

Trent University Archives

Finding Aid - Frances Stewart fonds. 1994 additions (94-006)

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Frances Stewart fonds. 1994 additions

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Summary information

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| Repository: | Trent University Archives |
| Title: | Frances Stewart fonds. 1994 additions |
| Reference code: | 94-006 |
| Date: | Photocopied 1978 (creation) |
| Physical description: | 38 cm of textual records |

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Frances Anne Stewart (nee Browne) was born May 24, 1794, daughter of Reverend Francis Browne and Anna Maria Noble, in Dublin, Ireland. In 1796, Rev. Browne died quite suddenly in front of his wife. The resulting shock left Frances' mother somewhat of an invalid until she died in 1809. Frances was left in the care of her great-uncle, Robert Waller in Allanstown, Ireland, where she was raised by Harriet Beaufort, who managed the household. Harriet was a well educated young woman, and sought to give Frances the same quality of education. Under Harriet's instruction, Frances received a much more academic education than was the norm for young girls of those days. In the summer of 1816, Frances, and her aunt Susan went to visit some distant friends, the Stewarts, who lived near Belfast. This is where Frances met her future husband, Thomas Alexander Stewart (1786-1847). They were married December 16, 1816. Thomas worked for the firm of Robert Reid and Son, which manufactured linen, cotton and silk. When the company ran into trouble, and eventually bankruptcy, Frances and Thomas decided to emigrate to Canada. The Stewarts went with Thomas' brother-in-law, and former business partner, Robert Reid and his family. The party of 27 set sail from Belfast Lough, on June 1, 1822. Seven weeks were spent on the ship before reaching Quebec. From there they traveled to Kingston, and then on to York, where Stewart and Reid were each granted 1200 acres, provided they settled in an unsurveyed township. Douro Township was suggested as a promising region. On September 9, 1822, Stewart and Reid traveled to the area with Richard Birdsall, the surveyor, and each chose land on the Otonabee River. Life in Douro Township was very isolated for Frances, but she managed well on her own, looking after her home and children. Thomas Stewart died in 1847 from typhoid fever, and Frances Anne died several years later on February 24, 1872 at Goodwood. Extensive biographical information on the Stewart family, plus friends, neighbours, and associates, may be found in accession 02-001.

Custodial history

This fonds was created by Jean Shearman and her sisters. It was in the custody of Jean Shearman before it was donated to the Trent University Archives.

Scope and content

This addition to the fonds represents a compendium of Stewart materials. It consists of 5 volumes of transcriptions of letters, journals and other papers of Frances Stewart of Douro Township, Upper Canada, and other family members. These 5 volumes transcribe materials of varying provenance and location and were made by Jean Shearman and her sisters. Interfiled within the volumes is the Stewart-Dunlop fonds [(94-007)] (<https://archives.trentu.ca/index.php/94-007>) which is comprised of photocopies of correspondence and a family tree; the correspondence is interfiled where it would naturally occur chronologically and the family tree is located at the beginning of Vol. 1. **Note: In 2013, the original letters were received for many of the 94-007 items; the originals are processed as [13-008.](<https://archives.trentu.ca/index.php/13-008>)**

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on contents of fonds

Immediate source of acquisition

This fonds was donated by Jean Shearman.

Restrictions on access

None

Related material

Associated material located at the Archives of Ontario.

For related records see: 69-1003, 71-001, 75-011, 93-1013, 94-007, 94-1002 and 02-001.

Accruals

This fonds, along with 74-1006, 77-1006, 78-008, 92-1002, 94-1001, and 97-023, is an addition to 74-1005.

Note [General]

Note: O=original; T=transcript; P=photocopy.

FINDING AID

Following are examples of letters found in the transcribed volumes. The number in bold refers to the page number of the transcription of the said letter.

ca. 1780

Elizabeth Waller to Harriet Beaufort re. misunderstanding

'and now my dear farewell- with this assurance; that tho' perhaps sometimes I may appear irritable & sometimes capricious- that at all times your happiness here and hereafter- has been my most sincere & fervent wish & that to you I have been an affte and steady friend.' (8)

ca. 1780

Elizabeth Waller to Harriet Beaufort re. advice

'I hope my love you continue your think on to Grand mama & are affectionate & attentive to your Aunt Waller to whom you owe more that you can ever repay as well as your Uncle who is so kind to you- never let this out of your mind, nor be tempted to ingra(ti)tude by any thing or any body.' (13)

30th (probably 1789 or 1790)

William Waller (?) to Harriet Beaufort re. visits of friends and family (46)

July 23 1794

Prayer perhaps by Rev. Francis Browne for daughter Frances' christening (54)

November 16 1799

D. Johnson to Elinor Stewart re. blessing and reflections

'I feel that God is love unbounded imeasurable love I long to love him with greater ardor & see him and cast my soul at his feet.' (71)

early 1800

Bess Johnson to Elinor Stewart re. news of Margaret Johnson, reflections and blessings

'...since all happiness is derived from Jesus, and heaven is the perfect enjoyment of himself. O let us live by faith on him & ever now enter into rest by casting off that bitter foe to our peace Unbelief O let us quicken our foot steps, we have not a moment to lose we re hastening towards an unchangeable state.' (76)

ca. 1800

Elinor (Ellen) Stewart to Thomas A. Stewart re. sibling relationship and pursuit of knowledge

'I felt myself greatly gratified my Dear Tom by your so kindly writing to me as I am sure it may be a great means of improvement to us both it will tend to make us more observant of our own hearts which I am sure should be our chief concern as it is of the greatest importance and if we do it with attention & impartiality it will have a good effect in making us acquainted with the motives of our own actions.'

'And every pursuit of the kind we may make tend to the great & the glory of God which should be the object of all our pursuits- how very delightful is it where knowledge & religion are thus united.' (73)

Thursday 16th 1801

Elinor Stewart to William Hanna re. request for favour

'... we should be much obliged to you if you would make a particular request to him that he would spend a day with us as he is passing.' (85)

ca. 1801

fragment of Elinor Stewart to William Hanna (much like a sermon)

'You profess to deny original sin but you will at least acknowledge a Supreme Being the Creator & first great cause of all things you must also allow that is perfect in every attribute & quality of course agreeable to such a character cannot in any degree be the immediate or remote author of evil.' (86)

February 26 1802

Rev. William Cooper to Elinor Stewart re. apologies for tardiness in writing and descriptions of congregations

'Indeed I have not a great deal to relate but what I have is good- I have lately heard of several Persons- to whom God has been pleased to bless my labours- Particularly one- of whom Mr. Kelly was telling me his name was Richardson he was an Avowed Infidel & Able defender of the Principles he heard me in Dublin about 18 months ago- was under deep Convictions of Sin- and Died Triumphant in a most Extraordinary Degree at Athy about a fortnight back.' (93)

October 4 1806

Harriet Beaufort to Frances Browne re. news of family and friends

'I hope you will conduct yourself well- & act so as to shew me that your principles are steady- & your recollection good, of my advice- pray be industrious & active, & lose no opportunity of adding to your stock of knowledge...' (112)

November 17 1806

Ad Averell to Martha Stewart Fowlis re. reflections and travels

'By the Doctrine of faith and Truth, that God in Christ only, is necessary to your Comfort & Happiness when you follow this process, so as to be fixed in it, then the Love of God will, & Must supplant every other Love.' (120)

ca. 1806

Sophy Ruxton to Frances Browne re. lesson in mineralogy (116)

February 15 1809

Mathias Joyce to Martha Stewart Fowlis re. blessing for trip, possible visit and advice

'In all your temptations my dear Martha, draw near to the Lord. Never keep the secrets of the Enemy, no, not for a moment. Say them all before your everlasting Friend. He will solve every difficulty, and enable you reap profit, by the say of your enemy. Remember, Martha, that if you are tempted, and that in a violent Manner, your case is not singular. Your Lord & Master was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.' (127)

May 16 1810

Frances Browne to Harriet Beaufort re. chronicles of life in Dublin including piano practice and visits with friends; begins with an exercise of translation

'My Aunt made me play for Dean William Allot yesterday he said I played very well & he came again to hear me but I was out- Warren asked me today whether I had played for him, & when he heard I had he said he would ask him his real opinion of me- so I know I shall never have the satisfaction of knowing his real opinion- for I think Mr W wont tell me' (132)

July 2nd-3d I mean finished 4th (1810)

Frances Browne to Harriet Beaufort re. reply to Harriet's questions and news of family and friends

'I really do thank you greatly for your nice kind long letter, and of all your advice which you seem to be a little afraid of my not thanking you for- but I know I always want advice & I like to have you give it to me- I feel so odd with out any one to advise or order me & I am sure I hope I am doing without orders as you my dearest Moome wish me...' (138)

March 22 1812 Newspaper clipping-Examiner with poem inscribed:

'Last night a Concert vastly gay, Was given by Lady Castlereagh My Lord love musick, & we all know, Has always two strings to his bow, For chusing songs, the Regent named His...heart for falsehood framed.' (147)

December 3 1812

Harriet Beaufort to Frances Browne at Merrion St., Dublin re. daily activities and reading undertaken

'I wish you would ask your Aunt Susan to send you some volumes of the Theatre of Voltaire- suppose six- I asked my Father, & he says all Voltaire's plays are perfectly proper to read-' (148)

December 31 1813 (postdate)

Catherine E. Browne Kirkpatrick to Frances Browne Stewart re. news from Clongill

'My ever own dear Fan, I am glad to tell you that all our Invalids are quite well & that Clon. Rec. is no longer our Hospital.' (156)

May 20 (with note: Uncle Beaufort's death 1822)

Anna Maria Nangle to Frances Browne Stewart re. Thomas A. Stewart's intentions to emigrate to Canada, Harriet Beaufort's visit to her ill father, Daniel A. Beaufort, and his death

'I cannot but hope the delay, which has arisen- may induce a change of plan- & I do strongly wish Tom would consider if something might be done in some other way- to prevent this emigration intirely'

'So there she was, with a set of strangers, poor little delicate creature- in such a miserable state of mind- & with such a shocking prospect before her' (175)

September 1822

Journal of Frances Stewart Browne re. voyage from Ireland to Canada

'We heard the welcome news that land was seen- 5 weeks after our departure from Ireland- it proved to be part of the Southern coast of Newfoundland- in a few days we saw two fine headlands of Cape Breton & Cape Rage & passed between them just at sunset. All this week we proceeded slowly up the Gulph of St. Lawrence- the weather remarkably pleasant and fine- but too calm for sailing- several of the people amused themselves in fishing- & caught some fine mackerel & codlings & 2 Dog fish.' (187)

September 11 1822

Frances Browne Stewart to Louisa C. Beaufort re. description of travels into Douro from Quebec

'The scenery all along was very beautiful- but here it was magnificent- the water rushing over the great stones in that great river & appearing between different wooded islands was most beautiful & formed such a contrast to the smooth glassy Lake (I many call it) through which we had been sliding all day.'

'The next day we were to travel 4 miles by land, as the rapids were too violent for us to remain in the boats: we hired a Waggon in which Mrs. Reid & four of her children, Tom & I & our 3 children all stuffed- a cart containing the rest of the Children & servants followed, & the men & boys walked. Waggon are the sort of carriage generally used by gentlemen's families in Upper Canada'

'When we slept in this manner at farm houses we paid nothing except for milk and bread- which were the only provisions we required as we had cold meat with us & dined & lunched every day in the boats- so that our lodging cost us nothing.' (202)

November 25 1822

Extracts from Frances Browne Stewart's journal with note: received Jan 14 1823 to Mrs. Noble, Clongill re. early news from Canada

'Tom went to Douro last week to see how the houses were going on- & he returned in greater delight than ever with the place- the beauty as well as goodness of the situation & soil- indeed I think from all I hear of it that if they had been searching all Canada they could not have chosen a place more completely to their minds' (228)

December 14 1822

Frances Browne Stewart to Maria Newcome Noble- Waller and Maria Noble-Waller re. early news from Canada

'...but we are reasonably well off- for the land is remarkably good- & the situation itself the most wholesome in Canada as well as beautiful it is a new township which is not yet surveyed, & we are the very first settlers in it- but we have neighbours very near us- not any of our own class however nearer than 6 or 7 miles- there are a great many farmers from England & Scotland in the two adjoining townships & there is a flour mill & Distillery within three miles of our Loghouse-' (232)

May 7 1823

Frances Browne Stewart to Harriet Beaufort re. home in Douro (with hand drawn descriptive plan) and daily activities of the Stewart family

'So you see my dear Harriet we must bear a good deal of inconvenience, but the hope of having everything made comfortable by degrees is a cordial that keeps up my spirits and reconciles us to everything.' (268)

August 1 1823

Harriet Beaufort and Anna Maria Nangle to Frances Browne Stewart re. visit to England, letters received and news from home

'My dearest I am sorry that so much of your little property was spoiled & that the poor little brats clothes were among them- I hope none of your books suffered-. I am greatly vexed that I did not send you some neat walking shoes from London I was thinking of it & the doubt I was in about fitting you prevented me.'

'The pleasure you experience My dearest Fanny from receiving letters from the old world we enjoy from your communications from the New Hemisphere and a considerable alleviation it is to the pains of distance & absence to hear so frequently from one so dear to us all as your are-' (272)

December 18 1823

Frances Browne Stewart to Elizabeth Waller re. winter conditions, birth of Elizabeth Lydia, and developments in settlement of the family

'The snow on the roads & the ice on the lake, not being hard enough for sleighing- & on some parts of the river being too thick to allow boats to pass- so that only horse or foot messengers could travel- & but few of them like to come so far at this time of year thro' the deep snow.'

'In one of your letters you or Harriet asked how we succeeded in our soap & candle manufacturing. We have succeeded admirably. Our soap is excellent tho' the colour of almost all the homemade soap in this country is very dark which makes it not look as nice as our old country soap' (301)

February 1824

Frances Browne Stewart to Harriet Beaufort (continuation) re. early life in Upper Canada

'She [Elizabeth Lydia] has been my bedfellow since her birth- & I have taken the entire care of her since she was a week old- it seemed very odd to me at first- & trembled every day when I was washing and dressing such a tiny creature, but now I am become quite expert & I am very proud of my child, for she is firm & strong & very lively- which is proof of her having a good nurse.' (311)

March 20 1824

Maria Newcome Noble-Waller to Frances Browne Stewart re. gifts for newborn Elizabeth Lydia Stewart; news from Ireland

'I hope, my dearest dear friend that this dear child may be a comfort & blessing to you & keep your mind occupied & far from any melancholy ideas. It is delightful to hear of the improvements you are making to your comforts and convenience every day....' (314)

March 30 1824

Maria Noble to Frances Browne Stewart re. enclosed gifts of socks and books

'...then I made a few extracts for you as I thought it was a book likely to please you... perhaps you had better not say any thing about these little extracts in any of your letters tho' I should be very glad to know what you think of them- but the book is by some people reckoned to be in rather a high stile bordering on Methodistical language... Our dear friends at Clongill seem to have a great dread of anything Methodistical so I should be particularly sorry they heard anything about it.' (318)

July 1825

Recollections of Ann Garner Stewart by Anna Stewart Mathias (?)

'Pray to the Lord for my family that they may all go to Heaven, and meet me there- indeed it could not be Heaven without them.'

'Though our dear Mother wandered much yet all her wanderings proved she was constantly activated by the love of God & Man-' (362)

August 19 1827

Frances Browne Stewart to Honora Edgeworth Beaufort re. Honora's trip to England and France and gift to Stewart family

'the Battledores and shuttlecocks were a new and delightful recreation for your young friends Anna and Ellen- as well as many older people, last winter our rooms are much too small and low for playing it within doors- but on some of our calm clear days when the snow was so firmly encrusted with ice as to allow people to walk on it without sinking- they used to play outside- & as such never had been seen in this part of the world before, many young English children who had left home infants or little children were quite surprised at this new amusement' (429)

June 3 1828

Frances Browne Stewart with note from Bessie Stewart Brown to Jane Stewart Wilson re. death of Mrs. Stewart and reflections on the power of God

'I am here seperated from you all- & often have been placed in very trying situations- & I found my foolish heart regretting those friends from whom I could procure advice- at last I felt the power of His free Grace & Mercy- & flew to Him to shew me my way.' (442)

May 24 1833

Harriet Beaufort with notes from Elizabeth Waller and Anna Maria Nangle to Frances Browne Stewart re. birthday greetings and news from Ireland

'My beloved Fanny I don't like to have you say or think that you are grown 'dull' & 'dead' & 'stupid' etc.- no indeed you are not- but you have a great deal to do- & to think of- & to labour at during the day- & my only wonder is how you have always continued to get through so much & to write so kindly & so constantly & so much.' (507)

November 16 1833

Frances Browne Stewart to unknown addressee re. mill construction and descriptions of nearby Indian family life

'I went to the Wigwam one day where 4 or 5 Indian families live. The hut was not more than 10 feet long & about 6 or 7 wide. Of an oval shape, made of poles covered with Bark of Birch. The floor was made merely of branches of white cedar spread over the ground.'

'One Squaw who had an infant only a few weeks old, was making a very nice little frock of dark cotton for it- quite neatly and putting green braid on the little band round the top... Another was preparing a deer skin for mocassins, another was making a pair, an old Squaw making a basket- and old Indian whose name is Squire Martin was making a pair of snow shoes & his son a boy of 18 or 19- helping him.' (513)

October 19 1834

Frances Browne Stewart to Harriet Beaufort re. news from Canada

'I fear, dear Harriet you think I am terrible harrassed & worried with all I have to do- but do you know I never spent such an idle summer, & I never feel oppressed now by my needle work as I used to do- one thing goes on quietly after another & we never seem in a fuss- and indeed we are very happy & comfortable.' (519)

March 15 1838

Harriet Beaufort to Frances Browne Stewart re. lack of letters from Canada, marriages and news of family and friends

'If you would just imagine England in a state of rebellion or smothered flames of insurrection my dearest Fanny- and think how very anxious you would be to hear from me!- in short put yourself in my place- your conscience would sting you (I hope) for having been so long without writing- I expected to have two or three New York letters- & every packet from thence would bring me a very satisfactory letter from my own dear child- And alas! I have still been each time cruelly disappointed-' (588)

June 28 1838

Harriet Beaufort to Maria Newcome Noble-Waller re. Queen Victoria's coronation

'I did not see the ceremonies performed at the Altar- which I had wished to see as they are so ancient but I saw the enthronization- and the receiving the homage of the peers & bishops- and saw the Queen step forward very gracefully to give her hand to Lord Rollo when he stumbled & was helped up the steps to the throne.' (600)

February 1841

Frances Stewart & Elizabeth Stewart to Harriet Beaufort (fragment) (not the same as transcription) re. Bessie's trip to Stoney Lake and news of the children

'They had a great escape & I have great reason to feel thankful, for neither of the lads had much knowledge of managing Canoes & besides they were ignorant of the intricate navigation amongst those rocks & islands- added to which they spent the night in wet clothing & without any covering except branches as

they had gone in Summer dresses- without even Shawls- they did not catch the slightest cold which was miraculous.'

'Everyone here distracted about the election which is to come next Monday. I feel quite anxious about it all- much fighting is expected- & some bloodshed and violence feared- God preserve my dear husband and friends from danger.' (712)

April 9 1843

Martha Stewart Fowlis to Frances Browne Stewart re. 'troubles'

'...let us all dear Fanny be truly in earnest to secure a place in Heaven we are exhorted to give all diligence how good for us often to examine our hearts & pray much for the Holy Spirit to shew & direct us by His influence to cast our souls on the infinite merits of the great atonement- & feel by so doing that our Sins are forgiven & we reconcile to our offended Father- we may then hope all things shall work for our good-' (780)

July 1 1845

Catherine E. Browne Kirkpatrick to Frances Browne Stewart re. news of children, health and life in Ireland

'I suppose the Spirits we had before the cares of the world come on, merge into cheerful energy when we find ourselves responsible, so much of the comfort & credit of a family depend upon the wife & Mother & then we poor merry grigs astonish every one by the Charming beings we turn into, when we settle down-' (787)

October 28 1845

Catherine E. Browne Kirkpatrick to Frances Browne Stewart re. news of potato disease, children, family and friends

'I mention this as I think perhaps this Calamity may be in Canada as well as in other places- the rotten potatoes are found to make excellent starch when ground down & cleaned by repeated Cold Water upon them- I hear it also makes good bread, mixed with flour but we have not yet tried it' 'dear Fanny here is post so I must break off all in the middle like the Cat & the Fiddle' (792)

September 20 1847

Frances Browne Stewart to Rev. Robert J.C. Taylor re. illness and death of Thomas A. Stewart and his family's relationship with Rev. Taylor

'...that you considered you had been slighted by us & some other clergyman preferred-'

'Dear Mr. Taylor do believe me this was not the case- on the contrary it was always the nearest wish of his heart to consider & to find you our Spiritual pastor advisor and friend' (821)

Account by Ellen Stewart Dunlop of death of her father, Thomas A. Stewart in September 1847

'about 1/2 past 9 his breathing ceased without a sigh or a sob- and his blessed Spirit fled! Oh let me die the death of the righteous & let my latter end be like his' (817)

May 31 1848

Frances Browne Stewart to Catherine E. Browne Kirkpatrick re. wedding of daughter Bessie, William's illness and news of the children

'The little Bride looked simple, innocent & composed- & behaved with more self possession than I expected- for I knew she was "heart full" '

letter ends with note on June 1: 'This day 26 years we sailed from Ireland' (835)

July 29 1848

Frances Browne Stewart to Harriet Beaufort re. gifts received from Ireland

'...many ready hands were stretched to receive each article & lay it on the table where Bessie & I were standing to receive them- shirts, sheets, shoes, parcels, bundles, boxes- all were laid on the table- but not in silence I assure you. You never hear such gabbing and exclaiming- such running and tramping backwards and forwards- but in the midst of all, we all & each, felt bitterly the blank there was! the loss of one who

was ever foremost in the pleasure of opening the Dublin box! we could not help feeling a pang in the midst of our joy.' (841)

July 8 1858

Catherine E. Browne Kirkpatrick to Frances Browne Stewart re. vacation at seaside and news of home 'After 17 years without ever sleeping out of my sweet Hazelbank, here I am in full view of the Wide Atlantic, & surrounded by bare black Rocks!- Every one set upon me & said that the change of air & ec ec would be so good for me, & would brisk me up & that at last I determined to gratify all my friends & so on Monday last to Portrush we came bag & baggage- We have taken the house for the Month of July-' (913) n.d.

notes on Indian settlement with sketches

'the Indian women or Squaw carry their infants in curious little Cradles made of a board rather longer then the child with a small hoop at one end which comes over the child's forehead & protects it- sometimes two or three hoops all round the head- & sometimes they ornament these hoops with Porcupine quills dyed different colours.' (ca. 513)

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
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Access points

- Textual records (documentary form)
- Indigenous Studies (subject)
- Pioneers and Early Settlers (subject)
- Women's Studies (subject)
- County of Peterborough (place)