

Collection: McAllister Family Papers
1747-1935
Cumberland County

P.C. 1738.1-2

Physical Description: 231 items (one of them a volume having another 20 items mounted or laid in).

Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. Alexander Pope McAllister, Sept. 22, 1984.

North Carolina State Archives
Raleigh, North Carolina

Description: This collection of papers contains the family correspondence and related papers of a Cumberland County family who came to North Carolina from Scotland in the "Argyll Colony" of 1739. This group of gentlemen-adventurers with servitors and tenants included among the former class, Coll McAlester of Balinakill (a property in Kintyre, Argyllshire), his wife Janet McNeill of the family of Lossit in Kintyre, and five of their six children: Hector, Alexander, Mary, Grissella, and Isabella (their daughter Ann remaining in Scotland). The parents dying in 1740, an aunt apparently helped with the younger daughters while Hector worked as head of the family to produce a market-able crop. In 1744 Hector returned to Scotland (presumably on pressing family business) leaving his brother Alexander to conduct the family's North Carolina affairs. Having been implicated in the 1745 uprising in support of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, Hector appears to have been forbidden under a governmental writ of ne exeat regno to leave Scotland. During this time, Hector married Mary Fullarton of the family of Corse and commenced a family. Consequently, he remained in the Island of Arran in the Inner Hebrides and never returned to North Carolina, despite constantly expressing an intention to do so right up to the opening of the American Revolution.

Alexander, in the interim, married and commenced his family, marrying as his first wife Flora McNeill of the family of Ardelay in the Island of Gigha (known in North Carolina as the McNeills of The Bluff), his sister Mary McAlester marrying Alexander's brother-in-law, Hector McNeill of The Bluff. Their youngest sister Grissella remained unmarried. Upon the death of his first wife, Alexander married Jean Colvin of the New Hanover County family residing at Colvin Hall.

Description continued

Understandably, the family's standing as county gentry determined Alexander McAlester's position not only among the Scottish community but in the county at large. He was named in every commission of the peace for Cumberland County from December 1757 through December 1762, and it is probable that he presided in his community as a single justice of the peace during this period. For reasons no longer clear, however, he sat with his fellow magistrates in the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions during the duration of his 1761/2 commission only, and even then it appears that he sat without having properly qualified by taking the necessary oaths. During the last year he was in the commission of the peace, Alexander McAlester was concurrently promoted in his military rank from captain to lieutenant colonel. Upon the death of Colonel Thomas Armstrong, McAlester was raised to a full colonelcy in February 1766.

Colonel McAlester represented Cumberland County in the General Assembly in 1762 and again in the session of 1773/4, and in the Provincial Congress of 1775. Though Colonel McAlester's son Neill was an officer in the American Army upon outbreak of the American Revolution, when the colonel's relations, Ferquhard Campbell and Thomas Rutherford, were implicated in the Highland uprising that culminated in the Battle of Moore's Creek (February 1776), Colonel McAlester resigned his military commission in May 1776 and abstained from attending the 1776 session of the Provincial Congress to which his county had returned him.

After the peace, Colonel McAlester was a member of the 1788 state convention to ratify the United States Constitution (his reference in Letter #60, however, is to the federal, not the state, convention), and he served as a senator in each of the four General Assemblies held from 1787 through 1790.

Long active in Presbyterian circles, as his letters will show, Colonel McAlester was an elder of the congregation meeting first at Roger's Meeting House, then from 1787 at a new meeting house built at The Bluff (see Letter #60). His son Alexander continued the tradition and served both as elder and as stated clerk of the session for the meeting at Bluff Church. It was this son who continued the Scottish correspondence, and through him the family papers ultimately descended to the colonel's great-great grandson, Alexander Pope McAllister, whose widow gave them to the North Carolina State Archives on September 22, 1984.

Tables showing the descent of the papers as well as relationships of the principal family members mentioned in the letters will be found in Appendix I.

Family Correspondence, [1747]-1935. The most important of the family letters are those dating from [1747] to 1809. These seventy letters include those exchanged between the brothers Hector (in Scotland) and Alexander (in North Carolina) and have as their common theme Hector's efforts to retrieve his business affairs concerning his North Carolina plantation called New Troy as well as an indebtedness owing to him from the estate of their mother's brother, Dugald McNeill of Lossit, who died in the colony in 1741. The brothers' letters contain, as well, substantive information concerning emigration from Scotland to North Carolina. Almost all of Alexander's other correspondence with kinsmen and friends in Scotland prior to 1776 have emigration

Family Correspondence, [1747]-1935 continued

as their central subject. Following the interruption in the correspondence caused by the American Revolution, the brothers resumed their letter writing. After Hector's death in 1790, his daughter Mary (Mrs. Shannon) continued until 1809 a correspondence first with her uncle Alexander then with her cousin Alexander in the hope of securing at least some part of her father's share in the North Carolina property. A fairly full abstract, sometimes amounting to a paraphrase, of the first seventy letters in the collection will be found in Appendix II.

The remainder of the family correspondence is altogether of family interest. The six letters dating from 1839 to 1857 are those of McLean kinsmen, the third Alexander McAllister having married Janet McNeill McLean. The correspondence dating from 1868 to 1916 (with one letter from 1926) is that of his son, John Alexander McAllister whose interest in his family was spurred by publication of the Rev. D. S. McAllister's Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Col. Alexander McAllister (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson printers, 1900). John Alexander McAllister's son, Alexander Pope McAllister, inherited his father's interest in family history, and by 1929 he had prepared typescripts of a number of the earlier letters and had reopened a correspondence with Scottish cousins as well as with others that he thought might help him in his research; his correspondence ranges in date from 1929 to 1935 and is altogether genealogical in nature. Reference to the letters of A. P. McAllister will greatly assist the researcher in identifying many of the persons named in the eighteenth-century family correspondence.

Family Papers. These materials include some papers of family interest only, but other papers of a much wider import. The folder of Cumberland County land papers includes deeds, patents for land, and some plats of survey. The five folders of records concerning Bluff Presbyterian Church, Wade, N.C., include records of baptisms, rough copies of session records, pay of ministers building fund, and reports to the synod and general assembly; additionally there are some historical notes on the church and a brief historical pamphlet concerning the Lumberton Presbyterian Church. A folder of Civil War material includes Lt. John A. McAllister's January 8, 1865, request for a 20-day leave from the 24th Regiment, N.C. Troops, at Petersburg, Va., and a typescript of Capt. James S. Evans' history of Company F, 24th Regiment ("The Cumberland Plough Boys"). This is followed by an account by Elizabeth Ann Harlee McRae (Mrs. Alexander McRae of "Argyle") of a night attack on her house by a gang that included Henry Berry Lowery ("The Raid of the Yankees and Robbers") in March 1865. The folder of "literary compositions" includes school essays and debate notes as well as an undated draft of a letter addressed to the editor of The Methodist Christian Sentinel. Included in these miscellaneous family papers is a folder containing three veterinary formulae—one for a febrifuge powder, one for curing a fistula in a horse, and one for curing the sleepy staggers in a horse. The four folders of genealogical notes relate to the McAllister, McNeill, Richardson, and Whitfield/Bryan families, and are followed by a folder containing a typescript copy of Jean Colvin's 1761 Covenant with God. The folder marked "Estates" contains an undated contemporary copy of a document concerning the estate of McNeill of Lossit and an incomplete contemporary copy of the will of Alexander Colvin of Colvin Hall, 1774. A bound ledger commenced in 1928 as an intended scrapbook to be entitled "Some Sketches of Scotch History" includes newspaper clippings and materials relating to the McAllister family.

Inventory of Box 1 (PC.1738.1)

<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Prelim.	Paraphrases of Letters #1 through #70.
1	Letter #1: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester [ca.1747]
2	Letters #2 and #3: A.McD. to Hugh Gordon, 1751 June 15; A.McD. to Adam Gordon [1751 June 15].
3	Letter #4: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1754 Jun 26.
4	Letter #5: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester [1761 Summer].
5	Letter #6: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester [1761 Summer]
6	Letter #7: Mary McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1764 Feb 1.
7	Letter #8: Wm. Wilkinson to Alex. McAlester, 1766 Nov 29.
8	Letter #9: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester [1767]
9	Letter #10: Edward Holland to Col. Alex. McAlester, 1769 Feb 15.
10	Letter #11: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1769 Mar 15.
11	Letter #12: Hector McAlester to Hector McNeill, 1769 Mar 20.
12	Letter #13: John Boyd to Alex. McAlester, 1770 Jun 21.
13	Letter #14: Angus McCuaig to Alexander McAlester, 1770 Jul 26.
14	Letters #15 and #16: Alexander McAlester of Cour to Alexander McAlester, N.C., 1770 Jul 26; Alexander McAlester, N.C., to Alexander McAlester of Cour [1770]
15	Letter #17: Angus McAlester of Loup to Alex. McAlester [1770 Aug
16	Letter #18: Alexander McAlester to _____ McNabb, 1770 Nov 29.
17	Letters #19 and #20: Alexander McAlester to Hector McAlester, 17 Nov 29; Alexander McAlester to Angus McCuaig, 1-70 Nov 29.
18	Letter #21: Alexander McAlester to Hector McAlester, 1770 Nov-De
19	Letters #22 and #23: Alex. McAlester to Angus McAlester of Loup, 1770 Nov 29; Alex. McAlester to John Boyd, 1770 Nov 29.
20	Letter #24: Angus McCuaig to Alexander McAlester, 1771 Aug 22.

Inventory of Box 1 (PC.1738.1) Continued

<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
21	Letter #25: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1771 Aug 26.
22	Letter #26: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1771 Sep 12.
23	Letter #27: James McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1771 Oct 5.
24	Letter #28: John Boyd to Alex. McAlester, 1771 Nov 15.
25	Letter #29: Alex. McAlester to [James] McAlester [1771 Nov-Dec] INCLUDING closing paragraph to Letter #30.
26	Letters #30 and #31: Alex. McAlester to John Boyd [1772 Apr] (with closing in folder 25 on reverse of Letter #29); and Alex. McAlester to Alex. McAlester of Cour [1772 Apr].
27	Letter #32: Mary McAlester to Alex. McAlester [1772].
28	Letter #33: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester, 1774 Jan 22.
29	Letter #34: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1774 May 1.
30	Letters #35 and #36: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1774 May 31; Alexander McAlester to Hector McAlester [1775 Spring]
31	Letters #37 and #38: John Boyd to Alex. McAlester, 1774 Sep 29; Alex. McAlester to John Boyd, 1775 Jan 4.
32	Letters #39, #40, and #41: John Boyd to Alex. McAlester, 1774 Dec 22; Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester [1776 Jan?]; Alex. McAlester to John Boyd [1776 Jan?].
33	Letter #42: Angus McAlester of Loup to Alex. McAlester, 1775 Aug 20.
34	Letters #43 and #44: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1775 Aug 22; Alex. McAlester to "Sir" [1776 Apr 20].
35	Letter #45: Neill McAlester to Col. Alexander McAlester, 1775 Dec 20 (Xerox copy only; original not present in collection).
36	Letter #46: Isabella MacDonald to Neill McAlester [1776 Summer].
37	Letter #47: J. Galbraith to Neill McAlester, 1775 May 15.
38	Letter #48: David Smith to Neill McAlester, 1777 Sep 28.
39	Letter #49: Daniel McNeill to Neill McAlester, 1779 Apr 23.
40	Letter #50: The Rev. John McLeod to Presbyterian Congregation in Cumberland County [1781 July?].

Inventory of Box 1 (PC.1738.1) Concluded

<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
41	Letters #41 and #52: Alex. McAlester to William McAlester, 1783 Oct 22; Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester, 1783 Oct 29.
42	Letter #53: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1784 Feb 14.
43	Letters #54 and #55: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester, 1784 May 20; Alex. McAlester to Captain Cook, 1784 May 24.
44	Letter #56: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1785 Aug 12.
45	Letter #57: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1786 Feb 18.
46	Letter #58: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester [1786 June].
47	Letter #59: Hector McAlester to Alex. McAlester, 1787 Apr 30.
48	Letter #60: Alex. McAlester to Hector McAlester, 1787.
49	Letter #61: Alex. McAlester to Mrs. Hector McAlester, 1792 Nov 1.
50	Letter #62: Capt. James McAlester to Alexander McAlester [the Younger] 1793 Jun 23.
51	Letter #63: Mary Shannon to Alex. McAlester, 1795 Mar 2.
52	Letter #64: Mary Shannon to Alex. McAlester, 1800 Dec 24.
53	Letter #65: Mary Shannon to Alex. McAlester, 1801 Nov 30.
54	Letter #66: Mary Shannon to Alex. McAlester, 1802 Feb 25.
55	Letter #67: Alex. McAlester to Mary Shannon, 1802 Apr 14.
56	Letter #68: Alex. McAlester to Mary Shannon, [1802 Spring].
57	Letter #69: Alex. McAlester to Mary Shannon, 1802 Nov 16.
58	Letter #70: Alex. McAlester to Mary Shannon, 1809 Jul 3.
59	Correspondence, 1839-1898.
60	Correspondence, 1903-1905.
61	Correspondence, 1910-1916, 1926.
62	Correspondence, 1929.
63	Correspondence, 1930-1931.
64	Correspondence, 1933-1935.
65	Correspondence, n.d., fragments.

Inventory of Box 2 (PC.1738.2)

<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Land Papers, 1749-1917, n.d.
2	Bluff Presbyterian Church--Session Records, 1814-1822 (partial)
3	Bluff Presbyterian Church--Baptismal Records, 1814-1820
4	Bluff Presbyterian Church--Pastors' Stipend: 1810, 1811, 1822, 1
5	Bluff Presbyterian Church--Reports to Synod/General Assembly, 1814-1822
6	Bluff Presbyterian Church--Building Repair, 1816
7	Bluff Presbyterian Church--History
8	Lumberton Presbyterian Church--History
9	Civil War Papers
10	The Lowery Gang's raid on the McRae home, March 1865
11	Literary Compositions
12	Recipes/receipts (veterinary medicine)
13	Genealogy--McAllister
14	Genealogy--McNeill
15	Genealogy--Richardson
16	Genealogy--Whitfield/Bryan
17	Jean Colvin's Covenant with God, 1761 (typescript copy)
18	Estate--McNeill of Lossit; Will--Alexander Colvin, 1774 (both incomplete contemporary copies)
19	Scrapbook "Some Sketches of Scotch History"
20	Fragments of a copybook (of Walter or Patrick McBeth?)

Computer Index Entries (exclusive of those from Appendix II)

Scots

Bluff Presbyterian Church, Cumberland Co., N.C.

Lumberton Presbyterian Church, Robeson Co., N.C.

Church Plate

C.S.A. Army

24th Regt., N.C. Troops

Veterinary medicine

McRae, Elizabeth Ann Harlee

Campbell, Rev. James

Lowery, Henry Berry

McAllister Family

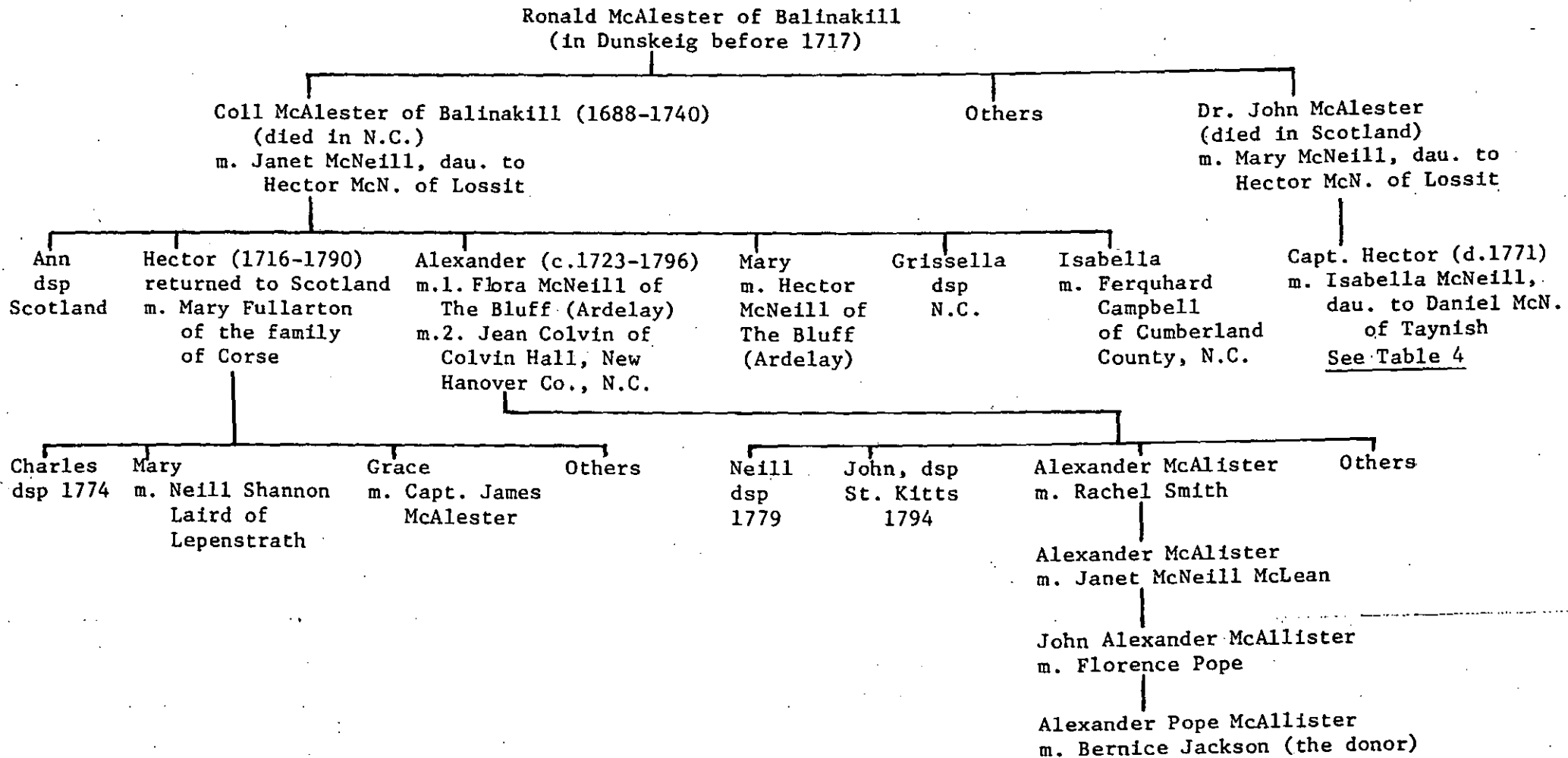
McNeill Family

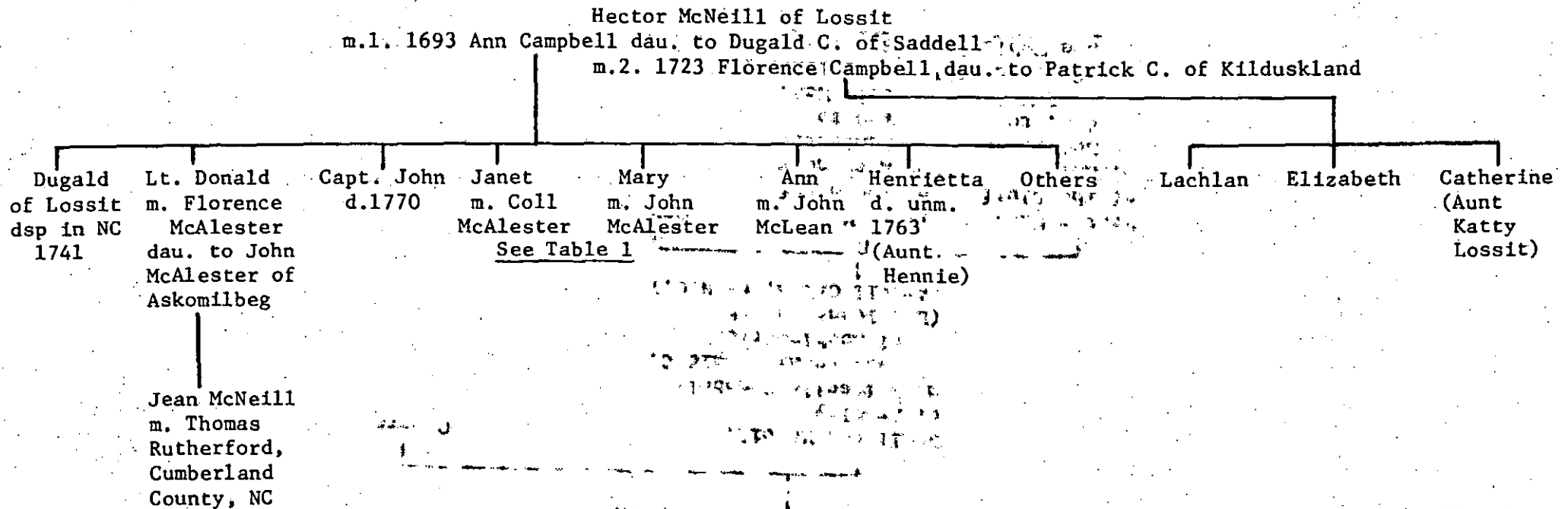
Campbell, Ferquhard

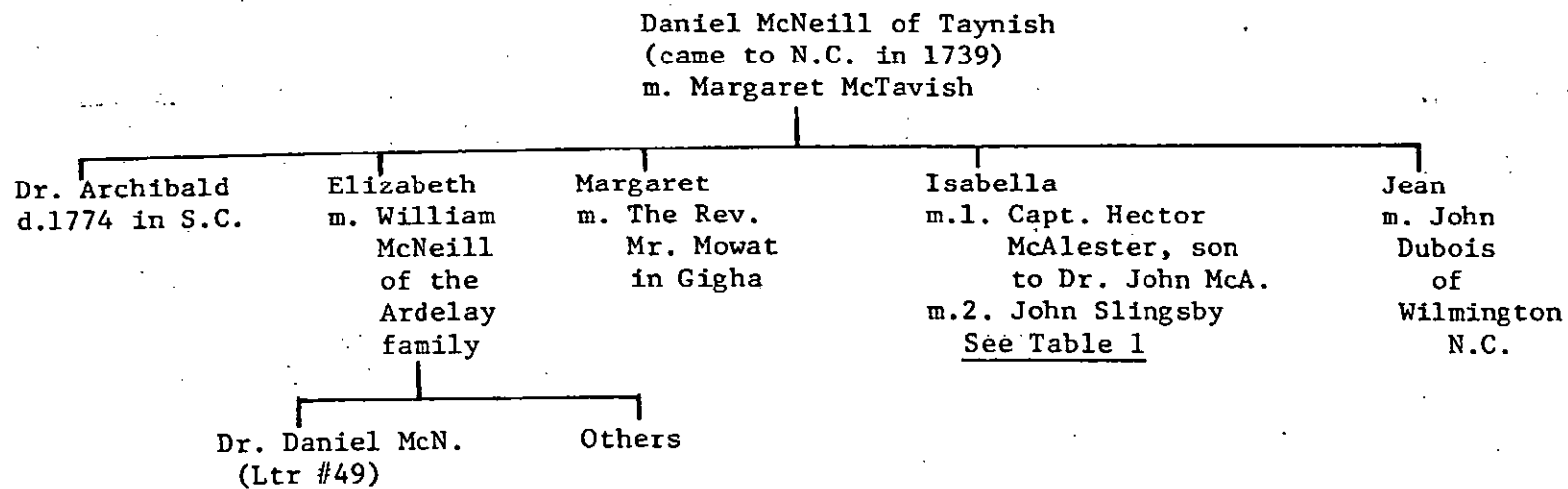
Campbell, Alexander of Balole

Campbell, Colin of Crackaig

Finding aid completed by George Stevenson, North Carolina State Archives,
and William C. Fields, Fayetteville, N.C., on July 6, 1990

APPENDIX ITable 1
McALESTER OF BALINAKILL

APPENDIX ITable 2
MCNEILL OF LOSSIT

APPENDIX ITable 4
McNEILL OF TAYNISH

APPENDIX II

1. [ca. 1747] [Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cumberland County, N.C., to Hector McAlester, Glencloy, Arran, Scotland]
 Dear Brother. Commiserating with Hector for being so long detained, even confined [i.e., legally unable to leave Scotland to return to N.C.] and informing him of the posting to Scotland of three exemplifications of accounts of indebtedness [owing from the estate of Dugald McNeill of Lossit in N.C. (Port Neill)]. Mr. McNeill has been very active in getting them done, and Alexander has, in everything, advised with him and Mr. Grant according to Hector's instructions. They are both writing Hector now. All the servants are gone [from Troy] except _____ Moore. Duncy McFee obtained his freedom by judgment of the court. All the same, I have made a larger crop than last year and hope to clear all accounts of indebtedness.
 Congratulates Hector on his recent marriage. Your sisters still continue here very dutiful and join in kind respects to you and your consort. [Letter carried by our "Cousin Neill" who needs no recommendation from Alexander.]
 INCLUDING Fragment of a cover letter presumably to Capt. McCulloch who is to take two of the exemplifications by a vessel sailing from Virginia.

2. 1751 June 15. [A. McD., Jamaica] to Hugh Gordon of Carrol, Esq.
 Wishing to hear from him with news of writer's brother & sister and their families, and how Gordon's brothers, John Gordon and Lt. Robert are doing. John Gordon and Robert Gordon (Embro's brother) are well settled in Jamaica. Has been sick for the past two years. Is going to a very good place this week to settle. Sorry to hear of Ld. Sutherland's death. [NOTE: Lord Sutherland died at Montauban, France, on 7 Dec 1750. Robert McAlester, factor to the Earl of Sutherland, had died by June 2, 1749--see, Sheriff Court of Inveraray, Roll Book, 1744-1769 in S.R.O., Edinburgh (SC.54/1/3).]

INCLUDING

3. [1751 June 15] A. McD. [Jamaica] to Adam Gordon, Esq.
 Writer understands from Alexander MacDonald that his bills of exchange have been protested; it is very hard Davidson should use me so and that you do not think it worthwhile to favor me with an answer. Hopes Gordon has not been told lies about him and defies any to say that he has done any "dirty mean action" since parting company with Gordon. Wants badly to know how his brothers and other relations are. Has been sick since his arrival in Jamaica. Address letters to him c/o Alexander Goodbrand next door to Messrs Clev[e]land & Gordon's store, Kingston.
4. 1754 June 26. Hector McAlester, Moniquill [Arran], to [Alexander McAlester, N.C.]
 My dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt about 8 days ago of Alexander's letter of 24 April. Cannot "express my Grief for

the death of my Aunt who was more like a mother than Aunt to us all, and am certain made one of the best of wives, tho' our friend seems already to have forgot her" Has written Alexander several letters by way of Virginia over the past two years. Has been meaning to come over with as many emigrating families as he can bring to be an addition to the colony, but is always balked. Had 20-30 families (besides young folks) for this year and would have got a vessel from the Clyde, but the Campbeltown merchants promised to furnish a vessel--then let it go to Philadelphia with 28-30 passengers rather than to Cape Fear [with entire families]. Sent the bearer, Neil Munrow, to Jura, hearing that Capt. Neill Campbell was disappointed of some passengers he expected there, but Campbell was able to make up his complement. The owners of the snow Argyll of Campbeltown have promised to have that vessel in readiness for me any time betwixt March & July next, and on that I have fixed since I have got all my people settled for this year.

Mr. Neill McLeod whom the colony wanted over to be their minister, was to go with me, & as he is a very popular man amongst the commonalty, would encourage numbers to leave this country, so you'll not fail to advise to write pressingly for him again. He is a good preacher and full master of the highland tongue, & I am sure will please all parties.

Wants to know what Scottish goods will best find a market at Cape Fear as all the passengers will bring some with them. Also advise on the price of tar. Campbeltown merchants will send bale goods--can they get a cargo of lumber for the West Indies, etc.?

In what order is my plantation [New Troy]? What about that piece of land I had a warrant for and gave Chief Justice Smith a moidore to see justice done in the affair? Remember John Smith's line came down the waterside and crossed the river to Troy in place of having one-half mile on the river and two miles back (which was the king's instructions at the time John Smith's patent was granted). What is done with Port Neill?

How long a servitude can I expect from transportees under North Carolina law?

5. [1761 Summer] Hector McAlester [Monyquill, Arran] to Alexander McAlester at New Troy, Cape Fear River, N.C.

[UPPER PORTION OF BOTH SHEETS ON WHICH THIS LETTER IS WRITTEN IS LOST]

[Dear Brother] I have been for some time past applying for some commission that wou'd enable me to support my family as they are now growing up--they are all of the female sex save Charles and no less than six in number. I have the promises of some good people to do for me, but such promises are very uncertain and not at all to be depended upon. I have all the inclination in the world to return to Cape Fear but cannot get my wife prevailed with on account of the war.

LARGE FRAGMENT LACKING

What improvements have been made at New Troy as I hear there is good indigo made now in that colony? Asks for a sample of indigo, a cask of rice, some sassafras root. Has looked for a servant to send, but with recruiting and pressing for sea and land service we can't get servants to labor our ground. In case of a peace, which we have reason to expect soon, matters will be otherwise.

P.S. Since writing the within, my uncle tells me that you would give me the price paid for my plantation of New Troy (fifty pounds sterling) provided I give you a right to it and that you will besides give me [TORN] plantation when I go to that country. [TORN] ... you remit me by Capt. Hume of the Caesar or any other shipmaster for [bills of] exchange or cash the sum of fifty pounds sterling [TORN] You always obliged to give me [TORN] plantation on my reimbursing you [TORN] and payment for any improvement you [have made] upon it from this time forward in [case you?] do not agree to this or do not [wish to?] live upon my plantation yourself I have agreed that my uncle Mr. McNeill should inhabit it who promises to pay up any quit rents may be due upon it now and in time coming until I go there myself or dispose of my plantation otherwise. You know Smith offered me a hundred pistoles for my plantation before I left that country. Letter sent by the Caesar, Capt. Hume, master. [NOTE: William Hume, master of the Caesar, sailed from Greenock to N.C. on Sept. 20, 1761. SRO, Edinburgh, E.504/28/10.]

6. [1761 Summer] Hector McAlester, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Brother. In my three letters to Uncle Daniel, brother Hector, & you, I made no mention of your friend [Angus McAlester of] Loup whose marriage with his cousin-german (a young widow of one Mr. Dun, writer in Edinburgh) was confirmed by sentence of the Lords of Session, and after an appeal to the British Parliament was confirmed there also. He does not cohabit with her nor own her, but she has an annuity of thirty pounds a year off him (his estate is much encumbered defending that unhappy plea with his wife). His brother Archibald, a very pretty lad, is lately come home from the River St. Lawrence. He was at the taking of Quebec, a lieut. in Col Fraser's Regiment & is now on half pay.

Urges Alexander to remarry.

7. 1764 Feb 1. Mary McAlester [(Mrs. Hector)], Monyquill, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cape Fear, N.C.

Dear Brother. Says Hector has written to him and their brother-in-law Mr. McNeill a long time ago, and apologizes for not having written earlier, herself. Urges Alexander to remarry.

Uncle Lt. Donald McNeill lives still in this country; Capt. John is still in life; his son the major died at the Havana, the Isle of Cuba.

Coll, your Uncle Dr. McAlester's son, is also dead in Tortolla, West Indies.

Your Aunt Hennie died last harvest. Your aunt Mrs. McLean is in a bad way and cannot live long. Your uncle Capt. Lachlan and his sisters are very well as is your sister Anny and all my young folks.

Invites Alexander to send one of his boys to Hector's care.

8. 1766 Nov 29. Wm. Wilkinson, Wilmington, N.C., to Alexander McAlester, Esq., Cumberland County.

Asks him to be on the lookout for his slave Jack who has run away ("undoubtedly is gone up to his old range"). I was told when I bought him that he was about getting a mulatto wench of Jeff Williams for a wife.

9. [1767] [Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C., to Hector McAlester, Arran]

Dear Brother. Sending this letter by Neal McKerter [i.e. McArthur]. Mr. McNeill is at the Bluff and Ferquhard Campbell family's at the old squire's. His [i.e., the old squire, Daniel McNeill of Taynish] daughter Isabel is married to Cousin Hector McAlester who sails commander in a snow of Mr. [Alexander Duncan]. Cousin Hector McNeill is in this place who follows his trade of making saddles.

Wrote about 14 months ago treating of Troy, but got no answer. If you have no intention of coming to this place to live, please send me a deed for that tract of land; I'd pay (in tar) the same amount you gave for it. As for Port Neill, I think you should give me that gratis.

Have married a second time. Have 6 children: 4 by first wife; 2 by this--3 girls & 3 boys. My eldest son Coll I intend to bind to a trade this summer.

10. 1769 Feb 15. Edward Holland, Sr., to Colonel Alexander McAlester, Cumberland Co., N.C.

Letter being delivered by Wm. Forster. John Armstrong acquaints me that the orders I gave you were not accepted; I am sorry you should be so long out of your money. Had I known this earlier, I would have made you some remittance. God willing I shall do so by August; would have remitted last Christmas but my leg has been troublesome.

Little Pigeon hanged himself with a grapevine.

I follow my old calling, but very low wages given here. This is my fifth letter to you, and never had an answer. Would love to hear from you and Mrs. McAlester and the rest of your family and the rest of my employers.

Let me know about the lawsuit concerning the pistole. Hopes McAlester will act for him in this matter, and that a new action will not lie against him for cost of court.

When writing an answer, please enclose it in a false cover addressed to the Rev. David Caldwell in Buffalo Settlement.

11. 1769 Mar 15. Hector McAlester, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Brother. Has been nearly 2 years since having Alexander's letter by McArthur, who, all the time he was in the country, stayed between Islay and Jura. Hector never could get a meeting with McArthur and feels he was badly used.

I have told you again and again of my resolution to return to North Carolina. There are now some hundreds of families in Arran and neighboring Argyllshire who want Hector to go with them to Carolina and who want undoubted information about the province. He is to provide vessels for them, which he can easily do. Hector has written the governor [Tryon] recommending these families be settled on Cape Fear River. Hector has been so long gone his information is no longer current. He must have current information from the governor before he can charter vessels for the emigrants. "It is impossible to live any longer here. The poor people had scarce to pay their rent hitherto and now when three rents is paid on every farm how can they stand?" Cattle prices very low last year; if low this year it will be "a great loss to our adventurers." It will be a year hence before we can be altogether prepared for the voyage.

Please let me know the state of the plantations. You told me that the houses and fences of Port Neill were burnt. I wish Troy house may be fit to shelter my family till I get a better made up.

Asks whether or not lands are now settled that were taken up by Kilduskland, James McLaughlin, or their father, Coll McAlester (2 surveys on N.W. Cape Fear). Asks again about trade goods to be brought in by settlers, prices of land purchased by deed.

Family news. Oldest daughter (of 6 girls) is above 20 years of age and youngest 7 years old. My son is 19 and a stout, tall, fellow--intended sending him to Norfolk, Va., with a friend of his who goes to keep a store and sails this month. He went to Greenock a fortnight ago to fix with the mercantile firm, but they had already engaged another.

Hears the colonies are refusing to submit to Acts of Parliament. Glad to hear that a number of our countrymen from Cape Fear were on their march to support the Government's authority. May that ever be their resolution and yours is my earnest wish.

P.S. Write what our cousin Hector the doctor's son is doing. Had a letter from him some years ago, and wrote to him at London in care of Mr. Dunlop, Wapping, but never heard from him again.

12. 1769 Mar 20. Hector McAlester, Arran, to Hector McNeill, Esq., Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Sir. Has not heard from him these many years, nor indeed from any of my friends excepting a short note from my brother Alexander by favor of Mr. McArthur near two years ago. McArthur said he wanted a meeting with me, but I never could

fix one with him though trying to arrange a meeting in Tarbert. Not a word from him.

My wife and her friends have opposed my returning to Carolina so long as we had a tolerable living in Scotland, and the schooling of my children was a further consideration.

The children are, all but 2, about grown up, my leases are expired, and rents have doubled and tripled. People are interested in going to Carolina, particularly Cape Fear; they want to settle in a body. Hector is to provide vessels for them. Need intelligence and a reply from governor [Tryon] before Hector can charter vessels. Doubts they can be ready to leave before a year hence as they must await a good market before selling their stocks of cattle.

Says he entered land back of Troy and paid Attorney Gen. Montgomery the cost of entering a caveat should another attempt to enter the lands. If there is danger of land behind Port Neill or Troy being taken up, you or Sandy must enter a caveat in Hector McAlester's name (if this has not already been done). A plantation on the waterside will be too much confined if the lands immediately back be settled.

Requests information on market and land prices, and other information necessary for "our adventurers to know." Could you propose any encouragement for a Presbyterian minister, we can easily have one with us. What occupations, such as millwright or carpenter, are desired there? P.S. Write upon receipt and direct to care of Mr. Andrew Donald, merchant in Greenock.

13. 1770 June 21. John Boyd, Balinakill, to [Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C.]

Introducing and recommending Malcolm MacIlchrist who has gone to Cape Fear with his brother John, and Ivor MacMurchy (married to their sister). The MacGilchrists are clever, pretty lads and are fit for sea or land--would pass for gentlemen. Their grandfather lived in Lochkiarran, a place you knew very well in your young days. Our countrymen are all upon the wing ... going to that New World of America. I heartily congratulate you upon the thoughts of meeting with so many of your country people this year. Closes with a note that his father died on April 2 and that Alexander's brother Hector from Arran was here at his funeral. Complimentary close: Your most affectionate cousin.

14. 1770 July 26. Angus McCuaig, Assabos in [The Oa of] Islay, to Alexander McAlester, Sandybluff, Cumberland County, N.C.

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter of March 15 last. Gave him great pleasure to hear of Alexander's welfare and good character of his family, and likewise of Mr. Ferquhard Campbell and his family and am glad he is within 2 miles of you and the good name he is under at home and abroad. Fail not in sending me particulars of the rest of the children, especially Grizy the younger.

Scotland has become so poor and scarce of provision and money that no man of spirit can live here unless he begs or

steals. I shall reckon me to be a sturdy beggar for I was not trained to pick pockets. My land was offered to me May last at a rent of eight pounds sterling yearly (which is the [gross produce of the land that would equal] three rents); I have enough to do with just one. If you give me encouragement to go with Mr. Alexander Campbell of Balole, and let me know how to get land near you I would be as glad as if I was in my native land. ... You left me to Balole's intelligence before ... people will reckon him to be for his own profit ... he has more regard for his own honor than that he was never brought in cheating the poor. But women will believe idle things and my sister Mary as ready to go [as I am] if she could pay the freight and had anything free.

Compliments to you and your family, to your sisters, and to Mr. Ferguhard Campbell and his spouse.

15. 1770 Aug 17. Alexander McAlester of Cour to Alexander McAlester, Sandybluff near Troy, Cape Fear River, N. C.

Dear Cousin. Had been an entire stranger until our friend John Currie arrived in America (though I saw you take ship in Gigha). Is plagued by people who want Cour to recommend them to Alexander in North Carolina--in short, our lairds' or landlords' oppression will soon help to plant your colony. Recommends the bearer, Alexander Smith, a distant relation of yours, to Alexander's advice. Wife and son join in sending their greetings.

INCLUDING

16. [1770] [Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C. to Alexander McAlester of Cour, Argyllshire]

Dear Cousin. This part of North Carolina will soon be a New Scotland for within these three or four years there is an immense number come in to this place. Our friend John Currie died 12 July. His widow is in Troy still. The little son he left is grown a fine child. Will my brother not come over next year? [INCOMPLETE]

17. [1770 August?] Angus McAlester of Loup, Ardpatrik by Inveraray, Argyllshire, to [Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C.]

Though unacquainted with the addressee, is introducing Alexander McAlester who goes from this country with several others to settle in your parts.

As I am informed you left this country when young, you will know little or nothing of me, but you will have heard of the family of Loup from whom you descend. As I represent this family, I beg leave to introduce this man. He has a large and beautiful family.

Invites a correspondence and asks to know something of the country. People here have wondrous high notions of it. Are you married; what family have you? Your brother Hector and his family are well. He has a large family of daughters. Loup hopes Alexander has a family of sons so as to make the clan numerous in that part of the world.

18. 1770 Nov 29. [Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C. to McNabb]

Acknowledges receipt of a letter sent by the hand of Mr. Ochiltree. Encourages him to come on to North Carolina and not wait until he is stripped by his landlord. "This is one of the best poor man Country you ever heard of & I'm sure better than you ever saw." Advises him on possibilities and necessities in emigrating.

19. 1770 Nov 29. Alexander McAlester, Barmore, N.C., to [Hector McAlester, Arran]

Dear Brother. Letter being sent via Archibald Simson, son to Alexander Simson of Coullabus [in Islay] who has been on a visit in N.C. the past 8 months and who likes the country so well he may settle his affairs in Scotland and come here to live. We hope there will be a good number of our countrymen in the neighborhood soon. I should be glad if I could see you in the number. Your Uncle John has sent our cousin Hector McNeill a power of attorney to act in his uncle's affairs. Hector has shown me the instrument, and by virtue of it has demanded I give up Port Neill to him. Will not give it up as had purchased it from the sheriff. Advises Hector to take security for the balance of the debt due.

No news, but we are likely to have a civil war amongst ourselves. Mentions the Regulators and says "we are lifting men for to suppress them."

Hopes Hector will see their cousin Archibald Simson or Neal McArthur who goes in company; they will give you all the news that is stirring.

INCLUDING

20. 1770 Nov 29. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Angus McCuaig, Assabos in The Oa of Islay]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of his letter. He and Mr. Campbell are obliged to their friend Balole for his good opinion. I was sure he'd not say anything [about N.C.] he could not stand by. Alexander will not further describe N.C., but assures McCuaig that it is a mistake to stay in Scotland one day longer than one is obliged to. The landlords grind down their tenants in Scotland. "This is the best poor man's country I have heard in this age."

All are well. Mr. Ferquhard Campbell and his family are in good health. My sister Grise lives with her sister Mrs. Campbell. My sister Mrs. McNeill and family are well.

What has become of your granduncle's daughter, Mrs. Gilchrist that lived in Glenegedale [near eastern shore of Laggan Bay in Islay] and what are her circumstances?

21. 1770 Nov 29 - Dec 6. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Hector McAlester, Monyquill, Arran]

Dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of three letters. Advises him either to quit thinking about coming to N.C. or actively to resolve to come over immediately. If he delays

much longer he cannot expect either himself or his family to be well settled. Says his plantation is no benefit to Hector or his family. Purchasing a few slaves would be to more advantage than servants. Where there are slaves one careful hand would be very necessary. As for redemptioners they must be a loss to any that will engage in that way as money is so very scarce, little or none circulating since our mother country wanted to impose the Stamp Duty act onto the colonies. All governors have positive orders not to strike any money on pain of losing their government and being incapable of bearing any commission under the crown.

Concerning the back lands of Troy, they were taken up many years ago. You never let me know anything of them until it was too late. I have 300 acres there myself which is mostly swamp--the rest is taken up by other neighbors.

The four vessels you mention are safe arrived in good health. As for Duncan McAlester, Samuel McAlester and William Shaw, I have not yet seen. I suppose they are gone up Black River to my father-in-law. If there is any way you can procure what balance is coming to you from your uncle's estate, save yourself and lose no time, for they have done all that lay in their power to dispossess both you and me of Port Neill. But fortune has been more kind to me. The land was taken up at the suit of the king unknown to me or any other in the settlement till about ten days before our county court. I was at Campbellton where I met the Sheriff who asked me if I knew the land called Port Neill and said he was going to advertise it for sale the second day of court. I could not believe him till he showed me the advertisement. Accordingly I became purchaser, paid the money and got the sheriff's deed for the same. Your uncle's heirs sent our cousin Hector McNeill a power over last year and as Hector did wait on the captain another came to him or another copy of the same.

As for our cousin Miss Jean McNeill I have not seen her but hear she is with her cousins Mrs. Dubois and Mrs. McAlester in Wilmington. God knows how things will turn out but Girls without a portion sticks long on hand.

As for Duncan Brown or his son-in-law I have not seen as yet. Our friend John Currie died 12th of July last. Mrs. Currie and child live still at Troy. If you're not coming here, I'd like to have Troy. Our sister Mrs. McNeill and family are in good health and clearing the estate as fast as they can. Our brother Mr. Campbell and family doing well; I suppose he will write to you. Our sister Grisel is well and lives with Mrs. Campbell. Very unkind of you not to let me know what is become of our sister Ann.

22. 1770 Nov 29. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Angus McAlester of Loup]

Acknowledges receipt of letter via Alexander McAlester. Hopes God may direct him to represent the ancient family of Loup to his honor and God's glory. Has a particular regard for the family of Loup and would do anything in his power to support its honor and dignity.

Has done everything to McAlester's satisfaction (since Loup neglected doing it for him), and he should be able to send Loup a good account in a few years. Would count it a great honor to correspond if Loup thought it worth his notice.

As for people's notions of this place, they see but through a dark glass. If they could see clear, not one poor man would stay in Scotland where they are always kept at hard labor and never get ahead. This is the best poor man's country I have ever heard of. There is very little money in circulation, but the other necessaries of life we have in great abundance.

INCLUDING

23. 1770 Nov 29. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to John Boyd, Balinakill]

Dear Sir. Acknowledges receipt of his letter by Malcolm McGilchrist, with whom he was unable to converse at that time, but I'm creditably informed they have both purchased land since then. Each has clear ground on his piece of land to raise bread corn, so they should soon be established.

I wish with all my heart that all poor people, both young and old that have any family to do for, would take courage and leave the oppression they now lie under in Scotland and let the lairds and landlords till their own estates; they would in a little time be glad to see their tenants prosper. As for the idea I have of such things, I think the richer the tenant is the richer the laird is. But be they rich or poor, it is all one with the lairds so long as they get their due. While sorry for the present state of affairs, it is a means to make this country flourish by immigration of industrious inhabitants. If they are half as industrious here as there, the barrenest land we have would be good tillable soil. People may have what notions of this place they please or call it what they will--it is the best poor man's country I have heard of.

There is a rumor of war. Whether it is so or not I can't say. All I'm sorry for is that it will be a means of hindering the poor from entering the door that God has opened for them. Has no hope of ever seeing Boyd in America (for he has so much to leave in Scotland), but hopes they will keep up their correspondence.

24. 1771 Aug 22. Angus McCuaig, Assabos [Islay] to Alexander McAlester of Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C.

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter of 16 March 1771 with news of family, Mrs. McNeill and family, Miss Grisell, and Mr. Ferquhard Campbell and family.

Willing to give undoubted faith to Balole's recommendation of N.C. Wants specific information on land, cattle raising, culture of grains. Is resolved to go to N.C. now that his wife is willing (previously fearful of being in a strange country with her children). Your brother Hector, from whom I heard last week, is for going next spring. His wife was very

opposed to their going until his rent was raised from 22 pounds to 62 pounds 10 shillings.

Has had a son since his last letter to Alexander. Is happy his passage is to be with Mr. Patrick Simson who does not diminish your character and Mr. Campbell's as well worthy gentlemen.

Recommends the bearer, Allan McDugald: deserving, good character, good scholar, a worthy man's son.

Your granduncle's daughter, Mrs. Gilchrist, and family are well (her youngest died Dec. last in childbed--only Ronald and Belle left). They and my two sisters join me and my family in best wishes. P.S. In your next, pray give me some account of your uncle's son. I was told by your aunt, Mrs. Simson, he stays in some part there. Let me know his circumstances.

25. 1771 Aug 26. Hector McAlester, Monyquill [Arran] to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Brother. Letter of introduction for Duncan Sellar, going to Cape Fear in Capt. McNeill's vessel. He leaves few or none like himself of his station in this country. His lease was at an end, and foreseeing the consequence and having a spirit superior to most of his neighbors, determined to leave this country with his substance. Hopes Alexander will advise Sellar. Two families from this neighborhood go with him: Angus Kerr who married Sellar's wife's sister and Marion McCole a widow who has a son (a cooper) who went to Cape Fear last year.

Is also sending by Sellar a reply to Alexander's letter brought over by Capt. McNeill.

26. 1771 Sept 12. Hector McAlester, Monyquill [Arran], to Alexander McAlester at Caney Branch near New Troy, Cape Fear, N.C.

My dear Brother. Acknowledge receipt of letter via their cousin Capt. John McNeill of the ship Neptune in spring of 1771. Am glad Alexander has so much of the backlands of Troy, but he is to purchase vacant lands there for Hector and enter a caveat on them for Hector, if possible. Glad Alexander has bought his uncle's plantation (McNeill of Lossit's Port Neill).

Was at Edinburgh to get up his papers (in an agent's hands) relating to his claims against Lossit's estate, but the agent having died some years ago, was able to recover only one of the three copies sent Hector from Carolina. (SEE LETTER #1) The balance against the estate was 686 pounds, 2 shillings, 7 pence, halfpenny, currency, and Hector has suffered other losses since. Though not actually confined, he was (in a manner) a prisoner for a year, though he is now unable to compute the losses incurred thereby.

Hear there are 100 families from Isle of Skye going to N.C.; a few from Arran are going, and such of the rest as can afford to pay passage will soon follow. The landlords are unrelenting ... "it would seem as [if] providence had ordered for the peopling of that vast Continent."

Our sister Anny is with the lady of Major Mulikin of Mulikin Hall, has 10 pounds sterling per annum, and clothes.

Our Uncle Capt. John McNeill died at Edinburgh last summer and left an only son Hector about 3,000 pounds sterling who, I'm told, is a genteel young fellow.

My family are well except for my oldest daughter, Jenny, who has been complaining for some months past. Your cousin William McAlester is still at Port Greenock, officer of excise there, has not yet been married though turned 40 (what we call a Dunbarton youth)--however, he has a son gone to Virginia about a month ago as apprentice storekeeper on James River in the employ of Messrs Donald at Greenock. His name is Archibald. You should endeavor to fix a correspondence with him. Capt. McNeill with the ship Neptune goes to Cape Fear with a few passengers.

I wonder much our brother Ferquhard Campbell did not write me, nor our Cousin Capt. Hector McAlester in Wilmington, though I wrote them both. I have not heard from our cousin Miss Jean McNeill [subsequently Mrs. Thomas Rutherford] since you wrote me. Let me know what has become of Duncan McAlester and Duncan Brown and the rest of our country people.

See that the quit rents of Troy be duly paid.

Love to you, Mr. Campbell, and my sisters Mrs. McNeill, Mrs. Campbell, and Mrs. McAlester.

27. 1771 Oct 5. James McAlester, Ronvachan, Scotland, to Alexander McAlester, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Wrote to Alexander July 1770 by Angus Brown, a passenger with Mr. Simpson. Really wants to know how the Scots are faring in N.C. It's the poorer sort who go, and they must, of course, meet great difficulty before they can make a comfortable settlement. Their accounts of N.C. greatly differ, everyone as chance favors them. The landlords make very good use of the unfavorable constructions that can be put to their letters. The landlords characterize "your country" the worst under the sun for a poor man that has not money to set up with slaves as a servant man can never get service with one master above a month or so at a time. They say that men go 40-50 miles to get another master, and that pay is in the produce of the farm, and it 100 miles from market.

What has become of your cousin Hector McAlester, the doctor's son? Your brother's son was here with me in May.

In my last I informed you that I had two sons Archibald and Hector settled in Norfolk upon James River in Virginia. The youngest has been there for 10 or 11 years and is now in the mercantile way in Cape Henry with one Mr. Donald of Greenock. They will be glad to serve you in a business way.

Asks specifically about the following "poor people" who emigrated to N.C. in 1770:

Alexander and Angus McAlester

Angus Brown

Archibald McCris

Malcolm McFaill

John Johnston, a tailor

Archibald McIlbride

Donald Johnston, shoemaker

Archibald McFiggan
Neill Paterson

Alexander Graham
John & Malcolm McIlcrest

28. 1771 Nov 15. John Boyd, Balinakill, to Alexander McAlester Esq. of Barmore at Crosscreek near Cape Fear, N.C.
Dear Cousin. Recommending to Alexander's notice Dugald Campbell of the Isle of Skye who with his large family and his father (a surgeon) is emigrating to N.C. Hopes Alexander can help the young man (who is a classical scholar, writes a good hand, and understands figures) to get into business. (Letter delivered by Dr. Campbell.)
29. [1771 Nov-Dec] Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C.] to Bailie [James] McAlester, [Ronvachan, Scotland]
Of last year's arrivals from Scotland, there is not a one but is in a way of doing well. All made plenty of corn for themselves and families and seem to be well satisfied. The most of them is now "leards" for I believe two parts of them have got land of their own. I don't doubt but the landholders will put their own constructions on letters from N.C., but let them construe as they will, if they persist in augmenting their rents, in a few years some of their land may lie waste. Only wishes tenants would come to N.C. before they got so poor. One half the people who came here during the past four years would now be beggars had they stayed in Scotland. The rumors about servants are absolutely false, "for they get above serving when they come to [this] country"
As for Cousin Hector, alas, he is no more. He sailed from this port to the West Indies April last and no accounts of him since. He was married to a daughter of Daniel Taynish by whom he left two children, a girl and a boy.
I will endeavor to settle a correspondence with the young gentlemen your sons. Alexander and Angus McAlester, McIlcrest and McFiggan are in a good way. My own family consists of two boys and two girls by my first wife and the same number by my second. [NOTE: The reverse of the sheet on which this letter is written contains the continuation and complimentary close for LETTER #30.]
30. [1772 Apr] Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C. to John Boyd, Balinakill]
Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter by Mr. Simson. "[Your] being a friend to adventurers makes you more Deare to me & your goodness in wishing the poor & oprest releaved from the tyranni of their oppreasores shues a sprit of generosity & freedom which is seldom to be found in the gentlemen of that Country." Gives some description of the fruitfulness of Carolina--2 bushels of Indian corn seed will produce 600-700 bushels; wheat, barley, rye, oats, potatoes, tobacco--all grow extremely well. Once poor people are settled here, they are settled for life.
Your friend Dugald Campbell is with a merchant in Campbellton and will do very well. His father has purchased land where there is a clear plantation and tolerable good

houses. Mr. McMillan is gone with his son-in-law who is well settled on his own land.

[FROM THE CONTINUATION ON THE REVERSE OF #29]: I will make it my business to correspond with Mr. McAlester in Antigua; he may be of great service to me and I to him in trade. But, alas, Cousin Hector McAlester is no more. He sailed from this port twelve months ago and is never heard of since.

INCLUDING

31. [1772 Apr] Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C. to Alexander McAlester of Cour]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter of October 1. Believes his brother Hector will never return to N.C., principally through the influence of his wife (who acknowledges she is the only hindrance to his return).

The orphan of John Currie was drowned last summer, and the widow is married to one Tomson. John McCallum is overseer for my father-in-law. Samuel, Daniel, and Duncan McAlester live near Mr. Colvin, and all the Arran people come no further (which is about 60 miles below me--i.e. toward the seaboard). They will have Little Arran on Black River, which is where my father-in-law lives.

If brother Hector is not coming back to N.C., I wish he'd sell me Troy since it joins the rest of my lands and would enable me to settle my family joining one another.

32. [1772] [Alexander McAlester, Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C., to Mary McAlester [(Mrs. Hector)], Monyquill, Arran]

[Dear Sister] Chides her for preventing Hector's returning to North Carolina. Hector knows the country well, and she should rely on his judgment. Would give Alexander great pleasure to have them all in North Carolina, but if she and the rest of her family oppose the move, Alexander had rather they stayed in Scotland. True it is that money circulates more freely in Great Britain, but here the people breathe the air of liberty. We have no rents to pay up to the laird, only our quit rents which is three shillings per 100 acres, and some taxes for support of government. That is all that troubles us unless we are in debt. Confesses that had he an ample fortune, he'd rather live in Scotland.

With reference to his sister Ann, glad she is in good health and she is well fixed, since it was her misfortune to be at service.

My two oldest daughters have made runaway marriages since [my last letter to my brother]. They are both well, I'm told. I never have spoke to them nor I believe I never shall.

[NOTE: The above letter was written on the reverse of a cover enclosing an earlier letter from Hector in Arran to Alexander in North Carolina and sent in the care of Alexander Colvin of Colvin Hall, Black River, Cape Fear. That letter, however, has not survived in this collection.]

33. 1774 Jan 22. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C. to Hector McAlester, Monyquill, Arran]

Dear Brother. Sending this by Mr. William Campbell, a resident who has lived in N.C. for three years and will return in six months at most. Governor and General Assembly are at a stalemate and law suffers. The land office has been shut up, and there is no knowing if it will be opened or on what terms. People believe it will open with higher fees and augmented quit rents. Nobody knows why it has been closed unless it is to hinder emigration to America. In the past year we have had 700 souls from Skye and adjacent islands and a great many expected in the coming year.

Daniel McAlester died September last. The widow Currie and her son are both dead (she had married a Tomson about 2 years previously). Our sister Mrs. McNeill lost her eldest son last April, aged about 21 and very well grown. He was respected by all who knew him. She was more a widow when she lost him than ever as there was a large family of helpless children and all daughters but one boy named John who is about 16. My father-in-law died Jan 1773; mother-in-law is very frail.

34. 1774 May 31. Hector McAlester, Monyquill, Arran, to Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C.]

My dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter of Jan 19 last which replied to Hector's letter of 12 Sept 1771. Surprised his letter of July 1773 did not reach Alexander. In it told him of his determination to go to N.C. in summer of 1774 with most of his family (son Charles to come over in summer of 1775).

Tells of the death of Charles at sea when he and his sister were crossing to Islay in February when he fell overboard and was lost between Arran and Kintyre. His body was found two days later by fishermen on Island Davaar in the mouth of Campbeltown harbor.

Will not now be able to go to N.C., but must remain longer in an oppressed country reduced to beggary. "I shall never think myself happy this side of time until I see you & my friends in Carolina where I hope while I live to breathe the air of liberty and not want the Necessaries of life."

Concerned that I cannot enjoy the opportunity of my passage with our worthy friend Mr. Campbell Balole. He was kind enough to take the trouble of coming from Islay here to spend some days with me, and alas the very night he came to my house, brought the fatal news of my son being no more. You may judge what disappointment this must have been to him, as well as to me, who never have seen him since he came from Carolina. He sets off, he writes me, by the first of August. I am in hopes it will be in my power to see him off then. If it be the Almighty's will that we all meet in Carolina, what happy society shall we have together.

This letter will be handed to you by our blood relation Angus McAlester (an able bodied man between 30 and 40) who goes to try his fortune in Carolina. He lived in the town of

Tarbert (that is now, with the rest of that estate, fallen into the hands of Mr. Campbell Stonefield). His family consists of two pretty boys and a girl. His oldest boy is no more than 13 and writes a most beautiful hand and has the five common rules of arithmetic.

I am happy to hear that our cousin Mrs. Rutherford is so well married. Give her and her husband my compliments and tell her, her mother continues in the same way and lodging. Her cousin Provost McNeill died last year, and his son Charles is not in a good state of health. Aunt Katty Lossit is still languishing and consumptive. [Letter delivered by Angus McAlester.]

35. 1774 May 31. Hector McAlester, Monyquill, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C.

My dear Brother. Condoles on the death of his nephew McNeill, and is thankful that John remains. Wonders that he never hears from Ferquhard Campbell and that Alexander never mentions him or their sister Mrs. Campbell.

Surprised the land office is closed up. It must have been done by order of the Court of England. Why on earth have you neglected to pay the quit rents on my land as well as yours? It is but a small annual sum. Is glad to hear that Coll is now doing for himself.

INCLUDING

36. [1775 Spring] Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C. to Hector McAlester, Arran

Dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter [of 31 May 1774] by Angus McAlester. Condoles on the death of Charles.

Mr. Campbell of Balole is safe arrived with his family which consists of three daughters and one sister and servants, and William Campbell [has returned] with his sister's children (one girl and two boys). A Mr. McLean from Islay who came to see the country would learn more if he stayed until fall.

The colony is much alarmed over some acts of parliament passed last year, and thought the new parliament would repeal those pernicious acts which will bring American to near slavery if they should be put in execution. All the colonies are unanimously agreed not to accept them on any terms. They are fully determined to fight to the last before they will give up their most valuable privilege which is their liberty. I doubt not but if parliament persists in putting the acts in force, they will have a severe battle. I don't know but America will be the seat of war for some time.

When the General Assembly met in March last [1774] the governor dissolved them very abruptly, so I don't expect anything will be done until these affairs are settled between the mother country and her colonies. The land office is still shut, but there is talk that Lord Granville's land office will be opened this summer. It has not been opened for 20 years.

Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to see you in N.C., but doubtful that it is so ordered that we will ever meet. If you come, bring some tradesmen with you such as a

weaver, a blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker--all sorts of trade are very serviceable. If coopers are plentiful, bring me one. I have one negro boy a cooper, but for want of one being with him he does not do me half work.

There is no price for our commodities. Wilmington is full of tar and no shipping to carry it off. They have 70,000 barrels. If shipping don't come soon they must lose very considerable.

We understand there is 10,000 troops sent lately to Boston and 15,000 that was there before, which will make 25,000--too many to send to a new country that is destitute of ammunition. [NOTE: By early July 1774 Gage had 3,000 men in Boston, at the beginning of 1775, 4,500 combat troops, and by mid-June 6,340 to 6,716 troops. When the British evacuated Boston on 17 March 1776, there were only 11,000 soldiers in the town.]

37. 1774 Sept 29. John Boyd, Balinakill, to Alexander McAlester
[Cumberland County, N.C.]

Dear Cousin. Has seen his letter to Bailie [James] McAlester at Ronvachan dated 19 Jan in which mention is made of a letter to Boyd at the same time. If you gave a good account of N.C. in it, I suspect the letter has got into the hands of Scottish lairds who will keep it from me, knowing full well that I am a great friend to adventurers. Though the lairds do all they can to prevent emigration they are "falling on all the Methods in their power to force the poor people away from them by their violent oppression."

This is being delivered by Malcolm Smith (a very honest body) who is married to a cousin of yours (a clever alive woman), and hope you will help him. Remarks on the death of Alexander's nephew, Charles McAlester, "a pretty, promising young gentleman."

Compliments to Mrs. McAlester and my young cousins, also to Peter Simson and his wife.

INCLUDING

38. 1775 Jan 4. Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C., to
[John Boyd, Balinakill]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter delivered by Malcolm Smith. Wonders at the unreliability of mail since Boyd has not received his letters. He has written three to his cousin Cour, but never hears from him. Can't understand it. During differences between Great Britain and America, letters are more apt to miscarry. God knows where it will end.

The acts concerning Boston and Quebec have roused the spirit of every true American to that degree that they will not carry on any further trade or commerce with their mother country unless differences are reconciled. The acts will have to be repealed. Shutting up the land office so that emigrants cannot get land is very hard. They want to bring us under Parliament without any representation.

My family increases. I have two sons and two daughters by my first wife and four sons and three daughters by my second. Mr. and Mrs. Simson are in good health.

39. 1774 Dec 22. John Boyd, Tarbert, to Alexander McAlester Esq. of Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C.

Dear Cousin. Came to Tarbert by accident and met a mutual friend, Angus McAlester, son to Ronald McAlester who lived a good many years under your father and grandfather in the lands of Balinakill. He is on his way to N.C., and this is to recommend him to your care. He has a pretty, promising son who, if you will help get into business, will turn into a pretty fellow and may be an honor to his country. I saw your brother and his family recently in Arran, and have reason to believe they will go for N.C. next summer. [Letter delivered by Angus McAlester.]

INCLUDING

40. [1776 Jan?] Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C., to Hector McAlester, Arran]

Dear brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter of 22 Aug 1775. Wrote in reply to the letter you sent by the hand of Angus McAlester and sent my reply by Capt. Alexander McLean of Islay. However, Capt. McLean finding the ladies of N.C. more agreeable than the ladies of Scotland stayed to pay court to our cousin Mrs. Dubois. He says, though, that he sent the letter ahead by the vessel he was to have been on.

Condoles on his brother's troubles. Alexander's mother-in-law [Mrs. Alexander Colvin] and brother-in-law [John Colvin] died last November; he left his children, one boy and two girls, good property. Alexander mentions his son Coll. Sister Molly is well and her family, Mr. Campbell and his, our sister Grisse, and Mr. Rutherford and his family.

Doesn't know what to say about purchasing Troy from his brother. It's a bad time to be making a purchase. "In this poor country there is nothing but warlike preparations amaking in every province. God only knows the fate of the Colonies for by all probability Britain intends to Subdue them and if so I don't know but some of us will be glad to see it [i.e., see Britain try it]." 1000 provincial troops are being raised to be in readiness in this province, but what signifies men without arms or ammunition? Our case is desperate. We have no law but what our Provincial Congress prescribes. Our governor has been aboard a British man of war the past six months, and calls no assembly, but issues his proclamation against all congresses and committees.

I have two new sons, Ronald and Charles, of the same age.

INCLUDING

41. [1776 Jan?] Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C. to John Boyd, Balinakill]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of his delivered by Angus McAlester who, as yet, has no settlement. It is more

difficult to settle with the land office closed than previously. We are fully determined to stand to the resolves of Congress concerning nonimportation of British goods [after Dec. 1, 1774] nor to send any of our produce after the first of September [1775].

I have Angus McAlester's son with me at school. Mr. and Mrs. Simson is in health. I have had two fine boys whom I have named Ronald and Charles.

42. 1775 Aug 20. Angus McAlester of Loup, Ardpatrik, to Alexander McAlester, near Cross Creek, N.C.

Introducing Mary McAlester who, with her mother, brother, and sister are going to N.C. They are quite poor, but think if they once get "in that Blessed Country of yours" they will prosper.

Loup's family now consists of a son of ten (at school in England) and three daughters with a governess. His only brother [Col. Archibald, 35th Regt.], poor fellow, is at Boston. Has no doubt Britain will make the colonies yield, but at the expense of a deal of money.

If you see Campbell Balole, offer him and his family my best wishes for his prosperity, and tell him I expected he would have written me on his landing in America. He professed himself my friend, but the air of America may have changed him.

Inquires about Angus McAlester, who, if he keeps sober, has parts to make a livelihood for himself and ten children; want of sobriety was his greatest fault.

43. 1775 Aug 22. Hector McAlester, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Brother. Refers back to his letter of May 31, 1774, and the death of Charles. His family still have not recovered from the shock of it, and he himself is greatly failed and fatigued by it.

Recently heard from Mr. Colvin of Black River with news that Coll, oldest son of Alexander, appears to be on the verge of marrying a woman of fortune. "I wonder mightily you did not write me." "Our brother Mr. Campbell I never hear from. I know not what can be the reason. Suppose he was not married to our Sister, would expect a friendly Correspondence from him."

Mentions sudden death of his brother-in-law in the sitting room of his house last spring after a violent pain in his stomach; Mrs. McAlester, her sister, and three of Hector's daughters were sitting in the room when the death occurred. His affairs were mixed with those of a fishing company in Campbeltown for which his father [Mr. Fullarton of Corse] had stood security. Our cousin Provost Peter Stuart of Campbeltown and one Robert Stuart (married to the provost's sister) had management of the company. They have both left the country and gone to St. John's Island off the coast of North America. Hector is now obliged to deal with the matter and may have to sell a small "subject" of land. I must now

drop all thought of going to Carolina--would wish I had its value for Troy to enable me to keep the bit of ground here for the support of my family.

I have had offers from N.C. for Troy. Godfrey McNeill offered 300 guineas but would not tell for whom. I told him it was natural you should have the first offer of it. I hear our brother Mr. Campbell's land joins Troy on the lower side. I will never write him till he writes me, but give my compliments to him, and to our sister Mrs. McNeill and hers.

P.S. Many from Arran were determined to emigrate this season, but the troubles in Boston frighten them, and all the landholders are increasing their fears by persuading them they will be pressed for sea or land service by British men of war before they reach shore. How does our cousin Mrs. Rutherford? Her mother is as she left her.

INCLUDING

44. [1776 Apr 20] Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County, N.C., to "Sir"

A letter to an acquaintance in the Provincial Congress asking opinion and advice on serviceability of a bail bond for the release of Ferquhard Campbell and Thomas Rutherford, held in Halifax jail by order of the Congress for complicity in the Highland uprising and Battle of Moore's Creek [Feb 27, 1776].

45. 1775 Dec 20. Neill McAlester, Camp, Barnards Creek [New Hanover County, N.C.], to Colonel Alexander McAlester, Cumberland County.

Honored Father. Acknowledges receipt of his father's letter on Dec. 10. Speaks of his father's advice about "looking before me amongst Strangers" and the fact that the men complain to Capt. Rowan that he is bashful and will not associate with them. Speaks of courts martial he has sat on. Says they have been busy making battery and breastworks at Brunswick and Wilmington but are doing nothing "at the noble Camp on Barnon's Creek." Asks for scarlet cloth from Mr. Gillies' store in Cross Creek for coat and breeches--"Every Officer in the Camp has there Euniform But myself. I have writ to my uncal Farquard Campbell to procure the scarlet for me as he gets his goods on Reasonable terms."

46. [1776 Summer] Isabella Macdonald to Capt. Neill McAlester
Writing at the behest of her husband, James MacDonald of Rosebush [one of the prisoners from the Battle of Moore's Creek who had been sent into confinement at Sharpsburg, Maryland] asking for payment for some silk belonging to her husband that had fallen into McAlester's hands. She intends to "set off to the North" and would like to be paid the price of the silk right away.

47. 1777 May 15. J. Galbraith, Wilmington, to Neill McAlester, Cross Creek, N.C.

Dear Neill, Messrs. Speirs and Jamison arrived yesterday by whom I expected to have heard from you. A Lt. Clements and a

John Brown who left Cross Creek on Saturday bought in Wilmington the veriest trifles and always gave an \$8.00 bill to be changed. Twenty-four counterfeit bills have been taken up. They were jailed to await the consequence of their temerity but have since escaped.

Asks Neill to cause two letters to be delivered to Mrs. Jordan ("Angelick Maid") without letting her know Neill's role in their delivery. Sally Maxwell claims Galbraith was to have married her (so says Hannah at Elizabethtown); has written forbidding her ever again to own an acquaintance with him if she valued her character. Please contradict such talk without publishing Miss Maxwell's shame.

48. 1777 Sept 28. David Smith to Neill McAlester
This concerns letters enclosing payments to two persons (presumably for commissary goods purchased at Gov. Caswell's behest).
49. 1779 Apr 23. Daniel McNeill, Dorchester, S.C., to Capt. Neill McAlester
Dear Cousin. Offers to sell to Capt. McAlester a pair of saddlebags and a cutteau with belt and swivels.
50. [1781 July?] [The Rev. John McLeod, Suffolk, Virginia] to The Presbyterian Congregation in Cumberland County, N.C.
My dear Friends. Prevailing conditions in Carolina would not allow me to continue as your pastor without obliging me to forfeit my privileges as a subject [of the King of Great Britain] and obliging me to enter into engagements inconsistent with my principles. I hope the manner in which I left you will be thought justifiable. I never meant to throw off my relation to you as your teacher. Many times I declared from the pulpit that so long as you maintained your side of our engagement I should maintain mine. Our relationship has only ceased for a time (a time that has severed many joined by the most sacred bonds of connection and consanguinity). There is nothing for which I more honestly wish than to be restored to you.
My appointment in the Army put me in a position of enjoying pecuniary emoluments superior to those I enjoyed or could expect to enjoy in Cumberland. [My life] since I became acquainted with the Army has been as agreeable as that of any in my line. Still, I cannot find that satisfaction in following the fate of armies and the tumult of a military life which I might reasonably expect in serene and calm life among a settled congregation, and particularly amongst you. While I had the honor of serving you as your pastor I found myself situated in as comfortable a life as any of my profession should ever wish to enjoy.
The circumstances in which I am just now situated prevent my writing to you as fully as my heart desires. The bearer, if he arrives in Cumberland before I have an opportunity of seeing or sending to you, will more particularly inform you. I am immediately on the eve of setting out for New York, and

should I be happy enough to escape the imminent danger which I must unavoidably run through, I mean to remain with the British Legion (to which regiment I am chaplain) until this miserable contest is brought to [an end].

I have had offers of returning to Scotland, to a parish there. While you choose to receive [instruction] from me I would not change you for any congregation I have ever served whether in America or in my native country. Being entirely independent of you (and able to continue so), it is from my heart when I say that so long as you choose to continue your obligations to me, I will cheerfully resign my present appointments which amount to upward of 180 pounds sterling a year and return to Cumberland, there to close my days among you in the service of our beloved Lord and Saviour. Therefore, be so obliging as to take the earliest opportunity of letting me know your sentiments. As my resolutions in regard to my future settlement must in a great measure depend on the result of your opinion, I have no doubt but I will be favored with it as early as circumstances will allow. I intended writing to the members of each meeting house, but my time is so circumscribed that it is with difficulty I can command so much as to write this one.

51. 1783 Oct 22. Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C.] to William McAlester [Excise Office, Port Greenock?]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of letter of May 10, 1783 with news of friends in Scotland. Is happy to revive their correspondence after a ten years silence. Mr. Fleming [presumably the bearer of the letter] is a young genteel man of parts who seems calculated for trade. It will be to his eventual advantage for having come over to commence trade so early after the war, but at present there is no produce for market. We have done nothing these nine years. We are hoping to make as much produce as we can. I will render him all the service in my power.

My family consists of five sons and five daughters besides one son that married and has three children, and two daughters each of whom has four children. Sister Molly's family consists of one son and five daughters. Mrs. Isabel that was married to Mr. Campbell left, when she died, five daughters. Sister Grissel is still single and lives with me.

Malcolm Smith and wife are well and have two sons and one daughter.

INCLUDING

52. 1783 Oct 29. Alexander McAlester [Cumberland County, N.C.] to Hector McAlester, [Arran]

Dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter of May 6, 1783 via Mr. Fleming. Glad to hear from him after so long a silence imposed by the war; regrets to hear he and his wife are failing so rapidly for it foretells his own decline. My family consists of Alexander, Ronald, Charles, John, Peggy, Flora, Molly, Catherine, Isabel by my present wife; by the former wife, Coll, Janet, and Grissel who all have families of

their own. There was Neill also, the most promising of them all, who died October 1779, and one suckling infant that we lost in the smallpox.

Our sister Isabel who was Mrs. Campbell departed this life in October 1780, much lamented; the family consisted of five girls (one dead since). Mr. Campbell has married since and has a son named James.

Our sister Molly is well as are her family: John, Flora, Jean, Polly, Peggy, Janet. Sister Grissel is in good health.

We are burdened with taxes. Our land, cattle, and estates are taxed very high, and we are obliged to pay so much in hard money every year. We are greatly in debt which will keep us under for some time.

Wants the deed for Troy so he can make one to Ferquhard Campbell; that will enable Alexander to collect the purchase price and send it to Hector. Campbell will not pay the purchase price [for the part of Troy he has bargained to buy] until he has a deed.

Would like to send Hector a cask of rice of his own manufacture. Will recommend all the custom in his power to Mr. Fleming.

53. 1784 Feb 14. Hector McAlester, Springbank [Arran], to Alexander McAlester, North West Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Brother. Has heard from Mr. James Fleming, Wilmington, dated November 1, telling of his visit in your house when he saw a beautiful and hopeful family of children all mostly grown up. He assumed you'd want to send a letter by him, so he delayed closing his packet till the last minute. Mr. Fleming makes no mention of our brother-in-law, Mr. Campbell, other than that you had said you had sold him half of Troy to very good advantage for ready cash (though not revealing the sum).

My friend Mr. Fleming's being there affords a sure communication for our correspondence and your remitting me the price of my land. Explains how badly he needs the money. Brings up the subject of the back lands of Troy to which he says Alexander made entries in his own name after Hector had entered caveats in the Provincial Secretary's office. Reminds Alexander that he still has a debt of 686 pounds, 2 shillings, 7 pence currency against the estate of their Uncle Dugald McNeill of Lossit whose plantation, Port Neill, is now in the hands of Alexander. Is sure land in N.C. has greatly increased in value, "as Emigration is begun from all Countries in Europe to America, especially from Scotland & Ireland and will no doubt continue if lands turn not cheaper here, which Setts at this time from five pounds Sterling to forty Shillings per acre of yearly rents, and in General twenty Shillings Sterl. per acre for farms in the Country, besides the publick burthens which are very heavy, ever Since the commencement of the unhappy warr with America."

Hopes Alexander will recommend all the good customers he can find to Mr. Fleming's store. Wants family news from America. Many of our cousins are in the East Indies and doing well, some of them expected home with fortunes.

54. 1784 May 20. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C.], to Hector McAlester, Springbank, Arran, Buteshire

Dear Brother. Glad to have news of Hector and his family by Mr. Fleming, whose vessel left for Scotland before Alexander got his letters aboard. The letters are probably still at Wilmington where they've been since the end of November 1783. This letter is being sent by Capt. Cook who will see you before he returns to N.C. and will relate all the news.

Ten or twelve years ago, sold part of Troy to Mr. Campbell, but cannot collect payment for failure of ability to give him a good title to the land. If Hector will send Alexander a deed to Troy back by Capt. Cook, he can make an effectual deed to Campbell and send money to Hector when trade flourishes again. At present trade is very dull, produce very low, goods very high, and cash very hard to come at. Even currency is scarce and taxes high. There are heavy taxes on land, slaves, horses, and cattle. We have a peace now, but without some alteration we will not be able to stand long in the condition we are in at present.

Explains again to Hector the story of the sheriff's sale of Port Neill and how Alexander came to buy it at the vendue. Land prices are now low; people moving to the back country lowers land prices. In answer to charges of having taken advantage of Hector, Alexander retorts that though it was in his power to do so, he despises such behavior. With reference to Hector's caveat of forty years earlier, Alexander denies ever having heard anything of it. He got only 300 acres of land back of Troy, the remainder having been granted to other enterers.

Our brother Mr. Campbell and his family are in health. Our sister left him five daughters. The oldest was married to one from Charleston and lived only about a year [after the marriage]. The next is married to Col. Thomas Armstrong. The other three are with their father, who is married to a Mrs. Smith by whom he has a fine boy called James.

Our sister Mrs. McNeill is well. She has one son and five daughters. The oldest is married to an Ochiltree from Islay.

My own family by my first wife was two boys (Coll and Neill) and two girls (Janet and Grissell). Neill is dead some years ago. By the present Mrs. McAlester I have five boys and five girls: Alexander, Hector, Ronald, Charles, John, Margaret, Flora, Molly, Catherine, Bell. Two oldest daughters and Coll are married and have families of their own.

Our minister is a young man of your acquaintance, Dugald Craford, a very able preacher in Erse and English.

INCLUDING

55. 1784 May 24. Alexander McAlester [Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C., to Captain _____ Cook]
Asks him to deliver #54 to his brother Hector in Arran, and to collect those letters left at Mr. Fleming's store in Wilmington and deliver those as well. Please collect all the local news you can and take it back with you. Remember me to all friends who ask after me in the "land of Cakes." Miss Jean Colvin sends her best regards to the captain and wishes for his safe return.
56. 1785 Aug 12. Hector McAlester, Springbank, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, Barmore, Cape Fear, N.C.
Dear Brother. Surprised to have heard nothing from him in over a year. No price has yet been offered for Troy, though Alexander has made a bargain with brother-in-law Mr. Campbell for 200 acres of it (the price to be paid upon his getting a good title). You don't really suppose me foolish enough to give a title before I know what payment I am to receive? You never mention a purchase price. It embarrasses Hector to have to admit to friends and connections in Scotland that he has never had sixpence worth of profit from his N.C. investment of more than 40 years standing. Hector continues to receive offers for Troy, but would like Alexander to have first refusal and is giving him this last chance. From all Alexander's past letters, which Hector has, he has always expressed eagerness to have Troy. If he is serious, now is the time to strike a bargain. Hector has been told it is worth 1,000 pounds sterling--Alexander should know its worth and what it is worth to him (more than any other) since it adjoins his own land.
Family and all friends in Argyllshire are well. Compliments to Alexander's family, sister Mrs. McNeill's family, and brother-in-law Mr. Campbell's family.
57. 1786 Feb 18. Hector McAlester, Springbank [Arran], to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, near Fayetteville, N.C.
Dear Brother. Oldest daughter is married to a Kintyre shipmaster, Neill Shannon, who has made several voyages to Virginia. Mr. Shannon is against Hector parting with Troy, and is desirous of going with his wife to live in N.C. Hector has kept all of Alexander's letters, and has his letters to their cousin McAlester of Cour, as well, and it certainly seemed from them that Alexander wanted to purchase Troy. He has had the use of Troy for 40 years (has probably cut the timber), and Hector has never had sixpence from it. Alexander has got to make a reasonable offer for Troy, and so far as Port Neill is concerned, about 60 pounds sterling is still owing to Hector from Lossit's estate. A reasonable price for Troy should take into account not just the land but the stock and household furnishings Hector left there. Hector has been told Troy is worth a thousand pounds sterling, but Alexander must surely know its value. If there is no opportunity by Cape Fear, write by Virginia or South Carolina by the next

post making an offer; Hector will endeavor to keep Shannon from a foreign voyage until then.

How have you kept your promise to send your sister a barrel of rice? I hope you are not as negligent in other matters. Blessings from my family to yours.

58. [1786 June] [Alexander McAlester, Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C., to Hector McAlester, Springbank, Arran]

Dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter of Jan. 16, 1786 in which Hector says he has written twice in twelve months. Alexander has had only this letter asking what part of Troy had been sold to Ferquhard Campbell--it was the 200 acres of prime land at the lower end of the tract (joining Campbell's upper line). Campbell gave a bond in the sum of 200 pounds for it, payable when he has a title to the land. Without doubt Hector has had offers from N.C., but they were from persons who were no judges of land or land value [if they offered 1000 pounds]. The top price given for land in Alexander's neighborhood is 20 shillings per acre. Mr. Campbell would not have given 20 shillings per acre for the Troy land had it not been prime land adjoining his own.

Alexander has had it in his power to defraud Hector in many ways, but he has never intended to do so. He is willing to give 300 pounds proclamation money for the remaining 400 acres of Troy providing Hector will give him two or three years to pay the sum.

It is true Alexander has enjoyed the land for forty-odd years. Under the laws of N.C., that gives him absolute title. If Hector attempts to sell Troy to anybody else "you may Depend that I should stand a stiff lawsute before I would give it up."

Our state is in a bad way. There is no price for our commodities; we have no open trade with either Britain or France. They bring us goods and take away our commodities at their own price. Our only export that brings a price is sawmill lumber. We have great reason to be fearful of internal troubles, we are so burdened with taxes and our currency so scarce. It is all we can do to raise currency to pay taxes.

If you know of a young, clever fellow, a minister, that can preach fluent English and Erse, he would meet with great encouragement to come here, for there are three vacant places now in want. I am much in want of a teacher for my children. If you could get one to agree for two or three years and sent him over, I would engage him immediately.

Our brother-in-law, Mr. Campbell, is married to one of this country's widows and has two pretty boys by her. Our sister Mrs. McNeill and family are in good health; sister Grisel likewise.

59. 1787 Apr 30. Hector McAlester, Springbank, Arran, to Alexander McAlester, New Troy, Cape Fear, N.C.

Dear Brother. Letter sent by Neill McGachy. Acknowledges receipt of letter of Nov. 24, 1786 which Hector thinks

"thoughtlessly conceived". "You was but young indeed when our Father and Mother died, and seems you have forgot our Transactions at that time."

Reminds Alexander of those transactions by rehearsing his purchase of a small plantation opposite Gov. Johnston's plantation, Brompton [on Cape Fear River, Bladen County, N.C.], which he named Greenock where he cultivated a crop of wheat with the help of the Brompton slaves after the death of Mr. Hamilton of Hailpark deprived him of an office on the provincial establishment. When Gov. Johnston moved to Eden House, near Edenton, Hector sold his crop and Greenock and purchased a plantation called Irish _____ which he renamed Troy. Hector has all of Alexander's letters to him and others in which he expressed desire to purchase Troy, and never till of late pretended to have any title to it. Alexander knows he has no title. It was extraordinary conduct in Alexander to sell 200 acres of Troy to Mr. Campbell for 220 pounds and then offer Hector 300 pounds for the remaining 440 acres. Hector does not begrudge Mr. Campbell's having the 200 acres at less than their value, but Alexander should pay proportionately for the remainder. The timber Alexander has cut from the land should indemnify him for any encumbrances he has had to pay (not to speak of the furnishings, stock, and crop Hector left on Troy), or the accounts of 410 pounds, 18 shillings, sixpence in bills, and 136 pounds, 15 shillings, sixpence in open accounts by good debtors--of which Hector has an exact list). Assumes Mr. Campbell's bond for 220 pounds is bearing interest since he's enjoying the use of the land.

Thanks Hector for his wishes on Mary's marriage to Mr. Shannon who has taken command of a vessel sailing from Greenock to Jamaica. Hector has given him ample powers to transact his business and dispose of his concerns in Carolina. Hopes Shannon will be able to see Alexander and come to an amicable settlement.

In your letter of June last you inquire about a clergyman and particularly for a teacher for your children. Teachers will engage to go abroad but for high wages (double the 10 to 15 pounds sterling they get at home). Clergymen will not engage to go abroad for under a stipend of [torn document]. You can have a teacher or a minister right away if you can pay these wages and stipends.

Has never had a farthing from his 686 pounds, 2 shillings, 7 pence claim on Uncle Lossit's estate, though it was proved in Bladen County court on Sept. 17, 1745. If Alexander retains any part of Lossit's estate of Port Neill, Hector would like to know that. Asks what price was got by Alexander's sale of their father's survey of land at the forks.

Asks Alexander to consider judiciously all he has said and to act the part of a brother to Hector and his family should Mr. Shannon (who sailed about a month ago) meet with him.

Hector announces the birth of his grandson, Charles. Charles and his mother live with Hector and his wife (both of whom are in but a frail state of health). Greetings to Alexander's family, and to their sisters and their families.

60. 1787 [June 30]. Alexander McAlester [Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C.] to Hector McAlester of Springbank, Arran, Buteshire Dear Brother. Acknowledges receipt of letter of April 30, 1787, delivered by Mr. McGachy. After Hector's letter of January 1786, he should not be surprised at the style of Alexander's reply. Alexander has explained why the remainder of Troy is not worth the same price as the 200 acres of prime land already sold. Alexander recalls still all the transactions entered into at Cape Fear. If Alexander was as precise in accounting with Hector as Hector is with him, Troy would be in his debt. Of all those hundreds of pounds of debts owing to Troy, Alexander never saw 10 pounds; he could not sue to recover, having no power of attorney (though he often wrote asking for a power). With reference to Lossit's N.C. estate, Alexander wishes matters were brought to a head. The sooner Hector gives him a deed or a power, the better.

Alexander could pay a price for Troy no sooner than he has said, but would try to pay as quickly as possible.

We are in great confusion at present modelling our Constitution. Which way it will go is no knowing as yet. The Convention will sit again on Thursday next.

Our congregation have sent asking Mr. McFarland in Glenurchie to come as minister. Hopes he will have left before this letter is delivered (if he has not done so already). We are greatly in want. There are places for three more and will make at each place at least 150 pounds a year.

Daughter Margaret is married to a Mr. Rogers from South Carolina. Sister Mrs. McNeill at the Bluff and her children are well. Mr. McGachy will give you all the news.

61. 1792 Nov 10. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Mrs. Hector McAlester, Springbank, Arran]

Dear Sister. Acknowledges receipt of hers by Capt. McAlester in which she mentions having written him four times. Assures her he has heard nothing from any of them since Mr. McGachy was in this country (by whom he returned an answer), which is five years ago.

Condoles with her on the death of his brother Hector and assures her he would have written her had he known of it earlier. Alexander had heard from Mr. Lindsay, when he came here from Scotland, that Hector was bedfast.

Alexander has lost his wife who has left him nine children (five boys and four girls). The oldest, married to Mr. Rogers of South Carolina before her mother's death, made ten. Hopes to get the children settled. The youngest boy [John] has been bound to Capt. [James] McAlester, and the second youngest [Charles] to a silversmith and jeweller. Alexander, Hector, and Ronald are at home [as are] Flora, Mary, Katherine, and Isabella. None of the children by his first wife are married but Coll and Janet.

Our sister Mrs. McNeill died twelve months past. She left a son named John and five daughters: Flora, Jean, Polly, Peggy, and Janet.

Our sister Grissell is in good health but has hurt her knee in a fall and is lame.

Of the children of Mrs. Campbell [i.e., their sister Isabella who died in 1780], Nancy the oldest is married to Mr. Buchanan, and Isabella the youngest is yet single.

Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay are in good health (though I have not yet seen her), and Mary is very well.

You will see in my [last] letter to my brother what answer I sent him [concerning business affairs]. I will still perform as promised then, if your family needs support greater than mine. Should I make up my accounts, the balance owing to me would be the greater, however.

Refers her to Capt. McAlester for news.

62. 1793 June 23. Capt. James McAlester, Montreal, to Alexander McAlester [the Younger], Troy, near Fayetteville, Cumberland County, N.C.

Dear Sir. Your brother [John] is well. We had a six weeks passage home where we stayed for three months. Your brother visited his aunt and cousins in Arran for seven weeks; they made so much of him that he wanted to stay ashore altogether. We sailed from Greenock April 11 and had a seven-weeks passage to Quebec, thence to Montreal where we are lading wheat for Barcelona. We'll go from Spain to wherever our freight takes us. He seems not so fond of the sea as I could wish.

Both he and John have had a letter from Charles. Is sorry to learn Mr. McDiarmid is not well. Is drinking the health of all in a bumper of grog. Compliments to friend Duncan Stewart and to Mr. Campbell's family.

63. 1795 Mar 2. Mary Shannon, Springbank [Arran] to Alexander McAlester Esq. of Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C.

My dear Uncle. Mother wrote last April of our joy in Cousin Jack's visit. "Our lovely and darling Cousin left us in May laste and saild for St. Kitts in good health and spirits, and on his Arrival there he was sised with a contagion that raged there and was cutt of[f] the third day and the task I have now undertaken in communicating it to you my Dearest Uncle renews my distress." [Two and a half pages of condolences.]

Charles' letter of Apr 26, 1793, gave pleasure to them all. Still hopes he will keep his resolution (if times will settle). Mr. Shannon intends seeing Uncle Alexander. Mother is very frail and is unable to write. The writer has had another son (August 1793), named for her dearest father [Hector], and all three of her sons are very promising. Wishes Uncle Alexander would send her some remittance [for sale of lands of Troy] so her husband would not be obliged to go to sea. (Endorsed, "From Scotland; Received October 15th 1795.")

64. 1800 Dec 24. Mary Shannon, Springbank [Arran] to Alexander McAlester Esq. of Barmore, Fayetteville, N.C. [formerly A.McA. the Younger]

Dear Cousin. Would not have supposed from John's affectionate disposition that Alexander could have been so unnatural to his near relations as to neglect letting her know of her uncle's death. Has had no news of them since the letter John wrote before his death. She has lost her husband, and her sister Grace has lost hers [Capt. James McAlester], whom you all knew. Capt McAlester left one daughter who lives with my sister Margaret who married a Mr. James McAlester of our own family. They now live here at Springbank as I went to Ayr for the education of my children. My sister Wortley is with the boys at Ayr, while I have been at Springbank for the past twelve months.

She has before her Uncle Alexander's letter of June 27, 1786, to her father with proposals concerning the sale of Troy and division of the proceeds, as well as one from another person in the neighborhood offering 1000 pounds for it. Hopes her cousin will remit what is due her late father, or that he will bring it himself to Scotland. Wants news of his brothers and sisters and cousins.

65. 1801 Nov 30. Mary Shannon, Springbank [Arran], to Alexander McAlester, Barmore, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Cousin. This is the fourth letter I have written within these two years--have had answer to none. Her father made over his right to Troy to her husband who is now dead. She wishes her cousin to settle the business. She will probably empower Mr. Fleming, who trades to N.C. and is known to Cousin Alex, to act for her. She is thinking of putting the matter into a lawyer's hands. She really must have payments from Alexander.

If they were on the footing she would wish, he ought to be interested in her and her family. She would apply to him for advice and assistance did not his indifference put that out of her power.

66. 1802 Feb 25. Mary Shannon, Springbank [Arran], to Alexander McAlester, Esq., Barmore, Cape Fear River, N.C.

Dear Cousin. This is the fourth letter I have written within these eighteen months--have had answer to none. She wants a settlement about the Troy property. She may, with reluctance, be obliged to put the matter into the hands of a lawyer. She has both his father's letter (of May 15, 1787) and Ferquhard Campbell's letter on the subject mentioning Mr. Campbell's bond for 220 pounds and his father's proposition of paying 300 pounds for the remainder of Troy. She is willing to forego interest if the principal is paid right away--otherwise she must insist on the whole.

It would give every member of her family great happiness to see her cousin, and she would gladly defray his expenses in visiting from her proceeds from Troy.

67. 1802 Apr 14. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Mary Shannon, Springbank, Arran]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of two letters, long after they were posted, in August and October 1801. His father's instructions were to pay the Springbank family the money for the Troy lands agreeable to his letter of Nov. 1786. Mr. Campbell is perfectly willing to pay the amount of his bond, but only upon receipt of a valid title; interest, however, he says is payable on a bond only from its due date, and his bond is payable only upon receipt of a title. If she and her two sisters (and their husbands, if married) will execute and send over an attested deed, he will remit by bills of exchange on London, Liverpool, or Glasgow.

It would give Alexander infinite pleasure to see his cousins and friends in North Britain, but neither his business nor his inclination prompts him "to venture on so wide and boisterous an ocean as separates us."

My brother Hector is married and has three children; I also am married and have one child; my brother Charles remains unmarried; all my sisters but one are married and have children.

68. [1802 Spring] [Alexander McAlester, Barmore, Cumberland County, N.C., to Mrs. Mary Shannon, Springbank, Arran]

Dear Cousin. A postscript to his letter of April 14, 1802, giving her the metes and bounds of Troy and reciting its chain of title (1737 patent to Isaac Wayne, deeded by him to Gabriel Wayne, and by him deeded to Hector McAlester).

Offers condolences for the death of Mr. Shannon and her brother-in-law, Capt. McAlester. He had daily expected to hear of Capt. McAlester's arrival in Wilmington, and had no notion of his death before her letter of March 1, 1801.

Has just learned from his brother-in-law, Benjamin Rogers, that his sister Margaret died on the 13th following a stillbirth. She lived about 85 miles from here in South Carolina and left six girls (the oldest only 14 or 15 years old).

Is glad to hear of Mary's three sons. Did Capt. and Mrs. McAlester have children? How many of you sisters are alive? I am now upward of 36 years of age, have never seen the ocean (living about 100 miles from it) and am unlikely ever to visit you. It is true I failed to inform you of my father's death. The Rev. Colin Lindsay told me that your mother had died, and I had no idea where to address a letter to you.

69. 1802 Nov 16. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C.] to Mary Shannon, Springbank [Arran]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt on October 5 and 18 of her letters of Nov. 30, 1801 and Feb. 25, 1802. This is the third letter he has written her and trusts by now she has

received the other two. In my first letter I told you of applying to Mr. Campbell and his reply upon advice of a lawyer, that he would pay the amount of his bond upon receiving a title to the Troy lands but would not pay interest on the bond. I included [a copy of?] the lawyer's advice in my first letter to you.

After my father's death, Mr. Campbell proposed surrendering to me my father's bond to make a title if I would surrender back to him his bond to pay 220 pounds. He suggested I enter the lands anew to prevent an escheat, but I suggested my father's right in the lands would bar an escheat. He then suggested that I have Troy divided by survey into five equal parts [for each of the children of Coll McAlester: Hector, Alexander, Mary, Grissella, and Isabella--apparently excluding Ann], and said if he held more than his share [as representative of his deceased wife Isabella] he would pay the balance. I would not agree to this proposal.

Did your father make over his right in the land of Troy to Mr. Shannon by deed, or was there merely a power of attorney? You will find by my letter of April 14, 1802, that I, too, desire the business settled amicably, but it cannot be settled without a deed. Alexander would like to have a friendly correspondence with her and her sisters, as well.

70. 1809 July 3. Alexander McAlester, Barmore [Cumberland County, N.C., to Mary Shannon, Springbank, Arran]

Dear Cousin. Acknowledges receipt of the letter from her son [Charles] dated March 29, 1804, in which he says Mr. Campbell is obliged either to pay interest on his bond or to pay rent for use of the land. Mr. Campbell died last March twelvemonth. I think the November before he died, I told him your son's opinion, and he said he'd not pay one cent unless the law awarded it to the Shannons. He then wanted me to surrender his old bond to pay 220 pounds in exchange for a new one he would execute; I refused. I spoke to his son James (his executor) who is not fully informed of all particulars. He says he could not pay interest unless compelled by law.

I wish you would send a power of attorney, as Charles says you intend, and an attested copy of uncle's will.