained unopened.<sup>2</sup> A copy of Edward Hay's *History of the insurrection of the county of Wexford, A.D. 1798* (1803), inscribed "Mary Ann McCracken" on the title-page can be found at QUBSC. Finally, a letter from Conway Slullington to McNeill, dated May 1963, states that "Joseph McKinney still has Mary Ann McCracken's Bible." According to Slullington, Miss McKinney was her housekeeper.<sup>3</sup> Presumably this bible was inscribed with Mary Ann McCracken's name.

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<sup>1</sup> On 23 January 2018, Professor Donal McCracken (Senior Professor of History at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa), kindly scanned and sent these images to the thesis's author via email.

<sup>2</sup> John Aiken McClelland, "Madden – United Irishmen," *Irish Booklore* 1, no. 2 (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1971): 259.

<sup>3</sup> See Miscellaneous notes, transcripts and other papers connected with research for Mary Ann McCracken, Newspaper cutting, notes and correspondence relating to research on Joy and McCracken families, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/5.

### 5.5.5 Contribution to James Morgan's "Sketch of Thomas Russell"

The article "Sketch of Thomas Russell" appeared in the first volume of Charles Hamilton Teeling's *The Ulster Magazine* in January 1830.<sup>4</sup> Although authored by James Morgan, it would appear that Mary Ann contributed several hundred words, which may then have been adapted in some manner by Morgan.<sup>5</sup>

A model of manly beauty, he was one of those favoured individuals whom one cannot pass in the street without being guilty of the rudeness of staring in the face while passing, and turning round to look at the receding figure. Though more than six feet high, his majestic stature was scarcely observed owing to the exquisite symmetry of his form. Martial in his gait and demeanour, his appearance was not altogether that of a soldier. His dark and steady eye, compressed lip, and somewhat haughty bearing, were occasionally strongly indicative of the camp; but in general, the classic contour of his finely formed head, the expression of almost infantine sweetness which characterised his smile, and the benevolence that beamed in his fine countenance, seemed to mark him out as one, who was destined to be the ornament, grace and blessing of private life. His voice was deep-toned and melodious and yet his conversational powers were not of the first order, yet when roused to enthusiasm, he was sometimes more than eloquent. His manners were those of the finished gentleman, combined with that native grace, which nothing but superiority of intellect can give. There was a reserved, and somewhat haughty, stateliness in his manner, which, to those who did not know him, had, at first, the appearance of pride; but as it gave way before the warmth and benevolence of his disposition, it soon became evident that the defect, if it were one, was caused by the too, sensitive delicacy of a noble soul; and those who knew him, loved him the more for his reserve,

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<sup>4</sup> James Morgan, "Sketch of Thomas Russell," 39 – 60.

<sup>5</sup> See section 2.3.4.

and thought they saw something attractive in the very repulsiveness of his manner.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> James Morgan, "Sketch of Thomas Russell," 44-45.

## 5.6 Appendix F: Obituaries

### 5.6.1 *Belfast Morning News*, 30 July 1866

DEATH OF MISS M'CRACKEN – Another of the links which connect us with the past history of Belfast has been severed by the death of Miss Mary Ann M'Cracken, at the venerable age of ninety-seven.<sup>1</sup> The deceased lady was a member of a well-known family in this town, and in her earlier years was intimately connected with the political agitations of the memorable period which preceded the Union. Her sympathies were warmly excited by the part played by her brother, Henry Joy M'Cracken, who commanded the United Irish forces at the battle of Antrim in 1798. The late Miss M'Cracken was of a most benevolent and philanthropic nature, and for very many years of her long life took a prominent part in the educational and charitable institutions of the town.

### 5.6.2 *Weekly Northern Whig*, 4 August 1866

“The Late Miss McCracken”

Another of the links which connects us with the past history of Belfast has been severed by the death of Miss Mary Ann McCracken. The deceased lady was a member of a well-known family in this town and in her earlier years was intimately connected with the political agitation of the memorable period which preceded the Union. Her sympathies were warmly excited by the part played by her brother, the late Henry Joy McCracken and her devoted conduct at the crisis of his fate will always be remembered in the historical annals of Belfast. The late Miss McCracken was of a most benevolent and philanthropic nature and for very many years of her long life took a prominent part in the educational and philanthropic institutions of the town. She was a woman of strong feelings and an active temperament combined with considerable originality of mind and force of character. Among the ‘oldest’ inhabitants of this community she has long held a position

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<sup>1</sup> MAM was ninety-six when she died, not ninety-seven.

of general respect and esteem which her natural disposition and the events of her life fully justified.

### **5.6.3 Twentieth Report of the Committee for 1866–67 of the Belfast Ladies' Industrial National School for Girls conducted in the Lancasterian School-House, Frederick-Street, Being the First Ragged School established in Ireland, 1867**

We have to record this year the death of a beloved friend and associate in our work, Miss M'Cracken, who was connected with the school from its foundation, and whose place was never vacant at our weekly meetings, as long as she was able to attend. We know not how to speak of the worth that no words can express, and the loss, too little felt, perhaps, because it came so gradually. But though that loss may never be repaired, we trust she has left a precious legacy that will never perish from this place of her habitation, in the memory of a life so rich in all good works, and a spirit so full of love. When we would think of "those things that are pure, and lovely, and of good report," let us remember her who was so long among us, her ardent charity, her large and tender sympathy, her sweet humility and self-forgetfulness.<sup>2</sup>

### **5.6.4 *Forty-seventh Report of the Belfast Ladies' Clothing Society, 1867***

"the late Miss M'Cracken was a most energetic collector of its funds."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Twentieth Report of the Committee for 1866–67 of the Belfast Ladies' Industrial National School for Girls conducted in the Lancasterian School-House, Frederick-Street, Being the First Ragged School established in Ireland* (Belfast: Alexander Mayne, 1867), 4. Notably, "Miss M'Cleery of Donegall Pass" is listed as a committee member within the report, while Miss Ireland of College Square East is named as the President.

<sup>3</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 195.

## 5.7 Appendix G: The Last Will and Testament of Mary Ann McCracken

Mary Ann McCracken's last will and testament can be found within the will calendar entries for the District Probate Registries of Belfast.<sup>1</sup> The original document was lost when Dublin's Public Record Office of Ireland was destroyed during the Civil War of 1922. However, large volume copies, which were made by the District Registries, survived and are currently held at PRONI. These wills can be accessed digitally through PRONI's Will Calendar database.

<No. 4040  
McCracken Mary Ann - Deceased  
Effects: Sum under £100  
Died at Belfast, County Antrim, 26 July 1866  
Will: 5:50>

I[,] Mary Anne McCracken of Belfast in the county of Antrim[,] spinster[,] do make and execute this my last will and testament in manner and form following[,] that is to say[,] I leave and bequeath to Anna McCleery[,] the elder daughter of my friend William McCleery of Belfast[,] aforesaid accountant[,] the sum of one thousand pounds sterling and to Mary McCracken McCleery[,] the youngest daughter of the said William McCleery[,] the like sum of one thousand pounds sterling but so and in such manner that they[,] the said Anna McCleery and Mary McCracken McCleery[,] shall not be entitled to receive the same or any part [...] thereof respectively or any interest therefor until the decease of their father[,] the said William McCleery[,] or until they respectively attain the age of twenty one years or days of marriage respectively thereafter and I direct that their said respective legacies shall be settled in such manner that the same and all accumulations thereof shall be free from the debts[,] control or engagements of any husband or husbands with whom they may intermarry and I hereby charge the said two several legacies of one thousand pounds each upon all and singular the lands tenements and hereditaments which I shall die seized possessed of or entitled to, provided always and I do hereby declare that the said two sums of

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<sup>1</sup> "Will Calendars," PRONI, accessed 30 November 2014, [https://apps.proni.gov.uk/willscalendar\\_ie/willsSearchResultsDetails.aspx](https://apps.proni.gov.uk/willscalendar_ie/willsSearchResultsDetails.aspx).

one thousand pounds shall not be levied or raised off my said property unless their father[,] the said William McCleery[,] shall so direct in and by his will but that the interest thereof[,] shall be paid and applied to the said Anna McCleery and Mary McCracken McCleery subject as aforesaid and after their decease to their issue and as to all and singular the lands[,] tenements and hereditaments and all other property of what matter or kind so ever[,] whether freehold, leasehold or chattel which I shall be seized possessed of or entitled to for any estate or interest whatsoever either in possession[,] reversion[,] remainders or expectancy [,] charged and chargeable as aforesaid and to all my personal property and Estate "securities" securities for money[,] goods[,] chattels and effects which I shall die possessed of or in any way entitled to[,] I leave devise and bequeath the said unto the said William McCleery absolutely[,] for all my Estate[,] title and interest therein and I appoint him[,] the said William McCleery[,] sole executor of this[,] my will[,] hereby revoking all other wills by me at any time heretofore made, in witness where of I have hereunto set my hand this third day of June one thousand and eight hundred and sixty one. – Mary Ann McCracken

Signed by the said Testatrix as and for her –

Last Will and Testament in the presence of us present at the same time and who at her bequest in her presence and in the presence of each other[,] have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses[:] William Simms of Belfast[,] Rent Agent and accountant \_\_\_\_\_ Felix Simms of Belfast[,] clerk

The Last Will and Testament of Mary Ann McCracken late of Donegall Pass ^Belfast^ IRL the County of Antrim. Spinster, Deceased, was proved in common form of Law and Probate thereof granted by Her Majesty[']s court of Probate in Ireland in the District Registry at Belfast to William McCleery of Donegall Pass[,] Belfast[,] aforesaid Gentleman[,] the sole Executor named in the said Will[,] he being first sworn.

Dated the first day of September 1866

Extracted by Henry Milford  
Solicitor[,] Belfast

## 5.8 Appendix H: The McCracken Family Miniatures

### 5.8.1 Negatives and Photographs within PRONI's McNeill Papers<sup>1</sup>

Upon reading Edna Fitzhenry's *Henry Joy McCracken*, McNeill's attention was drawn to the following footnote, "'McCracken's infant daughter...afterwards became the wife of Wm. McCleery, whose granddaughter is the wife of Mr. A. Penny Francis, advocate, residing in Edinburgh, to whom I am indebted for this information.' Report on a Lecture on Henry Joy McCracken, by John J. Roland. The Irish News, 17 July 1911."<sup>2</sup> McNeill scribbled this quotation into her third notebook and in doing so, was set on the path to discovering a set of McCracken miniatures.<sup>3</sup>

On 24 April 1956, McNeill consulted the will of Helen Anna Francis neé Aitchison at Edinburgh's Register House. Helen was the daughter of Christopher and Mary McCracken Aitchison neé McCleery. Upon the deaths of her parents, she inherited what remained of the McCracken heirlooms.<sup>4</sup> An extract from her will reads, "my brother Hugh James Aitchison of Likatlong, Bloemfontein, S.A [...] will inherit my furniture etc. including the McCracken miniatures."<sup>5</sup> Therefore, upon Helen Anna Francis's death on 19 November 1941, these miniatures passed to Hugh James Aitchison. He had been a Lieutenant during the Boer War, having joined as a Scottish Volunteer and served with The Royal Scots between 1895 and 1900. He was later promoted to Sergeant in the Imperial Yeomanry. His medal rolls

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<sup>1</sup> See Envelope of illustrative material collected by Miss McNeill, Notes and papers relating to historical works published or prepared by Miss McNeill, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> Notebook 3, 5 volumes of notes for Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/3.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher and Mary McCracken Aitchison donated several of their inherited McCracken items to the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery. For more information see a letter from Christopher Aitchison to James Young, dated 11 October 1900, held within NMNI's collection (BELUM.W2012.542).

<sup>5</sup> Notebook 4, 5 volumes of notes for Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/3.

during this period list his address as Elmswood, Loanhead, Midlothian. However, he later settled in South Africa, where he died on 22 November 1944. He left behind three sons, one of whom was Hugh Christopher Aitchison, the Mr H.C. Aitchison of Bloemfontein, South Africa whom McNeill acknowledges in her biography.

After reading the will, McNeill attempted to track down the Aitchison family in South Africa by placing an appeal in some local newspapers. In a letter dated 17 June 1956 she jubilantly wrote to her sister:

I thought I'd try a letter to a Bloemfontein paper and also the Cape Times, and believe it or not within a fortnight of my posting it have I had a reply from the very man I was wanting to contact - the owner of the miniatures. There are 5 McCracken miniatures including: one of Mary Ann and one of M.A and her niece - and three unidentified ones.<sup>6</sup> Mr Aitchison said he was perfectly willing for me to have them photographed and implied that he would arrange it for me. So there will be no difficulty about [...] first hand and hitherto entirely unknown illustrations for the book.<sup>7</sup>

Aitchison sent McNeill negatives of the miniatures by post, contained in a small brown envelope which now lies within PRONI's McNeill Papers.<sup>8</sup> Filed alongside these, are black and white photographic paper copies, however, it cannot be determined whether Aitchison supplied these or if McNeill had the photographs developed from the negatives. Regardless, McNeill wrote the identity of the subject (or in some cases, speculated as to the identity) on the reverse of most of these photographs. Three of these miniatures appear within McNeill's publication, for which she acknowledges, "Mr. H. C. Aitchison of Blomfontein [sic], South Africa, who with extreme kindness had these miniatures photographed for me and gave me permission to use

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<sup>6</sup> In fact Aitchison supplied McNeill with images of nine miniatures.

<sup>7</sup> Mary McNeill to Peg, 17 June 1956, McNeill Papers, QUBSC.

<sup>8</sup> The address of the studio in which the negatives were created is written on the envelope as, "Martin Gibbs, 44 Maitland Street, Bloemfontein." See Envelope of illustrative material collected by Miss McNeill, McNeill Papers, Notes and papers relating to historical works published or prepared by Miss McNeill, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1.

them.”<sup>9</sup> Below are copies of the negatives alongside the information supplied by McNeill. Unfortunately, PRONI has been unable to provide high quality developed images (possibly due to degradation of the negatives).

#### 5.8.1.1 The Aitchison Negatives



**Fig. 5.1. Ann McCracken miniature, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

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<sup>9</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 12. The miniatures featured within the publication were those of Captain John and Ann McCracken (see McNeill, *Life*, 38) and of MAM and Maria McCracken (see McNeill, *Life*, 112).



**Fig. 5.2. Ann McCracken miniature reverse, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

Ann McCracken's miniature portrait lies within a silver brooch pin locket. A glass case on the reverse reveals an assortment of human hair within. Along the outer edge runs a plait made up of two different hair colours. This is separated from a looser plait of dark hair by an oval silver band. A piece of paper is stuck across the centre of the case and reads, "Mrs John McCracken (Ann Joy)." This locket is in keeping with Victorian sentimental and mourning jewellery, whereby such "hair mementoes" were "taken and given as the most personal tokens of unreserved attachment and love between family members and spouses."<sup>10</sup> The inner plait was presumably that of Ann McCracken's, while the outer plait may have been made from her hair and that of the owner's (or mourner's). Alternatively, the outer plait may be composed of the hair of two others such as Mary Ann and her sister Margaret. The portrait was reproduced with McNeill's biography.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 46.

<sup>11</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 38.

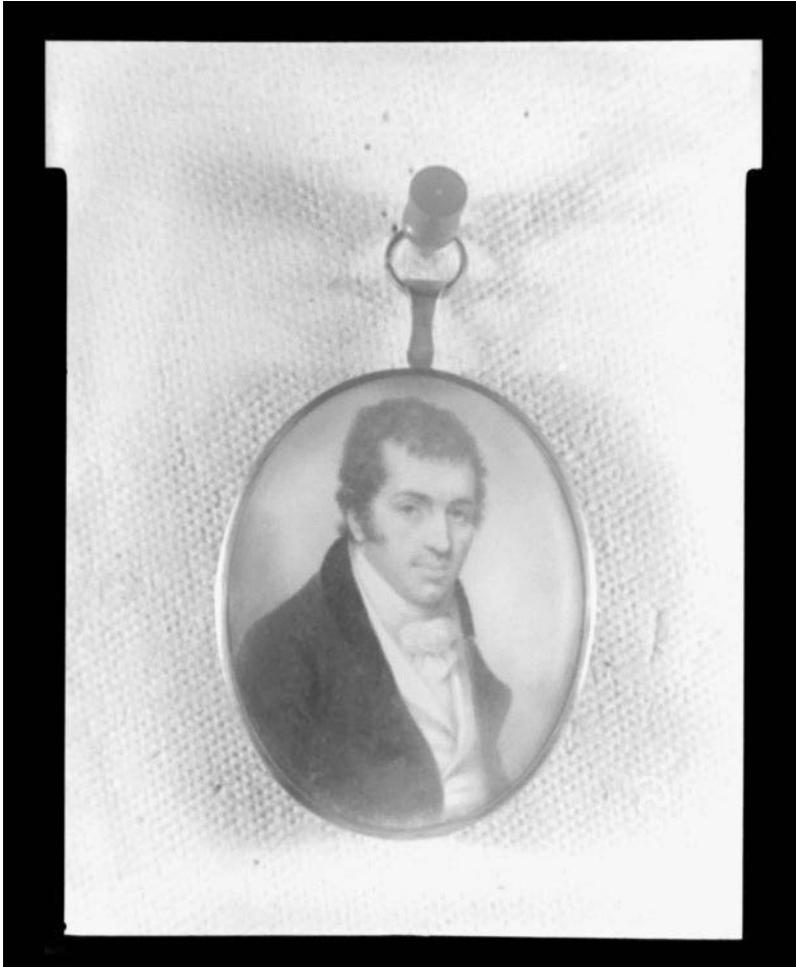


**Fig. 5.3. Captain John McCracken miniature,  
McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

Captain John McCracken's miniature portrait lies within a silver brooch pin locket. Unfortunately, Aitchison did not supply a photograph of the reverse. This image was reproduced with McNeill's biography.<sup>12</sup>

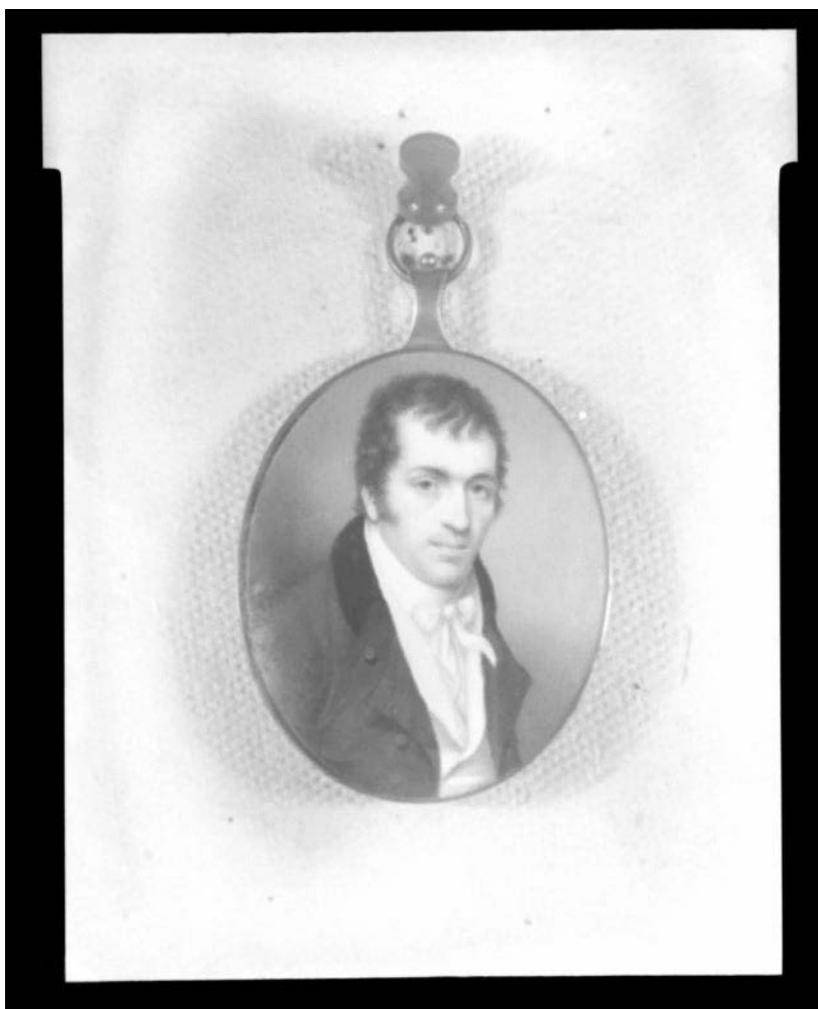
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<sup>12</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 38.



**Fig. 5.4. Francis McCracken miniature, McNeill Papers,  
PRONI D3732/2/1**

Francis McCracken's miniature portrait lies within a silver rimmed locket. Unfortunately, Aitchison did not supply a negative of the reverse. McNeill has written on the reverse of the photograph of this image, "Francis McCracken?"



**Fig. 5.5. John McCracken Junior miniature, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

John McCracken Junior's miniature portrait lies within a silver rimmed locket. Unfortunately, Aitchison did not supply a negative of the reverse. McNeill has written on the reverse of the photograph of this image, "? Francis McCracken?" This portrait is in fact of John McCracken Junior, as will be revealed by further findings.



**Fig. 5.6. James McCleery miniature, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

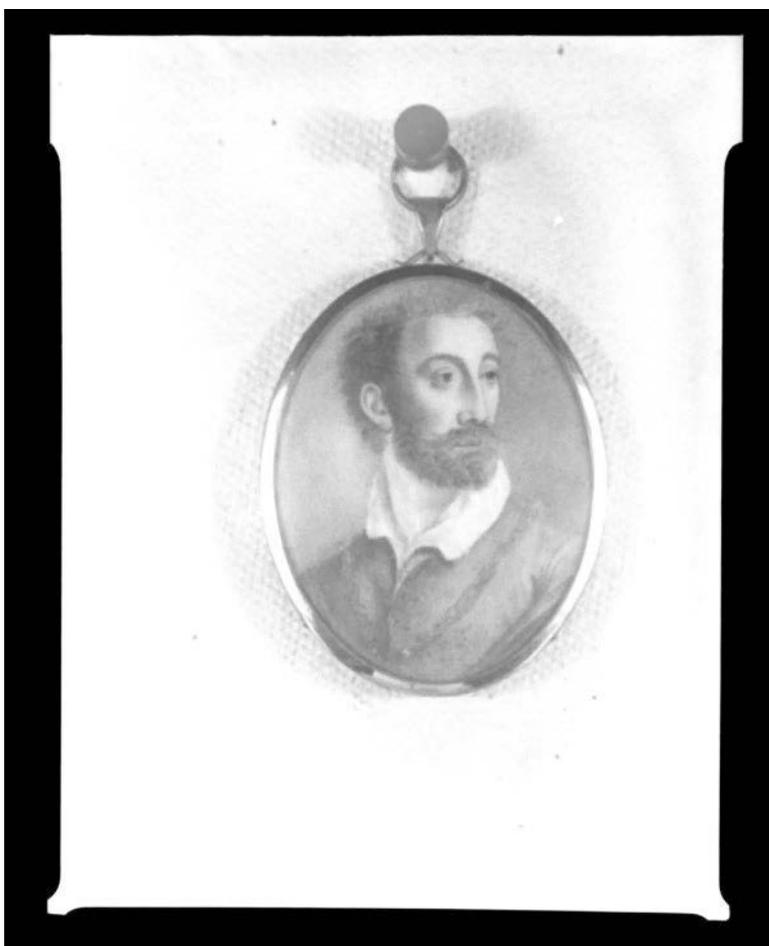


**Fig. 5.7. James McCleery miniature reverse, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

Like the miniature portraits of John and Ann McCracken, James McCleery's miniature portrait also lies within a silver brooch pin locket. On the reverse, the monogram "JMCC" is set at the centre of the glass case. A piece of paper stuck beneath the initials reads, "James McCleery 1776–1852 Grandfather to M.McC.Cl."<sup>13</sup> Through the glass case can be seen a plait of two different hair colours. On the reverse of the photograph of this image, McNeill has written, "James McCleery 1776–1856 Grandfather to Mary McCracken McCleery."

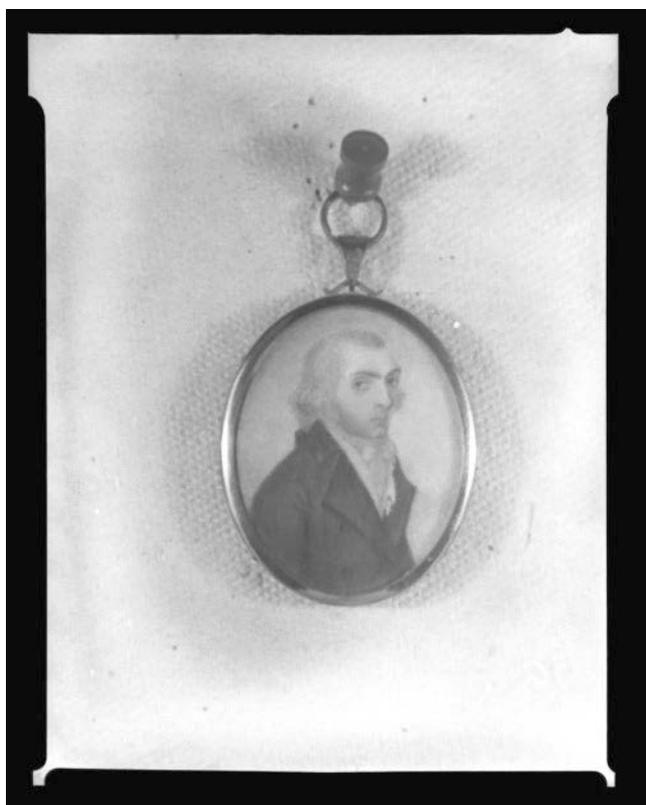
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<sup>13</sup> Mary McCracken McCleery.



**Fig. 5.8. Unknown McCracken miniature 1, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

This miniature portrait of an unknown sitter lies within a silver rimmed locket. Unfortunately, Aitchison did not supply a negative of the reverse. McNeill has written on the underside of the photograph of this image, "~~Henry Joy~~ possibly John McCracken."



**Fig. 5.9. Unknown McCracken miniature 2,  
McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

This miniature portrait of a second unknown sitter lies within a silver rimmed locket. McNeill has written on the reverse of the photograph of this image, “Røy Henry Joy? McCracken.” By comparing this image to the engraving of Henry Joy McCracken within Madden’s *United Irishmen*, Second Series, vol. 2, which was based upon his miniature, it is clear that Henry Joy McCracken was not the subject of this painting. It is possible that McNeill considered the possibility of the sitter being Mary Ann’s uncle Henry Joy (c.1720–20 January 1789) or Henry Joy’s son, Counsellor Henry Joy (7 January 1766–6 June 1838). From examining a miniature of Robert Joy’s son, Henry Joy Junior (16 October 1754–15 April 1835), it can be concluded that he was not the sitter in this instance.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See the miniature “Henry Joy, Junior (1754–1835)” by Charles Robertson in Michael Wynne, “The McNeill Bequest,” *Irish Arts Review* 3, no. 4 (1986): 38.



**Fig. 5.10. Unknown McCracken miniature 3, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

A miniature portrait of a third unknown sitter lies within a silver rimmed locket. McNeill has written on the reverse of the photograph of this image, "Mary Anne?" McNeill must not have believed this image to be of Mary Ann McCracken as she did not include it within the biography. It is possible that the sitter may have been one of the following women; Margaret McCracken, Anna McCleery or her sister Mary McCracken McCleery.



**Fig. 5.11. Mary Ann and Maria McCracken miniature, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1**

This miniature stands out from the others as it does not appear to be held within a locket or a brooch, but lies within a dark frame with a lighter inner trim. In a letter to her sister dated 30 December 1956, McNeill reports on the arrival of Aitchison's negatives, exclaiming, "I wish you could see Mary Ann aged 30 with little Regency curls across her forehead and a dog's head resting on her arm, and beside her Harry's little daughter."<sup>15</sup> McNeill appeared quite confident of the

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<sup>15</sup> Mary McNeill to Peg, 30 December 1956, McNeill Papers, QUBSC.

sitters' identities and went on to reproduce the image within the biography, labelling it as, "Mary Ann McCracken and her niece Maria (probably about 1801)."<sup>16</sup> This was presumably based upon information provided by Aitchison. Indeed, such details may be found on the reverse of this miniature, unfortunately however, Aitchison did not provide McNeill with an image of its underside.

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<sup>16</sup> McNeill, *Life*, 112.

### 5.8.1.2 The Bleakley photographs

Within the same folder of McNeill Papers lies a small envelope containing two photographs of miniatures.<sup>1</sup> These are of Captain John and Ann McCracken, who, judging from their appearance, sat for the paintings some years prior to their sitting for the ones owned by Aitchison. The originals of these particular miniatures were in the possession of Elizabeth Rose Bleakley when the photographs were taken. Mrs Bleakley was the great granddaughter of William McCracken.

Photo-engravings of these miniatures can also be found within McCleery's, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," which were then, "in possession of the Misses M'Cracken, grand-nieces of Mary Ann McCracken."<sup>2</sup> These ladies were Maria Henrietta and Rose Ann McCracken, grandchildren of William McCracken. Mrs Bleakley, who was their niece, inherited the miniatures upon their deaths.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Envelope of illustrative material collected by Miss McNeill, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/2/1.

<sup>2</sup> McCleery, "Life of Mary Ann McCracken," 176.

<sup>3</sup> See "Information from Mrs Bleakley Oct 1956," Correspondence of M.A. McNeill about genealogical enquiries, McNeill Papers, PRONI D3732/3/11.



**Fig. 5.12. Captain John McCracken  
miniature 2, McNeill Papers,  
PRONI D3732/2/1**

On the reverse of the photograph of this miniature McNeill has written, "Capt. John McCracken photo: of miniature in the possession of Mrs Bleakley (gt.g.dau of Wm. McCracken) 111.Ballygomartin Rd. Belfast."



**Fig. 5.13. Ann McCracken  
miniature 2, McNeill Papers,  
PRONI D3732/2/1**

On the reverse of the photograph of this miniature McNeill has written, "Mrs John McCracken (née Ann Joy) photo: of miniature in the possession of Mrs Bleakley. (gtg.dau of Wm. McCracken) 111 Ballygomartin Rd. Belfast."

## 5.8.2 Negatives within NMNI's Bigger Collection

In a letter to her sister dated 30 December 1956, McNeill reports on the arrival of Aitchison's negatives. She exclaims, "It's absolutely priceless and nobody here knows anything about them."<sup>1</sup> Unbeknownst to McNeill, someone in Belfast had known about the miniatures and had gone to the trouble of making copies of them (presumably before they left Belfast with the Aitchisons), some four or five decades previous. Six glass plate negatives of photographs which captured seven of the McCracken miniature portraits, now reside within NMNI's Bigger Collection. Local historian Francis Joseph Bigger annotated the negatives in July 1908. These images are of a much higher quality than those provided by Aitchison. Below are copies of these negatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary McNeill to Peg, 30 December 1956, McNeill Papers, QUBSC.



**Fig. 5.14. James McCleery, "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums Northern Ireland**

On NMNI's website, this item is described as a "black and white photograph of miniature painting of male member of the McCracken family."<sup>2</sup> Evidently it is the same miniature of James McCleery as displayed above.

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<sup>2</sup> "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18140>.



**Fig. 5.15. Francis McCracken, “Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection, National Museums Northern Ireland**

On NMNI’s website, this item is described as a “black and white photograph of miniature painting of Francis McCracken family [sic].”<sup>3</sup> The identity of the sitter is based upon Bigger’s annotation, “Francis M’Cracken.” Evidently it the same miniature of Francis McCracken as displayed above but in this instance, the portrait has been removed from its locket. A further annotation by Bigger states, “return negative to R. Welch” suggesting that at least this particular negative was borrowed from Irish photographer Robert John Welch.

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<sup>3</sup> “Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18141>.



**Fig. 5.16 John McCracken Junior,  
“Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection,  
National Museums Northern Ireland**

On NMNI’s website, this item is described as a “black and white photograph of miniature painting of John McCracken [...] note: Francis McCracken’s copy almost similar.”<sup>4</sup> The identity of the sitter is based upon Bigger’s annotation, “John M’Cracken.” Upon examining the Aitchison negatives, McNeill was unable to distinguish between this miniature and that of Francis McCracken, labelling both “Francis McCracken?” Indeed, if the miniatures are accurate, the brothers were quite difficult to tell apart.

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<sup>4</sup> “Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18142>.



**Fig. 5.17. Ann McCracken, "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums Northern Ireland**

On NMNI's website, this item is described as a "black and white photograph of miniature painting of female member of McCracken family."<sup>5</sup> The identity of the sitter is provided by the Aitchison negative of this miniature's reverse, which reveals a note within the locket's case reading, "Mrs John McCracken (Ann Joy)."

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<sup>5</sup> "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18143>.



**Fig. 5.18. Mary Ann and Maria McCracken,  
“Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection,  
National Museums Northern Ireland**

Although Bigger’s annotations are cropped out of this image on NMNI’s website, the item is described as a “black and white photograph of painting of Mary McCracken and child; annotated F. J. Bigger 08,”<sup>6</sup> suggesting the identification accompanied the negative. Evidently it is the same miniature of Mary Ann and her niece, Maria as displayed above.

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<sup>6</sup> “Photographic negative,” Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belumy18144>.



**Fig. 5.19. Two unknown McCrackens, "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums Northern Ireland**

On NMNI's website, this item is described as a "black and white photograph of two miniature paintings of male members of the McCracken family."<sup>7</sup> Evidently, the portrait on the left is the same miniature as found in Figure 5i above. However, in this instance, the portrait has been removed from its locket. The miniature on the right was not provided by Aitchison. Furthermore, both sitters remain unidentified.

Unfortunately, Hugh Christopher Aitchison died on 15th March 1964. His wife Helen Audrey Aitchison (née Dutton) continued to live at Likatlong Farm with their infant daughter Jane Margaret Aitchison, remarrying Hugh's brother George Kemp Aitchison on 5th October 1964. According to Helen and George's will, Jane Margaret Aitchison

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<sup>7</sup> "Photographic negative," Bigger Collection, National Museums NI, accessed 27 October 2017, <https://www.nmni.com/collections/history/photographs/bigger-collection/belummy18145>.

was the sole heiress of their entire estates.<sup>8</sup> The property appears to have been sold shortly after George's death on 2nd November 1980 and presumably the miniatures passed into Jane Margaret's hands. However, her whereabouts remain undetermined.

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<sup>8</sup> "South Africa, Orange Free State, Estate Files, 1951-2006," Master of the Free State High Court, Bloemfontein, Family Search, accessed 29 March 2021, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-LB3H-XD?i=154&wc=Q87D-X1Z%3A1058037301%2C1058105001+%3A+21+May+2014&cc=1407787>.

## 5.9 Appendix I: The History of Nicholas Crowley's *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing*

Crowley's *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* exists in several forms and media. In 2013, what was described as a "preliminary pencil study" appeared on the UK eBay website, fetching ninety-eight pounds sterling.



**Fig. 5.20. *Cup Tossing* preliminary pencil study attributed to Nicholas Joseph Crowley**

The seller, Belvoir Fine Art, described the piece as:

A lovely free hand sketch of a gypsy fortune teller. It appears signed lower left in initials "NJC" and could well be a preparatory drawing in pencil towards his masterpiece that was displayed at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1844, which ultimately sold at Sotheby's in 1998 for £13,800 including commission. This drawing is certainly old enough and is superbly executed. Some paper browning and a little

foxing are evident. A somewhat uneven paper surface can be seen and the later mount and frame are unglazed.<sup>1</sup>



**Fig. 5.21. *Cup Tossing* Preliminary oil painting**

A preliminary oil painting of the image (above), attributed to Crowley and also signed with his initials, sold at Adam's Auctioneers of Dublin in 2004 for three thousand euros.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Gypsy Fortune Teller," eBay UK, accessed 12 September 2013, <http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/GYPSY-FORTUNE-TELLER-Important-Drawing-Attributed-to-Nicholas-Joseph-Crowley-1819-1857-Fortune-telling-by-cup-tossing-Oil-on-board-22-x-28-5cm-Signed-with-initials-2089?Itemid=2047675.12557>.

<sup>2</sup> "Lot 16," Adam's Irish Art Sale, 31 March 2004, accessed 11 September 2013, <http://www.adams.ie/2089/Attributed-to-Nicholas-Joseph-Crowley-RHA-1819-1857-Fortune-telling-by-cup-tossing-Oil-on-board-22-x-28-5cm-Signed-with-initials-2089?Itemid=>.



**Fig. 5.22. *Cup Tossing* oil painting (1842)**

The finished oil painting (above) was purchased in 1842 by Dublin's Royal Irish Art Union (1839–1859), using its combined membership fees.<sup>3</sup> In 1844, it was balloted off to the union members and won by Mrs Grubb of Tipperary.



**Fig. 5.23. *Cleas an cópáin* engraving by Charles William Sharpe (1842)**

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<sup>3</sup> *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* (1842) by Nicholas Joseph Crowley. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's Picture Library.

The image was also engraved in 1842 for members of the Union by Charles William Sharpe<sup>4</sup> under the title, *Cleas an íopáin* (see above).<sup>5</sup> Several of these etchings survive, including one sold at Adam's Auction in 2006 for somewhere between two and three hundred euros. Further copies can be found at the Argory National Trust property in County Armagh, the British Museum and within the private collection of Mr Tom Cunningham of Belfast. It is Sharpe's engraving which is reproduced within Concannon's *Women of 'ninety eight*, alongside the claim that Mary Ann McCracken sat for the part of the old Gipsy woman.<sup>6</sup> Two further engravings of Crowley's painting were produced for American publications during the 1840s.



**Fig. 5.24. *Cup-Tossing* engraving by Archibald L. Dick (1844)**

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<sup>4</sup> The Birmingham engraver who lived from 1818 to 1899.

<sup>5</sup> "An old fortune-teller is reading a young woman's fortune by looking at tea leaves at the bottom of a cup. Engraving by C.W. Sharpe after Crowley, 1842." Wellcome Collection, accessed 19 October 2013, <https://iiif.wellcomecollection.org/image/V0025926/full/full/0/default.jpg>.

<sup>6</sup> Concannon, *Women of 'ninety-eight*, 224–225. The image is mis-titled, "The Cup Tossers."

A.L. Dick engraved “Cup Tossing” for the October 1844 issue of *The Ladies’ Companion* (see above).<sup>7</sup> Here, the image is accompanied by a brief description of the painting and of the superstition of reading tea leaves. It is then followed by a long “sketch [which] is furnished to us by the pen of Mrs. S. C. Hall,” the Irish novelist, whose prose had previously been published in the magazine.<sup>8</sup>



**Fig. 5.25. *Cup-Tossing* engraving by J. Sartain (1846)**

A final engraving by J. Sartain appears as a plate within the 1846 gift book, *The Mayflower*, in which Mrs S.C. Hall’s story “Cup Tossing” is reproduced (see above).<sup>9</sup> The Preface to this particular volume suggests that the story was lifted from the 1844 *Ladies Companion* as it admits that some of the materials within the book were not original, rather, “the editor has selected from the most popular periodicals and other sources, little known to the American public; but which he opines will prove more acceptable than a boasted array of entirely original articles, of only mediocre composition.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Cup-Tossing,” *The Ladies’ Companion and Literary Expositor* New Series vol. 1, Old Series vol. 20 (New York: W. Snowden, 1844): 286–287.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Hamilton, ed., *The Mayflower* (Boston: Saxon & Kelt, 1846), 161.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, iii–iv.

Having captured the attention of English potter Edward Walley, the scene was reproduced in pale green upon a stoneware jug in May 1849 and entitled "Hecate," after the ancient Greek deity of witchcraft, magic and ghosts. In 2009, it was bequeathed to the British Museum.<sup>11</sup> A strikingly similar design, entitled "Cup-Tosser," can be found within New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>12</sup> This green pitcher is attributed to the American ceramic manufacturer, Edwin Bennett, of Baltimore and is believed to have been modelled on Walley's design.<sup>13</sup> It must be assumed that when Mary Ann modelled for the part of the gypsy, she would have had no idea that her likeness would reach so wide an audience.

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<sup>11</sup> "Edward Walley's 'Hecate'," Britain, Europe and Prehistory Collection, British Museum, accessed 20 March 2021, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_2009-8049-40](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_2009-8049-40).

<sup>12</sup> "Edwin Bennett, 'Cup-Tosser'," The American Wing Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 20 March 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/20752>.

<sup>13</sup> Susan H. Myers, "Edwin Bennett: An English Potter in Baltimore," *Ars Ceramica* 4 (New York: Wedgwood Society of New York, 1987), 31-35.

## 5.10 Appendix J: Elizabeth O’Kane’s Preliminary Pencil Sketches

Two preliminary pencil sketches which won Elizabeth O’Kane the commission to sculpt the bust of Mary Ann McCracken, were kindly donated to the author by a former member of Belfast City Council’s Good Relations Unit (see below). In a press interview O’Kane commented, “I think using the bonnet and shawl got me the commission.”<sup>1</sup> I have since donated the original copies to the Belfast Charitable Society at Clifton House.

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<sup>1</sup> “Mary Ann is Finally Given Recognition,” *North Belfast News*, 15 January 2005, 21.



**Fig. 5.26. Preliminary sketch of bust anterior**



**Fig. 5.27. Preliminary sketch of bust in profile**

## 5.11 Appendix K: Elizabeth O’Kane’s Clay Bust



**Fig. 5.28. Clay Bust**

The first step in creating the bust involved O’Kane modelling the sculpture in clay. This was then hollowed out and fired (see above). With Belfast City Hall’s permission, O’Kane donated the completed terracotta bust to Clifton House, where it sits in the entrance foyer.

## 5.12 Appendix L: The Last Will and Testament of William McCleery

William McCleery's last will and testament can be found within the will calendar entries for the District Probate Registries of Belfast.<sup>1</sup> As with Mary Ann McCracken's last will and testament, the original document was lost when the Public Record Office of Ireland was destroyed during the Civil War of 1922. However, large volume copies, made by the District Registries, survived and are currently held at PRONI. These wills can be accessed digitally through PRONI's Will Calendar database.

<No. 8963 McCleery  
William  
Sworn under  
£1500  
Died at  
University Street  
Belfast in the  
County of Antrim  
1st of September  
1874  
Will 12 Folios>

I[,] William McCleery now residing at Bankmore near Belfast in the County of Antrim[,] Ireland and being in good health[,] both of body and mind[,] do hereby make and execute the following as my last will and testament[,] revoking all other wills which may have been heretofore made and executed by me. To wit I give and bequeath all and singular every description, of property real and personal of which I may die possessed to Christopher Aitchison Bookseller and Stationer of the said town of Belfast and my elder daughter Anna McCleery Spinster of Bankmore aforesaid[,] their heirs and assigns upon trust of my four children viz. my daughters Anna McCleery aforesaid[,] Mary McCracken McCleery and my sons James McCleery[,] who has assumed the additional name of James Douglas McCleery and

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<sup>1</sup> "Will Calendars," PRONI, accessed 14 December 2016, [https://apps.proni.gov.uk/willscalendar\\_ie/WillsSearch.aspx](https://apps.proni.gov.uk/willscalendar_ie/WillsSearch.aspx).

William McCleery in equal shares subject to the following conditions. It is my will and wish that my landed property shall not be disposed of except in so far and to such extent as may be necessary and advisable in order to clear off the incumbrances if any which may at the time of my decease be chargeable upon the same and that the clear proportionate profits arising out of or which may hereafter arise out of the properties[,] be paid to my said several children annually[,] semi annually or quarterly as the same may be obtainable and obtained and that these bequests of mine to my children shall not be subject[,] in the case of my daughters[,] to any control whatsoever on the part of any husband or his lands to whom either of them may at any time after the date of these present be married[,] nor to any debts contracted or to be contracted either by themselves or others[.] Nor in the case of my sons shall these herein contained bequests be subject to any debts which they have contracted or may hereafter contract. And in the cases of both daughters and sons I hereby will that neither of them shall have the power of in anyway disposing of their proportion of the said demised interest in the said property beyond the clear annual value thereof for one single year or of charging their several proportions of said property with any incumbrance but that the principal thereof shall descend, in equal proportions to the legal descendants of each of my said children and in the event of any of my said children dying without leaving any legal descendant or descendants then and in such case the proportion bequeathed to him[,] her or them under this will shall be divided as the same may be obtained in equal shares betwixt my surviving children and descend as the original bequest to each is intended to do and whereas under the will of my late father[,] my brother James McCleery - now or lately residing at Louisville Kentucky in the united states of America[,] became entitled to one half of the landed property known as the said Bankmore property and it was recommended by my legal adviser that the fee of said property should be taken out in my individual name, which was accordingly done[.] I wish it to be thus placed upon record that it never was my intention by taking such a step to attempt to appropriate for the benefit of myself or family to the prejudice of my said brother and proportion of such property other or beyond what descended to me under the said will of my said late father[,] therefore if it be necessary for the preservation of the just rights of my said brother to the bequest made to him under our father[']s will that I should bequeath to him[,] my said brother[,] the interest to which he is

entitled in said property[,] then and in such case be it known that I hereby give and bequeath to the said James McCleery or to his legal descendants in equal proportions the one half of the profits[,] rents or emdument which may arise out of the said lands of Bankmore subject to the reservations hereinbefore mentioned. And whereas my wife Maria McCleery is I believe sufficiently provided for on foot of a certain bond drawn in her favour by the late Francis McCracken[,] deceased[,] chargeable upon certain properties in Shankill in the said Town of Belfast but should it so happen that from any unforeseen occurrence such provision may be to any considerable extent or totally lost to her[,] then and in such case I hereby will and bequeath to my said wife a share and interest in my said property to the extent and value of one fifth of the clear annual income which arises or may hereafter arise thereout to be enjoyed by her for the term of her natural life and at her decease the same to revert to my above named children or the survivors of them in equal proportions.<sup>2</sup> And I hereby nominate and appoint the said Christopher Aitchison and the said Anna McCleery the executors and executrix of this my last will and testament with powers to carry same into effect and execution according to my intentions. In Witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name this twentieth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty one[.] The words “my daughters” being first interlined betwixt the eleventh and twelfth lines of the first page and the word “Reynolds” struck out in the fifteenth line of same page and the word “Douglas” interlined above in stead thereof.

William McCleery.

Signed[,] published and declared by the said Testator William McCleery as and for his last will and testament in presence of us both present at the same time in presence of said testator and of each other who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses – William Simms of Belfast[,] Rent Agent and Accountant. Robert Simms of Belfast[,] Clerk.

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<sup>2</sup> See “Report of the Committee of Transfers for 9<sup>th</sup> Decem<sup>r</sup> 1842” which states, “The Committee of Transfers reported that there was no legal objection to the transfer of M<sup>r</sup> Francis M<sup>c</sup>Cracken’s share to his adopted niece Maria M<sup>c</sup>Cracken.” Memorandum of Chairman of the Committee of Transfer, RBAI correspondence, Royal Belfast Academical Institute, School Records, PRONI SCH/524/7B/36/43.

The Last will and Testament of William McCleery late of 55 University Street Belfast in the County of Antrim[,] Gentleman deceased was proved in common form of law and probate thereof granted to Christopher Aitchison, Stationer and Anna McCleery[,] Spinster[,] both of Belfast aforesaid the executors named in said will[,] they being first sworn.

Extracted By Wm E. Armstrong. Dated 5 October 1874

Solicitor Belfast

## 5.13 Appendix M: Poems

### 5.13.1 Anon, "Harry's Sword" (1858)<sup>1</sup>

1. 'Tis the sword of my Harry —its own native hue—
2. The emerald handle—and steel's glossy blue:
3. I know the curv'd sweep of the well-temper'd blade,
4. With shamrock of gold and sweet myrtle inlaid.
5. How oft has it shone on the mountains afar,
6. When it marshall'd the sons of green Erin for war —
7. The avenger of wrong and the scourge of the foe!
8. But the hand that could wield it, alas! is laid low.
  
9. How long has it slumber'd secure in the sheath!
10. And years have roll'd on since it flash'd on the heath;
11. From its hilt the green shamrocks that once bloom'd so gay,
12. Fair emblems of freedom, have all died away.
13. The tooth of the fell Time has been trying the blade,
14. And a spot of dark rust marks the pressure it made;
15. How it drinks up my tears, as it shar'd in my woe—
16. For the hand that could wield it, alas! is laid low.
  
17. Oh! would that these tears might its splendour restore!
18. But ne'er can it shine as it oft shone before,
19. When, like heaven's fires, it the conflict began,
20. And Harry and Victory blaz'd in the van:
21. Then rout and dismay urg'd the proud Saxon horde,
22. And death mark'd each whirl of the conquering sword—
23. But no more shall it hurl such despair on the foe,
24. Since the hand that could wield it, alas! is laid low.

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<sup>1</sup> Lover, *Poems of Ireland*, 295–96.

**5.13.2 Thomas Charles Stewart Corry's "The Battle of Antrim: A Reminiscence of 1798: Part II" (1879)<sup>1</sup>**

1. The roseate summer morn bursts through the sable folds of night,
2. And darkness dies as rolls along the golden tide of light.
3. Alone upon the mountain top, the shaggy heath his bed,
4. A fugitive, without a friend, a price upon his head;
5. M'Cracken starts from fevered sleep, and from a hideous dream,
6. To find that hope has disappeared, like bubbles down a stream;
7. For hark! what sound from out the vale breaks on the outlaw's ear?
8. Men in pursuit, in glitt'ring steel, ascend and now draw near!
9. The hounds of hell are on his track! Alas! he's in their grasp:
10. His manly limbs they seize, and bind with thong and iron clasp.
11. They drag him from his mountain keep down to the plain below;
12. With ribald jest they scoff, and mock their proud but hapless foe,
13. Till he, who feared not in the field the cannon's deadly roll,
14. With hectic flush feels their rude laugh pierce through his inmost  
soul –
15. As when the archer's bended bow propels the fatal dart,
16. And the winged lightning finds its goal deep in its victim's heart.
17. They bear him to his native town, 'tis there that he must die.
18. For love of home and fatherland, upon the gallows high.
19. Short is the time by man decreed, few are the moments give
20. To free his mind from earthly cares and fix his thoughts on  
Heaven;
21. But, tho' his cell is dark and drear a comforter is there,
22. Ah! what a mission, what a place, for one so pure and fair!
23. The Sister he so fondly prized has come his soul to cheer
24. In Harry's arms she feels secure – what thought has she of fear?
25. Quickly the solemn moments fly, the fatal hour has come,
26. A sad procession moves along with dirge and muffled drum,
27. And in the midst, with shackled limbs, but aspect firm and proud,
28. McCracken stately walks along, bless'd by the weeping crowd -
29. While on his arm, with upturned eyes and cheeks of pallid hue,
30. There clings that angel comforter, his Sister kind and true.
31. And now the gallows-tree is seen, high on the market tower,
32. Whence his curbed spirit soon shall soar far from his captor's  
power;

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<sup>1</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 22–24.

33. M'Cracken dashes from his eyes the first unbidden tear,  
34. And turning round, in broken tones, says, "Sister, Sister dear,  
35. Proceed no further! for the sight would break your bursting heart -  
36. One kiss, my darling, 'tis our last! for ever we must part:  
37. I wish (as I have lived) to die undaunted, without dread,  
38. And would not that my foes could boast a single tear I've shed."  
39. One fond embrace - she strives to speak - a deep despairing groan-  
40. She halts - the crowd moves quickly on, and leaves her there alone.  
41. At length the mournful cortege stops - the hangman, rope in hand,  
42. Masked and prepared his work to do, in silence takes his stand.  
43. Up the steep path of death, unawed, M'Cracken now ascends!  
44. The nose is fixed - in fervent pray'r a moment then he spends;  
45. A hurried glance o'er the vast sea of upturned eyes around-  
46. A pause! his lips are seen to move, but utter ne'er a sound!  
47. He leaps! a scream bursts from the crowd as if from one huge  
breast-  
48. 'Tis o'er - and freed from sorrow's pangs, M'Cracken's soul finds  
rest!

### 5.13.3 Thomas Charles Stewart Corry's "Ode to the Memory of Mary McCracken" (1879)<sup>1</sup>

1. I knew her worth, and joy'd to call her friend,
2. For she indeed to all was good and kind,
3. And when t'was known that sickness or distress
4. Had crossed the threshold of the lonely poor,
5. She, like an angel, sped on mercy's wings
6. To whisper words of comfort, peace, and hope.
7. Then, if remorseless want had swept away
8. The "Household Gods" of bright and happy days,
9. Her hand was ready, and she freely gave
10. Help to the friendless in their hour of need.
11. Through lanes and alleys, which the sun ne'er blest,
12. Her presence shed a holy, hallow'd light;
13. Brighter, perchance, because in years gone by
14. Of grief's dark cup she'd drained the bitter dregs.
15. In sorrow's mould her youthful days were cast,
16. So, well she knew what 'twas to mourn and weep -
17. Full fifty years had left their furrowed tracks,
18. And dimmed the brilliant lustre of her eye,
19. Since, with a bursting heart and throbbing brain,
20. She heard the fatal mandate, "He must die!"
21. And, midst the awed, but sympathising crowd,
22. Beheld her dearest brother led to death.
23. What tongue can tell? what words or thoughts pourtray
24. The agony which seared her inmost soul,
25. As to her Harry's arm she hopeless clung,
26. A partner in his last sad walk on earth?
27. And when 'twas o'er, tho' friends shrank back in fear,
28. She followed to his grave the martyred dead,
29. And, horror-stricken, heard - with hollow sound -
30. The first clods fall upon his coffin lid;
31. Then reason fled and consciousness grew dim -
32. Dark as the sepulchre of him she loved.

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<sup>1</sup> Corry, *Irish Lyrics, Songs & Poems*, 113–14. Corry identifies his subject as "The devoted sister of Henry Joy McCracken, who commanded the United Irishmen at the Battle of Antrim, 7th June, 1798."

\* \* \* \* \*

33. Now she is gone, and severed is the chain  
34. Which linked our generation to the past;  
35. The stricken and oppressed no more shall hear  
36. A voice that soothed so oft the bed of woe;  
37. But though 'tis hushed, a record still survives,  
38. Shrined in the annals of a Nation's wrongs;  
39. Where Erin's daughters yet unborn, may trace  
40. A type of all in woman, good and great.

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## **Interview**

Skype interview with John McIllduff, 19 April 2017.

## Svensk sammanfattning

Denna avhandling utgör den första vetenskapliga utgåvan av den Belfast-baserade humanitära aktivisten Mary Ann McCrackens (1770–1866) korrespondens, fullständigt annoterad, med tillhörande essäer och kommentarer. Genom att lägga fram en fullständig resurs för Mary Ann McCracken, baserad på ursprungligt källmaterial, syftar avhandlingen till att undanröja behovet av att hänvisa till brev (och partiella brev) i andra hand via tidigare biografier (framför allt Mary McNeills verk från 1960, som de flesta moderna citaten ur McCrackens brev fortfarande bygger på). Denna studie sammanställer och sekvenserar alla McCrackens brev för första gången och syftar därigenom till att ge en bredare inblick i hennes senare liv och åsikter, och samtidigt belysa det irländska samhället på 1700- och 1800-talet, i synnerhet miljön i Belfast som snabbt förändrades.

Genom att komplettera breven med kontextuella, biografiska och tekniska kommentarer vill avhandlingen också bidra till irländsk livsskrivning, kvinnohistoria och det växande området brevforskning. En annan viktig dimension i avhandlingen är att använda detta primära material för att föra en kritisk dialog med de olika versionerna av Mary Ann McCracken som ingår i folkhistorien, det kulturella minnet och litteraturen. I egenskap av kulturikon har McCracken blivit föremål för appropriering av många (ibland konkurrerande) rörelser inom Nordirland, och det är därför också ytterst viktigt att garantera att hon blir hörd med egna ord. Avhandlingen undersöker dessutom de materiella och visuella spåren av McCrackens liv och minne, inklusive porträttering, skulpturer och muralmålningar.

Med hänsyn till sin kamp för politisk, minnemässig och humanitär rättvisa har McCracken tilldelats olika epitet, såsom abolitionist och proto-feminist, och även förknippats med obesvarad kärlek (det sistnämnda till följd av populära historier om hennes relation till Thomas Russell, medlem i United Irishmen). I avhandlingen undersöks dessa olika ikoniska representationer med speciellt fokus på deras ursprung, begränsningar och autenticitet, liksom även McCrackens mindre kända roll som historieskrivare för United Irishmen. McCracken uppträder också som karaktär i en mängd olika litterära genrer, för det mesta i samband med sin bror Henry Joy och det irländska upproret 1798. I

avhandlingen jämförs och kontrasteras dessa fiktiva representationer med information från ursprungligt källmaterial.

För att underlätta en informerad läsning av McCrackens brev presenteras först en serie detaljerade analyser av komposition och form. Häri framhävs materiella drag som ofta förbisetts, vilket belyser McCrackens brevskrivningspraktik och det irländska postväsendet, liksom även andra sätt att förmedla brev och riskerna med dessa. Skingringen av McCrackens en gång så omfattande brevsamling följs upp för att ge en övergripande historik över korrespondensen.

Avhandlingen omfattar 181 transkriberade och annoterade brev i kronologisk ordning samt tretton bilagor, av vilka många är starkt knutna till delar av huvudtexten och avhandlingen därför genomgående refererar till dessa. Bilagorna innehåller material såsom bifogade dokument (dvs. andra brev och tidningsurklipp), en transkriberad intervju, skrifter som inte är brev och nekrologer.

Förhoppningen är att dessa nya resultat ska erbjuda en ny och fullständig resurs för historiker, historiska lingvister, biografiförfattare och genusforskare som studerar Irland och den aktuella tidsperioden. Avhandlingen breddar våra kunskaper om irländsk kvinnohistoria och brevens betydelse för att hantera information, känslor och historiska minnen i Irland. Den utökar dessutom vår förståelse för United Irishmen och deras sätt att kommunicera, liksom även korrespondensnätverken som samlade, bevarade och spred historiografisk diskurs om upproret 1798. Materialet som läggs fram i avhandlingen förklarar också delvis de ofta förbryllande förändringarna i politisk attityd hos Belfasts invånare gentemot unionen med Storbritannien. Slutligen utgör breven en värdefull källa för studier i Belfasts historiska stadsgeografi och stadens tillväxt mellan slutet av 1700-talet och den senare delen av 1800-talet.

Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams

## **The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken (1770–1866)**

This study provides the first scholarly edition of the correspondence of Belfast humanitarian activist Mary Ann McCracken, fully annotated, complete with accompanying contextual, biographical and technical commentary.

In bringing together and sequencing all of McCracken's extant letters for the first time, the work seeks to give a greater insight into her later life and views, as well as shed new light on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish society, the rapidly-changing environment of Belfast itself, and women's history in Ireland more widely. It further aims to contribute to our understanding of the United Irishmen (with whom McCracken was closely involved) and their means of communication, in addition to the epistolary networks which collected, preserved and disseminated historiographical discourse around the Rebellion of 1798.

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