



Inventory

Acc.11416

Kerr Family Correspondence

National Library of Scotland
Manuscripts Division
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1EW
Tel: 0131-466 2812
Fax: 0131-466 2811
E-mail: manuscripts@nls.uk

© Trustees of the National Library of Scotland

Correspondence (thirty two letters or part letters), 1820-83, passing between various members of the Kerr, Currie, Boyle and Glen families mostly in the town and parish of Dalry, Ayrshire, and their relatives in Rising Sun and Deerborn County, Indiana; Bloomfield, Loudon County, Virginia; Alton, Kerrsland and Paddocks, Madison County, Illinois; New York; and elsewhere in the United States. Many letters are of or to the senior member of the family, Hugh Kerr, addressed as vintner, or spirit dealer and grocer in Dalry and his wife Jean, née Boyle, or to his sons, Hugh junior, a wright in Dalry and later a shawl-maker and manufacturer in Paisley and Glasgow, and John, an emigrant farmer in Illinois ca.1841-50, who, apparently, had returned home by 1853.

Presented, 1996, by Alexander Smith MEP, Ayr, through the good offices of Mrs Janey Buchan, Glasgow.

1-4 Letters from Ayrshire to the United States, 1841-6.

1. Five letters, 1841-6, of Hugh Kerr, vintner in Dalry, to his sons John, described as a joiner and farmer, in Alton, and Kerr, or Kerrsland, Paddocks, Madison County, Illinois, and Robert, also in Madison County, but who appears to have traveled or worked in other parts of the USA:

(i) To John Kerr, ?1 November, 1841, "... I have been often verey saruful when I thought on the days we past in company together ... Brother Hugh has not got any of the Machings [machines] sold yet. He is still talking of going out to America ... their has being Several deaths here since you left...".

(ii) To Robert Kerr, 16 April 1842, "... Hugh has comenced for the first time for himself to mak shawls [,] Mr Boyd has got an order for him from a good house for 2000 and has employed 20 hands in Dalry ... Miller Anderson is engaged with Mr Patrick in ... near Keith for to be his Carreg [carriage] drier and tak care of his Horses...".

(iii) To John Kerr, 14 September 1843, "... with respect to the turning lay we could not get any person to come to look it ... your Father in Law thinks it cannot be sold at this time ... the we[a]ther is uncommonly fin[e] and the cropps is verry good ... I am verry well employed the Masons and Wrights is Getting a Great deal of work with the New Church[e]s that are Bilding in Scotland ... [following the Disruption of the Kirk].

Letter from David [Kerr, another son in USA], "... he went into New York and fel in with a man that was going to breing the carpet making on a verie small sceal and he made 2 new looms to him he has but about 5 or 6 altogiter and David has the whole of the busines committed to his charge...".

- (iv) To John Kerr, 9 September 1844. Prosperity at home "... you would be much better heir ... There is more houses Bilt and Bilding thies year than has being fore 20 years back...". Bankruptcy of David's ex-employer in New York. In his new place he has 12 carpet looms and is "buyer and seller dyier dragger and card cutter...". Robert seems "to prise the counter [USA] more than you do..." Wonderful work in Scotland for wrights and masons on Free churches and schools.
 - (v) To John Kerr, 1 June 1846, "... since your Farm has now been got sold, you should lose no time in returning to Scotland...". Plenty of work for him. He [Hugh] will not sell the small turning loom until he hears from him. Great demand for shafts in the trade, etc.
2. Four letters, 1842-6, of Hugh Kerr, junior, in Paisley, to his brothers John and Robert, in Madison County [John] and elsewhere in the USA [Robert]:
- (i) To John, 8 July 1842. Two friends, Miller Anderson and Alex Stirrat, have arrived back from America. The latter is back "... into his old situation ... he talks of going to America yet as soon as he gets £100 ...". The former "... proposed going back immediately after his return ... he realy would have gone if his wife had consented...". Miller reports David [brother], married, in ill health and hard-up for money and moved to Poughkeepsie. After strike at his works [carpet mill] "David with 4 others were dismissed as ringleaders". With \$5 [?contributed by fellow-workers] he got back to Bergen Hill and into his former job, works a 15 hour day, factory verging on bankruptcy. David's marriage, "a very imprudent step", his lack of savings etc. Bad trade situation in Britain "nearly a fifth part of the population have existed on charity, for 8 months past...". In Dalry, not quite as bad, but many unemployed.
 - (ii) To John, 2 February 1845. John's intention to return to Scotland. The chances of making money farming in Illinois "must be next to none ... I do think you will be happier in Dalry & be more likely to make a little cash ... now in the altered circumstances of America I think if there is good prospect of continuance at 20/- a week here he should decidedly not go ...". But as nearly half the working population earn from 4/- to 8/- a week "I should think it would be a vast improvement for them to be removed to the Western States of America. You and I have never known almost anything of the privations endured by millions of our countrymen". John has told him of "landlords" [ie owner-farmers] sons going barefoot in Illinois – with cheap land and high interest rates in USA, land will never be worth much "as a means for accumulating money". But seeing the wealth of landlords at home, people will "form most exaggerated oppinions of the misery in Illinois". Trade in general has been good for past two years "but fashion has rather gone against paisley shawls these 2 last Autumns, and although we have been as cautious as most, we have lost full one half of what we gained ... The Paisley shawl trade is a most fickle one ...". Dalry much altered since he

- left: "... the whole country round is broken up with Coal and Iron Stone Mines ... The country generally is in a better condition than when you left ...".
- (iii) To Robert, 16 August 1845. He has received Robert's letter from New Orleans, and another since, written from Rodney [?Michigan]. Arrival of Robert's skins from America and his bargaining with dealers in Glasgow. Also intends to try samples in Edinburgh. Duck skins common in Scotland will only fetch 3d each: the most valuable of the skins sent are the parrots, worth, if good, 3/6. Red nightingale at 2/- also a "fine bird". Since receipt of a letter from John's wife, their father "has lost hopes of his return".
 - (iv) To John, 17 July 1846. Family tensions. His father and their father's pleasure if John comes home again. He looks to better times now the Corn Laws are modified. News of friends in Dalry and loss of his daughter, Jessie "a common occurrence but painful". His fears that their brother [?Robert] has died – John's intention to go to his last place of residence to make enquiries.
3. Four letters, 1842-5, of Archibald and Janet Currie, in Dalry, to their sister, Martha Kerr, and her husband, John in Madison County, Illinois.
- (i) To Martha, 4 June 1842. Takes the opportunity of two local lads going direct to their place to send a letter – John may advise them about work. Feather bed left by her aunt Martha to be sent to America. Their mother's dispute with another relative over another deceased aunt [Margaret's] good and chattels – his arbitration in this matter. Misdeeds of another aunt, Magdalene. Thanks to Hugh Harvie, another Dalry emigrant, for news.
 - (ii) To John & Martha, 14 September 1843. Again letter sent by hands of local emigrants – "And[re]w Crawford & Friends ... This old country cannot be said to mend yet – you probably have not an idea of the extent of privations suffered by the masses & still suffering...". Sends newspapers – Welsh counties "... in state of disorganization [the "Rebecca Riots"]". The Iron Hated Duke [Wellington] is making large military preparations ... he gives Iron and Lead for Bread ...". In present state of things he cannot sell John's farming lathe – prices are "incredibly low ... there has been a fearful Breaking down amongst Wrights, Masons, Ingeneers Since you left this country...". Asks Martha to write. Hopes they will see them in America though it may be some seasons hence.
 - (iii) To Martha and John, 3 June 1844. Joint letter with his sister, Janet, written on alternate lines. Family and local news. Many strangers in Dalry – the iron works commencing will bring many more. News received and wanted from other Dalry emigrants in their district.
 - (iv) Archibald and Janet to Martha and John, 31 October 1845. [Archibald] His trade [weaving] going downhill – "... the weavers are flying off to the coal pits at three times the wages of the loom". Gives examples, eg "... Jas. Roy's 8 loom shope 2

weavers only – besides 1 and 2 left in other shops in many cases ... John Howie's son Thomas is a Miner. In Short there will Soon be nothing left But old men Weavers ...". This has been a "Sewing season, I got about 2500 Shawls Sewed for Mr Greenlees ... Mining is all the go in our parish". The Bairds of Gartsherrie are said to have made "£2-3 million at iron-making – their land purchases. House-building following Bairds developments has created a strong business for masons and wrights. "A most alarming failure" of the potato crop – describes the blight. It is forcing up grain prices. Shortage of grain will benefit American corn: "... all your old fusty stores will have the chance of a market...". Fears recent prosperity in Europe may be short-lived – John may have done better in leaving Scotland. He reckons "... 130 large and small to have gone to Illinois & no death and no one injured in constitution ... in my oppinion Shows rather a healthy Country ...". [Janet]: family news.

- 4.(i) Ann Anderson [sister in law] to Martha Kerr, 30 October 1841 [add. To John Kerr at Alton, Illinois]. Asks for news and what she thinks of Alton Birth of a daughter. Martha's sister Janet "is as bright for America as ever".
 - (ii) James Laird, Barrhill, [?brother in law of Janet] to Martha and John Kerr, 7 February 1843. Refers to the "Great Lot of Emigrants" that went from Dalry last year. He has heard of the Kerrs' purchase of a farm – the price moderate "... but still it would ap[p]ear that every Rose has to prick. It would also seem that Money is very scarce and produce Low, that even Labour is not so much in Demand as might have been expected". He is confounded by reports from Illinois: "... it seems even in the remote country of Illinois prices are down 100 and in instances 1000 per cent ... we have nothing like that here...". In Scotland trade is reviving, money is in plenty and the banks have reduced their interest. "The America mania appears to have considerable abated about Dalry...". John's father doing well. His brother Hugh is business and may de well – "... but no Body that I knew was worse seised with the America Mania [,] had it not been that he was Tied firmly to his Better Half he would have been at America as sure as his Name is Hugh Kerr...".
 - (iii) William Rodger, Dalry, to John Kerr, 15 April 1842. Letter is sent by his brother, Andrew, who leaves tomorrow for Liverpool and New York "on his way to your neighbourhood". He leaves without the concurrence of his parents or the writer. Only 12 months experience in the trade, and they fear he may not be very successful. If Andrew is in difficulties, he hopes John may assist him, and write either to his mother or him so that money may be remitted. Trade continues very flat.
 - (iv) Hugh Kerr, now in Glasgow, to John Kerr, now baker in Dalry, 10 August 1853: arranging a meeting on legal or financial business.
5. Letters from the United States of America, 1820-3, addressed to Hugh Kerr, senior and his wife, Jean, from his brother-in-law, James Boyle, farmer near

Rising Sun, Dearborn County, Indiana; from David Glen, nephew of Mrs Kerr, in Vevay, Indiana; and from John Beaver and Ann Kerr [?wife] in Bloomfield, Loudon County, Virginia.

- (i) James Boyle [brother-in-law of Hugh Kerr, senior], Rising Sun, Indiana, to Mrs Jean Kerr, 6 August 1820. Happy to hear friends are well but he "...grieves for the situation of our native country whos[e] political lick [ie like] its natural horison is very gloomy...". Economic situation in the western states – money scarce due to little demand for produce at New Orleans "... together with the bad system of our banks whos[e] papper sells mostly at from 25 to 50 per cent below par with silver". Scarcity of money has resulted in the state government selling public land at \$1.25 per acre, after offer at public auction. Gives details of prices and wages in his region. Progress on his farm – he has cleared 4 acres this spring, is cultivating now 7 acres of corn, 3 roods of flax, 1 of oats, 2 acres meadow nd 1 and a half of potatoes. He has planted 3 roods of peach and apple trees and is hiring 9 acres of pasture. Stock includes oxen cattle, sheep, 2 mares and a colt, hogs, and 22 beehives. State road running through the centre of his land will give him " a good stand for a tavern in a few years". News of other Dalry immigrants in the region. He would not advise David Glen to come, but they are all happy that they have come and he would not return to Scotland.
- (ii) James Boyle to Mrs Jean Kerr and Hugh Kerr, 29 August 1822. Returns title of conveyance – his financial affairs in Dalry. He is well since recovery from the ague and fever, his children, loss of his wife. Means to rent more of his land to pay for the children's education. A fine time to purchase property there and to draw money from Scotland. Money very scarce "but our lit[t]le [w]ants is suplied by Barter, but our wants is few the woods supp[y]ing us with fuel shugar tea soap from our ashes and the offal of hogs milk beef lether of skins of our cattle flax hemp corn wheat rye Oats tobaco Potatos buce [buck] wheat cotton onyone [onions] ... a variety of melons concombors ... pumpings [pumpkins] pomreganets goarses castor oyle besides culinary herbs and Medical plants besides fruits pitches Aples grapes cherrys Plumes Pears Squinches &c..." There is "a spirit of emulation" in their country for trading their produce to New Orleans. A great many steamboats trading on the Ohio. Finishes with a poem:
- O Scotia dear though far awa
Some times a silent tear will fa[?]
Whin eer we fondly think on a[']
We left in Caledonia
Our father's home we cant forget
Thy sun though clouded is not set
Bright may it shine in glory yet
Like lang syne Caledonia.
- (iii) James Boyle to Mrs Jean Kerr, 1823. Sends this letter with a Kilmarnock man returning home to bring his wife and family out to America. Death of their sister

- Ann [mother of David Glen] in Marietta, Ohio, en route to Indiana. David Glen landed at Cincinnati, and came to him when he had a fever. David thought his land on the creek was unhealthy and has gone to the “Caledonian settlement” where he has rented 40 to 50 acres of land. He has a letter from brother, David, in Baltimore. Reports of various Dalry immigrants suffering from the swamp fever. There has been more fever on their creek than he has ever seen – thinks he might move to a more healthy place. His financial business and remittance of money due to him from Scotland.
- (iv) David Glen [“Scots Settlement”, Vevay, Indiana] to Hugh and Mrs Jean Kerr, 18 October 1823. Detailed narrative of his journey across America to Indiana. Death of his mother in Marietta, Ohio “... we had above twenty Scotsmen at her funeral...”. Arrival in New York, reports of Dalry acquaintances in Trenton, New Jersey. Descriptions of New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania], traverse of the Allegheny mountains. Purchase of a boat at Pittsburgh for passage down the Ohio river to Cincinnati. Within 300 miles of Cincinnati “... the towns is rapidly increasing and all is activity ... Cincinnati is a large and flourishing place bilding is goin[g] on in every direction ... there is often near 200 Wagons in the market drawn by 4 5 and 6 horses ...”. James Boyle’s new wife is a young Scots widow with two girls. Information about Dalry people including one Morton Cochran (“...inform Thomas Cochran that he is farming in Kentuckey ... I understand he had roamed over a good deal of America ere he setteled down...”). They have rented a farm at the Scots settlement for a year “...till we get some knolleg [knowledge] of the country before we purchas[e]...”. His brother working at the foundry [?in Cincinnati] and has \$18 a month, and will work until the spring as there is not much work on the farm until that time. Ague among the Boyles, Stevensons and Stirrats – “they are for leaving the creek this winter and is for coming down to this settlement where there is no ego [ague]...”.
- (v) Fragment of letter of David Glen to Mrs Jean Kerr, November [no year, but probably later than (iv), above]: reports a great fire in Cincinnati where a mill of nine storeys height was burnt to the ground; sends tobacco seeds and describes how to cultivate the plants. As a roup yesterday he bought 32 hens at three half-pence each, etc.
- (vi) John Beaver and Ann Kerr to Hugh and Mrs Jean Kerr (“Dear Brother & Sister”) Bloomfield, Loudon County, Virginia, 14 May 1823. Religion in Virginia – “... the Methodis[t] Church are the greatest in number for there is about 300,000 in Connection they are cauld a looveing & God fearing peapel and they add to there Church Dayly and there increase is about 20,000 in one year for some time back in the United States. The next hiaist Church are the Presbyterians next the Quaker next the high Church of England next the Baptist ... there is all sorts of Religion that you have in Crops Down to the Jewish Synagogue...”. The laws of the USA are good – “...Equil laws Equil Rights and pri[vi]liges with all men...”. As to advice to emigrate, “I will tel[l] you the truth and leave you to judge for your selves”. Their state not much settled beyond 300 to 500 miles back from the

coast. Good land for sale in Ohio at \$1 and a quarter an acre. Farming opportunities in north end of Ohio state. Markets there are very low at present "...but in my Opinion the Best Country for poor Labouring people to Raise a family that Ever I saw as the all that Work Live full and plenty & it is Settling Verry fast...". Abundance of hemp flax and cotton. If the textile manufacture increases as much in next 15 years as it has in the last they can supply "... millions of yards of cloth of all kind to other nations...".

6. Three letters, some incomplete, of John Kerr in Kerrsland, Madison County, Illinois, to his father and brother Hugh [senior & junior] and to other members of the Kerr family in Dalry, 1842-9.
 - (i) To "Dear Friends", also addressed "Dear Father" [ie Hugh, senior], Kerrsland, 2 October 1842: the latest news of his brother, David, apparently in New York. He has now passed a year in the New World. They are troubled with the "lax" [?] – common at this season of the year but will soon be over. Marth's [wife's] neck disorder. His trade of little use to him there as there are so many "... half tradesmen here that can do rough work that there is little use for my services. About every fourth man around here is or has been a Wright and does his own work. This country is flooded with tradesman. I would have been better to have sold the most of my tools in Dalry. They are rusting here and will not sell ... the business of this place is all in barter ... I wanted some new ground ploughed and James Fleck wanted some Wright work done, and so he ploughed to me and I pay him with work it does well sometime...". Gives list of Scotch (presumably Dalry people) that have had fever (8 names). "Cash is so scarce it is seldom to be got for work and hardly to be got for produce except wheat. I have heard it said that there is not so much as sixpence of specie in this state to every individual in it. And as for pr[op]er money any that we have is going at 40 cents to the Dollor and hardly any in circulation. This scarcity of money has brought down Property of all kinds. Land has fallen more than a half and land produce an half...". "Landlords" [ie proprietor-farmers] sons "... some 18 years of age are going to church barefooted for the very good reason that they cannot get them [shoes]...". But he has raised this year off 18 acres "... near 800 bushel of Indian Corn, 400 of Potatoes 100 of Oats ... I am going to try to keep my produce to the spring in hopes of get[t]ing a better price for it...".
 - (ii) To Hugh Kerr, senior, Kerrsland, 21 July 1844. Mr Crawford's arrival with a great many letters and other remembrances. This section of the country not adapted to raise wheat – he only gets ten bushels off five acres of land sown. In general they only doubled their seed last year. This year their wheat looked well until it rusted very bad. He expects it will average 10-12 bushels per acre. Corn [maize] brought a fair price last year, but they had a bad crop. Corn looks worse this year & he will have to buy again, if he can get it. Last year oats was a good crop. Potatoes were a good price but he only cropped one sixth of previous year, and could only sell \$15. Mr Crawford employed him to purchase land for him, and he got one of the best lots he ever saw. Tired of farming – he got three

houses to build – “... I will not make over fifteen shillings a week but that is a might sight better than farming”. Describes building a timber house: We take down 4 trees and hew them 9 in[ches] on the side and make a frame of them and lay it in blocks of wood for a foundation. We cut trees for sleepers joints shewing one side of them and then sink them into the frame at the ends. We then mortice round the frame for standards which are all oak[etc].

Oak is sold at the mill at a halfpenny per foot “so you see timber is cheap enough”. Brother Robert is working part of his land as a half-share cropper. This has been the wettest season in man’s remembrance. Oats and wheat secured but the corn crop will be short. His attention all with building at the moment. “This is get[t]ing quite a Scots Settlement. They are even leaving Bunker and coming to our side”. Happy to report Dalry folks all tolerably well. “I believe I would be as well about you as here – but I am here [,] I want to give this Country a fair trial and will push any trade while here, and if I do not get on better at this farming I think it likely I may return to Scotland before two years goes round”.

- (iii) To Hugh, junior: part letter lost, but dated on address leaf, 11 October 1849. Men’s work here is as low paid or lower than it is about Dalry. The “Port business” brings a good wage, “but it is such a disagreeable occupation that none will work at it for a common wage. I would as soon be a coal hewer as a hog [?] hitter – and the coal hewers of Dalry are about as well paid as the pork packers of Alton”. From letters he sees it will be some time yet before people are convinced that his country is not what it has been represented to be – “The representation of some mad dog will hold good if you go back to 1835 and 1836 with regard to wages but not now...”.
- 7. Letters, 1854-83, of David and Robert Currie, in Illinois and elsewhere in the USA, addressed to their brother and sister, and nephew and niece, probably in the Dalry district.
 - (i) David Currie, Alton, Illinois, to “Dear Brother & Sister”, 7 February 1854. He is sorry to hear that cholera is among them again. They had a newspaper from John Kerr [returned home] last week, and one from them the week before. Father would like them to send out one at least every week – “we feel very much interested in European news especially at the present Crisis”. They send the *Courier* alternately to them and to John. Doing nothing at the moment, but he may perhaps go to farming in the spring. News of other Dalry people. Great deal of frost this winter – the ice teams have been crossing the river [Mississippi] to Saint Louis [Missouri]. From where he sits he can see 6-8 miles of the Mississippi. Prices of meat. John Patrick has built a fine house and smiddy at Bunkerhill. Discusses flower cultivation – “this is but a poor country for flowers the Spontaneous weeds grow with such Luxuriance”, but wild flowers are pretty. Asks if they have received brother Archibald’s Daguerotype sent from New York. Asks for “a good Scotch song book”. His father and mother enjoy good health and they all look anxiously for letters.

- (ii) David Currie, Columbia River, 13 May 1863 to “Dear Brother” [endorsed on top of page ‘James Paterson’]. Glad to hear that mother and John’s family had been in Minnesota last summer. He has been hired out here for last 6 weeks at \$5 a day. The river has been over the bar and he is going out prospecting between the Columbia and the Kettle River. If they do not find anything, they will come back when the river goes down in July to work again until fall, perhaps at \$6 a day. Markets and prices are high with them. Asks how much the war affects the country around them.
 - (iii) Robert Currie [?Illinois], to John [?Kerr], 1867. Letter of introduction for a friend, Mr Conner, sometime Treasurer of Chicago County. Draft sent to bank in Dalry.
 - (iv) David Currie, Elevator A, St Paul [?Minnesota], to “Dear Nephew and Nieces”, 16 July 1883. Reports death of their uncle Robert. Other deaths at home – laments breaking of old links, Robert was drowned on the river on 16 May – fell out of his boat. Aged 71. Another [?uncle], Andrew has near 400 acres of land and is doing well. Their uncle Miller is in Nebraska – he has 160 to 200 acres this year. This is their fourth year “... they have not had good luck with between grasshoppers at first and drouth they have not had a fair crop yet”. Their uncle Robert’s will and executry – he has been appointed administrator of the estate. He is night watchman on the elevator.
8. Two letters, 1843, 1857, of David B. Kerr, New York, to his brother Hugh [junior], Dalry and Glasgow.
- (i) To Hugh, 16 April 1843. His letter of November 1842 was received by the Boston steamer. McEwan, his employer at Bergen, set fire to the larger portion of his factory in October. Frauds enough to send McEwan to the state prison if prosecuted – “... as they are the [insurance] policy is rendered useless. McEwan was, 2 weeks ago, forcibly prevented from Hanging himself. The rope that swings Satan wont soil his neck, I bid him good speed! The workers fared very badly, some were many months out of employment & had to go to the poor house. At the time of the breaking up, I believe among 20 workers \$10 could not be raised Mr McEwan owing each sums from \$10 to \$100. The whole effects would not have paid this debt & these there was a confessed fraudulent judgement on, in favour of S.T. Beals, Merchant New York = Money & law could have realized \$25 to each, But where was the money? ... But to make the best of it, I got employment in New York, sold my own effects to a friend & cheated my own creditors of about \$20. In New York State Furniture cannot be seized for debt if its value is under \$150.

I engaged to make a carpet loom for D.Mc. Wilcox & take pay in carpenters tools & share trade. – I have thus got a half stock of tools which are useful. – The loom I made was the 3rd in the establishment. Wilcox has been a dealer in Carpets in

New York for 2 years though [he] has lately commenced to make carpeting. In Jan[uar]y '43 he bought 2 more looms at the sale of the remainder of McEwan's which made 5 in all. – These I had just got started to work, when G. Wilcox, D.M.W.'s father Cried on the whole goods in the store, looms, yarns, building &c &c & sold the whole at public Auction. – This was done on the strength of a mortgage granted by the Son for monies alledged to be drawn from the Father – which mortgage he, the Father, foreclosed to defraud another party who has commenced an action against D.M.W. on a protested Note. – The father bought in the looms &c &c & I am now employed by him in the Son's interest, - who has applied for the benefit of that notoriously swindling but now repealed Bankrupt Act. – This is the way “we Yankees get along”. D.Mc. Wilcox is now employed as a clerk in a store, getting a “Sponge” or two of the “Brimstone...” undergoing a quarter of Purgatory, 90 days prostration and purification, after which he will begin on his own ... pure & immaculate as a thousand more of the same caste. By the way D. Mc W's father in law a baker is getting smoked in the same furnace, good company...”.

- (ii) To Hugh Kerr, 20 June 1857. He has received Hugh's letter by hand of a Mr Campbell, who has gone on to Canada to some relation. Trade is at its dullest now, June, July and August “these months salesmen, clerks & assistants are full half of the time idle”. Hugh Anderson has got something to do in the factory at about \$1 a day. He has full hope he will get along well. He has also written brother John. Thomas Boyd about to remove from the factory to Indiana at the request of a relative there “he is a man of fine feelings & some talent but not applicable to New York”. Hugh's thoughts of coming to America – “...with what capital you might be able to command, you could obtain a place of your own, so as to live comfortably & independently & at the same time brighten the prospects of your family ... There are quite a number of small manufacturers in New York, & a great many in Philadelphia, who work on a small capital - & many make a good living by weaving fringes, gimps, braids – making tassels, cords & covering buttons & other fancy articles, all of which take little stock, but much skill & ingenuity, the most of these work to order. I have no doubt but you could succeed in this way”.

“There are several parties known to me who have commenced farming in the State of New York, 3 hours ride from the City”. For \$300 is possible to buy 50-100 acres part cleared with a small house from which a good living could be made after a few years. He could have purchased 300 acres with a stream, dams and sawmills for \$2000. No need to go West to buy wild land “when it can be had nearer civilization & a market & as cheap by the acre”. Sends him a few ardvvertisements for farms in the neighbourhood of this city. One is near Saratego Springs, “one of the most fashionable watering places round the city & which would be a good investment”.

9. Miscellaneous papers associated with the correspondence described above:
- (i) List, derived from the Kerr family Bible, of the 12 children of Hugh Kerr in Auchingree and Jean Boyle in Cobside, in the parish of Dalry, married 28 April 1795; with their birth dates from 1796 to 1824 (1ff.).
 - (ii) Description, from Paterson's *List of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*, of the Kerr Family farm of Auchingree (2ff.).
 - (iii) Miscellaneous historical notes (1ff.).
 - (iv) Description of the collection by Alex Fotheringham, Bookseller, 1996.