

**"Ducit Amor Patriae"**

**NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**NO. 29**

**THE  
NIAGARA FRONTIER IN 1837-38.**

**PAPERS FROM THE HAMILTON CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CANADIAN  
ARCHIVES**

**AND NOW PRINTED FOR THE FIRST TIME.**

**PRICE 25 CENTS**

## PREFATORY NOTE

While engaged in investigating certain historical material in the Dominion Archives at Ottawa, I came upon some papers and letters which had been part of the official correspondence of the late Alexander Hamilton, of Queenston, Sheriff of Niagara. The papers were unlisted and uncalendared, and have not, I think, seen the light. They relate to the troubled period of the Mackenzie Rebellion, and reflect the anxiety of the authorities, especially those along the Niagara River, to maintain order, to prevent the spread of the movement and to avoid any incidents which might cause international complications. Having secured permission to use the material, I had it reproduced by Photostat, and it is now printed for the first time.

In presenting the copies of the pamphlet, together with the Photostat facsimiles, to the Niagara Historical Society, I do so as a slight tribute to the valuable researches and unwearied labours of Miss Janet Carnochan, whose fame as a student and writer of Canadian History has justly earned the admiration of her fellow Canadians.

A. H. U. COLQUHOUN.

Toronto, October, 1916.

### 1. THE FIRST ALARM

6th December, Niagara

The City of Toronto is besieged by the Rebels, the Lieutenant Governor has sent a deputation with the Steamer Traveller for the immediate transport of volunteers. Under this pressing emergency, the deputation demand your instant attendance at Harrington's Hotel to concert measures, as the Boat must start at 12 o'clock this day. Leaves Hamilton at 11:30 p.m. Please advise to me time of arrival.

Hamilton, 7th December, 1837.

A. Hamilton, Esq.,

Sir,- I send you the enclosed just received from Toronto by express, which left there at 3 o'clock this day, at which time a sharp engagement was then going on to the destruction of the Rebel Force. You have, I presume, heard of the interception of the mail hence to Toronto and visa versa.

It will be interesting to you to read the enclosed received here by the same express.

I am, Sir, Your Obedient Servant.

(Signed) E. RITCHIE.

We are all under arms, and altho various reports of contemplated attacks have reached us, we do not conceive they are well founded, but we are ready. (Enclosure.) It will be satisfactory to the people of your district to know that up to this time, except a few acts of violence and plunder directed against individuals, nothing has been done by the party who are said to be in arms against the Laws. A large party have gone to pursue and take the Rebels if they remain embodied.

If there are reports among you of anything contrary to this, it is false. People are flocking to this place by thousands to put down this disgraceful attempt. Call out your Militia, remain embodied, and use every exertion to keep the peace of your district. I

have no doubt that there are 20 men now here armed on behalf of the Government for every one man that the Rebels have collected.

Dated at Toronto, the 7th day of December, 1837.

(Signed: JNO. B. ROBINSON, W. CHISHOLM, JNO. MACAULAY.)

Toronto, 9 December, 1837.

Sir;- I am commanded by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to say that he has determined to place in your hands, two hundred stand of arms to be given as many as shall be required into the hands of the noble fellows who volunteered their services and came to Toronto, and to such others as in your discretion you shall think advisable. Take a receipt from any individual to whom you shall deliver arms, and His Excellency will hold you accountable for their safe return.

By command of his Excellency.

JONAS JONES

To Alexander Hamilton, Esq., Sheriff.

On Board the Traveller from Toronto to Niagara.

My Dear Sir, I am now on my way from Toronto to Niagara with others as a deputation from Sir Francis to bring over volunteers to assist in protecting the city and quelling the Rebels. I therefore pray you to be at Niagara as soon as possible. The boat will leave as 12 or soon after. All whom you can bring with you or alarm upon the way down, will be of service, particularly Stevens and Curry.

Most truly yours,

A. GILKINSON.

Dec. 6 - The City of Toronto is in a state of siege. Public offices are closed and all business is suspended. The Rebels, headed by Mackenzie, have approached to within two miles. The citizens of Toronto, headed by the Governor, await an attack at City Hall. Col. Moodie has been murdered by the Rebels, and Col. Wells, Messrs. Geo. Duggan, Brock, Bellingham with others made prisoners. An attack upon the city is hourly expected, and Sir Francis only awaits a sufficient re-enforcement to dislodge the rebels should they not attack. 80 men from Hamilton with McNab at their head.

Court House, Hamilton, 11th December, 1837

Dear Sir: From the various reports that reach us of preparations being made on the Frontier for attacking His Majesty's subjects, I am directed to apply to you and to request you will forthwith furnish us such information as may be in your power, and while we feel satisfied that any attack must end in the defeat of the Rebels, yet we cannot be too much on the alert, and it will be gratifying to learn from you how far the report of an Armed Force being organized at Buffalo or Lewiston with intention to march into our country is deserving of credit.

We have certain information of men being embodied in the London Districts in opposition to the Government and a large force march hence to-morrow morning to disperse them. Please note the time of arrival of the bearer hereof and the hour of departure.

I am, dear Sir, Yours, (signed)

EDMUND RITCHIE

Should it be in your power to render us at any time any information to precede the mail, pray do not hesitate to despatch it. A. Hamilton, Esq. Queenston.

Post Office, Dunnville, 12th December, 1837.

A. Hamilton, Esq.

Dear Sir: As there are at this time, many disaffected persons crossing the ferry at your place (as I am informed) to Lewiston, and as I am now in correspondence with a young man who is now at school in Lewiston, by the name of John I. Minor, who was formerly my Deputy, I take this opportunity of informing you of the nature of my correspondence with him; he is in a situation where he hears those Rebels who flee, then talk in an unshackled manner, and hears more what they are doing on this side than we can at home, and therefore am happy in keeping up the Correspondence.

I have been accused of a want of loyalty by some of my good friends in this place, which is the reason why I write you this. I read his letter publicly, therefore can satisfy anyone on the subject.

I am Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) A. S. St. JOHN

Niagara, Dec. 12, 1837. 11 a.m.

Dear Sheriff: Clarke received your letter by the Courier early this morning, and he now returns with an answer for Mr. Ferris. Major Cameron has come over with instructions to take the command of the District. We send a number of printed papers for circulation between this and Hamilton. Major Cameron is now with the Magistrates and should any orders in addition to those sent be issued you will of course be advised. Let the Ferries be well guarded.

Yours, CHAS. RICHARDSON.

Niagara, 14th Dec. 1837.

Dear Sir: I think it necessary to have a considerable force at Queenston, as the rascals may when they find that we are prepared for them at Fort Erie, abandon their plan of crossing there and come down by the Railroad cars to Lewiston in order to cross at your place. At present, we have none to spare from here after the Volunteers leave for Ft. Erie, and I cannot say how the remainder will turn out.

Yours Truly, D. McDOUGALL

A. Hamilton, Esq. or Robt. Grant, Esq.

Proposed arrangements for Queenston.

12th Dec. 1837.

That the Company shall be placed in Barracks - on the bank. The Commissariat Department under the charge of Mr. Nevia (?) with instructions to furnish the men with provisions and firewood, also some cooking utensils.

Instructions to be given to the officer in charge of the detachment that the Ferries to be stopped between the hours of five in the evening and seven in the morning, the boats to be securely fastened and the oars removed -- and no persons allowed to cross from either side during those hours -- in the daytime, the boats to be placed under the

charge of an officer of the detachment, who will allow no person to pass without a strict scrutiny, and if thought suspicious to be brought before the committee of magistrates for examination. In the night, sentinels to be placed at the points recommended by military men to prevent surprise from the interior. Ques. What means can be placed in Mr. Nevin's hand to purchase supplies -- also provisions, stabling and provender for the Dragoons?

Hamilton, 17 December, 1837. 8 p.m.

My Dear Sir: Your letter addressed to Mr. O'Reilly or the magistrates was received this morning and opened by me. Mr. O'Reilly is in Toronto. I thank, for us all, for your welcome communication, and my intention was to have written you nightly, but I have been so constantly engaged at the Court House until after midnight, that I have allowed myself to neglect sending you advices, and for the last three days I have been confined to the house after being fairly knocked up. I write from my house, and to-morrow return to duty at the Court, and I promise you a few lines nightly, stating if anything occurs, and if all remains as now, quiet. Your communication gives us intelligence exceedingly welcome, as, although we feel and did always feel confident any rebellious attempt west of us might be put down, yet the opinion prevailed here and at Toronto that we might expect annoyance from the other side. Your letter is calculated to allay apprehension on this head, and I trust your next communication will tend to confirm your last. From Lower Canada, I have dates to 11th inst., and they state that in Vermont arrests of Rebels from Canada had been made, and no protection would be afforded in that quarter - all fugitives were directed to leave the state - thus, we may safely calculate the United States Government have taken a correct view of the subject - in point of fact any toleration of assistance from that source would tend to create a breach between the two nations. I hope I may look to you for accounts of movements on the other side, and also as to what Bidwell, Rolph and Mackenzie are about. McNab has sent down 22 prisoners. They are lodged in jail here, but accounts from McNab state he has 100 prisoners to come down. Among these is believed to be Thos. Elliott, of Toronto, a Principal. We have a report to-day, but it is not authentic that a vessel at Port Dover is seized with 700 stand of arms for the Rebels - hope it is so. All here is just now quiet, and I do not believe any Rebels are embodied within many, many miles of this, if indeed there remain any in the Province. Still we must be on the alert until the wretched treasonable plot is fully developed. Parker is removed to Toronto.

I remain Dear Sir, Very Truly yours, (Signed) EDMUND RITCHIE.

P.S. By command of His Excellency a re-enforcement was just now leaving under command of Capt. Gourlay with a field piece. Their progress is arrested in consequence of a despatch from Col. McNab, stating their services are not required. E.R.

Chippewa, 18th December, 1837

My Dear Sir, - I enclose a memorandum relative to employing confidential persons to procure information of the movements, etc., of the Rebels on Navy Island, in which I have taken the liberty of inserting your name, well knowing your anxious desire to promote the public good.

I remain, Very dear Sir, Faithfully yours,

J. CAMERON, A.G.

Have the goodness to acknowledge the receipt of this communication. I have just received your letter of this date.

J. CAMERON.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq., Queenston. MEMORANDUM

The Assistant Adjutant-General requests that the Sheriff of Queenston employ one confidential person to obtain information on the other side and communicate the same every evening and morning, which information Mr. Hamilton will be pleased to communicate to the Assistant Adjutant-General as soon as received.

It is desired to have some person wholly employed on the other side to obtain information and to be well paid, and he to send it over by some person that you send for it, or by post. James Cummings, Esquire, will employ some person or persons on the opposite side to send over information morning or evening and report it as above. Alexander Douglas, Esquire, will do the same.

The information required is principally, number of men, cannon and description, small arms and where collected, number of boats, quantity of provisions and by whom aided, and relative to the contemplated movements of the Rebels, and works of defence on Navy Island.

J. CAMERON, Asst. Adjt.-General  
Chippewa, 18th Dec. 1837.

Government House, Monday 18 Dec. 1837.

Dear Sir: I have laid before His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor your two communications of the 16<sup>th</sup> instant, and I have it in command to convey to you, His Excellency's thanks for the very important information which you have been so obliging as to transit.

I am, My Dear Sir, Very Sincerely Yours,  
J. JOSEPH.

Mr. Sheriff Hamilton, &c. &c.

Our express from McNab this morning, dated the 16th inst., brings the most satisfactory accounts. The Rebels are dispersed in all directions, and most of them suing for pardon and offering to bear arms with McNab against those who have so deluded them. McNab requires first that they should deliver into his hands, their leaders.

About 6 o'clock, Dec. 20th, 1837

Mr. Sheriff Hamilton, Queenston.

Jack Green has this instant brought advice that he has pursued 2 Malcolms, Alway and Duncomb, from Oaklands to within a few miles of the Frontier, that his party and another are still in pursuit. He supposes they will be at the Ferries this morning or today.

Therefore every diligence is to be used to take them and close the Ferries partially. Elliot, the Rebel on Yonge St., has been captured at or near Oaklands. 500 Pounds reward is offered for Duncomb and 250 Pounds for the others. McNab day before yesterday, was well and had routed them all. He reported having 1,600 men under him. Please send word to Niagara.

G. CREIGHTON, J.P.

(Daylight) Parties in Niagara are moving towards the States by Queenston from the Interior; it is thought the Rebels may keep with these in women's dresses.

Niagara, Dec. 21st, 1837.

Dear Sir;

We have just received information thro' a person that has been in communication with McKenzie and some of his followers, - that his plan was, - if Duncomb succeeded in making a stand in the London District - that he would convey his forces afterwards, having chartered a steamboat to carry them above Fort Erie towards Bay, and join him. If, however, Duncomb should be defeated he would come down to Lewiston by the railroad lines and cross the river between this and Queenston, securing the horse boats at the Ferries to convey his artillery. It will therefore be necessary to keep a good lookout for the movements opposite to you. I believe we may depend on getting information here of his movements in time to be prepared.

Yours truly,

THOS. McCORMICK.

Do not mention this to more persons than are necessary. You had better make some arrangements to get immediate information from Lewiston should the attempt be made to come there. McKenzie's force is stated to be from 600 to 800, all busily employed in preparing ammunition. You must not neglect to see that the horse boat at your place be kept on this side at night.

THOS. McCORMICK.

Niagara, Dec. 24th, 1837.

Dear Sir,

We have information that an attack is intended by McKenzie either this night or to-morrow night - but it is not probable before to-morrow night. His intention is to make a feint at Chippewa to prevent any of the forces leaving that place -- whilst they are to send down a sufficient number to make good a landing between Queenston and this place -- when they will be joined by all the spare forces from the island. Several persons are employed at this Town to bring intelligence from Manchester of the movements there this evening. Should there be anything this day arrangements are made to communicate with you this evening, therefore you will have to employ two persons at least to keep a look out. It will be thus, - the person communicating will be at the upper end of the wharf opposite to the gully and will for a short time, show a light from a glass lantern and will then conceal it for a short time and then show three times, after which the person on the lookout on this side, must display a similar light to show that the signal is observed, and put it out to avoid observation.

You must then despatch two persons in a boat towards the place where the light was displayed and take the information as correctly as possible - have a dragoon ready and send the information to Col. Cameron. We have written to him to that effect. Should you think it better to have a boat on the other side in waiting it would be well if it can be done safely for then the messenger would come over himself. If he has anything to communicate, it will be before 2 o'clock in the morning.

Yours truly,

THOS. McMCORMICK.

Alex. Hamilton, Esq., Queenston.

We are very desirous at this time you would remain at home so that we could have some person to communicate with - and it would be desirable to confide in as few persons as possible.

T. McC.

Hamilton, 24th December, 1837

Dear Sir:

I thank you for your letter of yesterday. I perceive you make due allowance for exaggerations in reports and I have no doubt you do not err, if reports were true what would have become of us all by this time. I hope I shall hear from you to-morrow night. I have nothing of importance to communicate from this quarter. All is quiet and except at Navy Island

I do not suppose there is a gathering in the Province. The news from L.C. is highly gratifying – private letters state that the Rebellion there may be considered quieted. I hope we may soon be able to say so here. I was at Toronto yesterday. The Traveller was to leave at 12 o'clock noon for Kingston to bring up the 24th Regt., so that they may be expected at Niagara to-morrow night or Tuesday morning. McNab leaves this in the morning with a force for Chippewa.

I am, dear Sir, Yours truly,  
(Signed) E. RITCHIE.

The Postmasters at Waterford and Norwich have both been arrested. You have I presume heard Mr. Alway and one of the Malcolms are taken.

Niagara, 24th Dec. 1837, 12 o'clock, a.m. alias Midnight.

My dear Hamilton,

I have arrived here with the Queen's Rangers, three hundred and fifty strong, exclusive of thirty-four officers. We will be with you at Queenston by 8 o'clock when we shall expect breakfast prepared and ready for the detachment. We proceed on the Transit. Will you do your best endeavor to prevent any delay in our March by acting in concert with Mr. Nevins and by having six wagons or sleighs to transport baggage &c. Major Cameron of the Artillery is with us with howitzers and will also require your assistance.

Truly yours,

(Col.) SAM'L P. JARVIS.

My Dr. Sir, We have got the horse boat here laid upon the dock and some of her machinery taken out, so as to render her ineffective for present use. We beg that you will immediately have the same thing done to the boat at Queenston. We deem this step necessary for the public safety and therefore request you will lost no time in attending to it.

I remain, Your obed. servant. A. McDOUGALL.

To Alex. Hamilton, Esq., Queenston.

Hamilton, 31 December, 1837.

My Dear Sir,

Your favor of yesterday reached me this morning at about 4. Thank you for your attention. The reports from the west are as far as Detroit from whence I have letters stating that very considerable excitement prevails there and that Dr. Duncombe is there

using with success his best endeavors to raise volunteers. Of course, we may make many allowances for exaggeration, but there is no doubt some truth in the report and should there be a chance of McKenzie succeeding on the lines there is not a doubt, assistance from Michigan will be given.

Yours truly, (Signed) EDMUND RITCHIE.

A. Hamilton, Esq.,  
Any advice from Mr. Mclean.

My dear Hamilton, I have just received an order to send a Company of the Queen's Rangers to re-enforce the guard at Queenston Ferry. I have ordered Capt. Munro to proceed thither. His subaltern Mr. Buchanan has just returned from Fort Erie to which place he had gone with the view of crossing over to Buffalo. I do not know the Officer in Command at Queenston and therefore have to beg you to make the detachment as circumstances may permit. Nothing new since the poor "Caroline" was consigned to the devouring element.

Faithfully yours, 31st Dec. 1837.

SAMUEL P. JARVIS.

Simcoe, 27th, 1837.

A. Hamilton, Esq.,

Dear Sir, The Postmaster of Waterford, having been apprehended on suspicion of treason, Mr. Berezy have thought proper to suspend the office, and I am appointed to open the Waterford packages, letters or papers for that office. You had better enclose to this office.

I am, Sir, Your obedt. servt.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, P.M. for Chas. Baker.

P.C. The Rebels in this part of the country are entirely routed, Robt. Alway, M.P.P., with about seventy other prisoners, have been in our new gaol in this town for the last ten days. Alway has just been sent to Toronto.

D.C. for C. Baker.

Niagara, 6th January, 1838.

Gentlemen: Having received dispatches from Headquarters that 2 twelve-pounders will be over immediately to be forwarded with all expedition from Queenston. I think it advisable to apprise you of it, so as you may be prepared with teams and all other requisites for the forwarding of the guns and stores, as in my letter, it is stated that they cannot commence their real attack without these guns.

I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant.

(Signed) ROBT. MELVILLE, Col. Com. at Niagara.

To Sheriff and the Magistrates, Queenston.

Jany. 10th, 1838.

Dear Hamilton, From information received, it will be necessary to keep a lookout for any movement of men from above towards Lewiston this night, and if there is not any to-night, it will be equally necessary to-morrow night - for there is no doubt an attack is determined upon. Cannot you trust to anyone at Lewiston to give the necessary information or send someone from your place that would not be suspected?

If anything should occur, send intelligence to Col. McNab without delay, as well as down here.

Yours truly,

THOS. McCORMICK.

## II. PRECAUTIONS ALONG THE NIAGARA RIVER

Assistant Adjutant General's Office,  
Niagara, 12th December, 1837  
Militia Order.

No. 1. No person with arms to be permitted to land from the American shore, or if any such land, they must be immediately secured as prisoners of war.

No. 2. In order to prevent the escape of the Rebel fugitives from justice, all boats, skiffs, and canoes along the Niagara Frontier are to be forthwith secured, and if any land from the American shore with persons unarmed and on their lawful business, they are to be secured in like manner and given to their owners on their departure from our shore, and none are to be permitted to depart or land between the hours of five in the afternoon and seven in the morning. This duty is to be performed in such a manner that it cannot by any possibility interrupt the relations of peace and amity subsisting between us and the American nation.

Niagara, December 19th, 1837.

Ordered,

That the officer of the Beach Guards do not allow any boats to land or leave this side between the hours of five o'clock in the evening and seven o'clock in the morning - any boats appearing within challenge of any of the Guards during these hours to be brought to and persons therein kept in charge until examined by the Magistrates.

The Militia General Order of the twelfth instant expecting the Niagara Frontier to be strictly enforced.

(Signed)

D. McDOUGALL, Chairman.

To the Civil Authority of Queenston, U.C.

Gent.: In consequence of the outrage at Schlosser on Friday night last, a meeting of the Citizens of this Place was held yesterday to adopt measures to guard against the recurrence of such a scene in our own Village, at which meeting the subscribers were appointed a committee of vigilance. Lest the object of our having placed a guard in and about our village may be misconstrued, we take the liberty to inform you that our only object of our having placed a guard in and about our only object is to defend and protect ourselves and neighbours without intending any act of violation, retaliation, in any shape whatever. We shall use our best endeavours to suppress any act of individuals or parties to injure the persons or property of people residing in the Province of Upper Canada and have only to ask of you the assurance that you will interpose your good offices in behalf of our citizens to the same effect.

R. H. BOUGHTON, &c.

Lewiston, 31 Dec. 1827,

Leonard Bennett Oliver Grace

Committee of Vigilance and Safety. L.B. Piper

31st December, 1837.

A. Hamilton, Esq.,

Dear Sir, A deputation from Lewiston, consisting of Bates, Cook, Dr. Sebrace and Mr. Piper, waited on me this afternoon with a written communication from the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, formed in consequence of the affair which took place last Friday night at Schlosser, to which they request an answer may be sent by the civil authorities at this place, to-morrow. The deputation called also on you, but you were not at home. If you are at leisure this evening I would be glad you would come up and see the communication and consider what answer should be made to it. It is quite friendly and peaceful. I am too unwell to-day to go out or I would go up and see you.

Yours Truly,

ROBT. GRANT

Queenston, 1 Jan. 1838.

R. H. Braugton, Esq.

Edward Bissell and others of the Committee of Vigilance.

Gentlemen: We have to acknowledge receipt of your favour of yesterday, and have to regret that we had not the pleasure (together) of seeing the deputation who brought it to us, stating the object of your meeting of the previous day to have been one of defence to yourselves and neighbours and not of retaliation of the affair at Schlosser. We are extremely sorry we were not put in possession of the result of that meeting, which would have saved us considerable alarm, as also to yourselves, under the apprehension of an attack from us, which a communication with us would have at once dispelled.

In reply to which we beg leave to say that we must cordially concur with you in the determination of suppressing any act of individuals or parties to injure the persons and properties of individuals on the other side of the river, and wish to add our conviction that act of any persons or parties for that purpose need be at all dreaded from this shore, and that we shall be happy to keep up a communication with you on this subject until the present excitement shall cease.

We are, gentlemen, Yrs. Obedient.

(Draft in Sheriff Hamilton's handwriting).

Lewiston, 16 January, 1838.

A. Hamilton, Esq., Sheriff, etc.

Dear Sir, Permit us to suggest to you the necessity of removing the restriction upon the Ferry during the day time at least, and to solicit your aid in procuring from the proper authority an order to that effect.

We would remark that independent of the great public inconvenience occasioned by the restriction, the private interest of the lessee, Mr. Chubbuck, as well as that of our academical institution, is seriously affected. Being so well acquainted as you are with the matter, we forebear to enlarge, and conclude by expressing the hope that the present regulation will be promptly evoked. We are most respectfully,

Your most obedient

Servants, (Signed) SEYMOUR SCOVELL, Collector.

BATES CORKE

Chippawa, 21st Jan. 1838.

Sir: I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, on the subject of the Ferry at Queenston, and have to request you will allow the Ferry to be open to the Public as heretofore, now that the apprehension of an attack has ceased. At the same time, it may be necessary that a proper vigilance may be kept up in order to avert the recurrence of any future disturbance. I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient, humble servant.  
Alexr. Hamilton, Esq., Sheriff.

C. HUGHES, Lt.-Col. 24th Regt.

### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Confidential Circular  
20th June, 1838.

Government House,

Sir: In consequence of the various and often contradictory reports of assemblages and movements of and movements of disaffected and evil disposed persons within the Province, acting in supposed concert with refugees and vagabond foreigners beyond its limit, it has occurred to the Lieutenant-Governor that the Sheriff's in their several districts may have it in their power, by the exercise of due activity and discretion, to obtain extensive and correct information on this subject which might be of great use to the Government. I am therefore commanded by His Excellency to request that you will by means of your deputies and by communication with such loyal subjects within your district as you may see fit to consult with, endeavor to gain correct intelligence of any seditious and traitorous projects or designs which may be agitated or discussed by ill-disposed individuals -- and that from time to time, as occasion may warrant, you will report thereupon to me for His Excellency's information. I beg to add that the Lieutenant-Governor anticipates very great advantage from your exertions at the present moment. I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant,  
JNO. MACAULAY.

To the Sheriff of the Niagara District.

Queenston, 17 June 1838

Sir: In furtherance of the within communication from the Government office, I take the liberty of calling upon you to assist me in carrying into effect the views of the Lt. Governor there expressed, and have to request you will take every means in your power to discover any such designs or meetings in your vicinity and take such measures in conjunction with any other magistrate or magistrates in your neighbourhood for their suppression, either by the apprehension of any or all of the parties compassing them as you may deem best and as circumstances may warrant, immediately reporting to me what may have been done.

I would also observe that your attention is particularly requested in discovering and apprehending any persons who may have been engaged in the late insurrection at St. Johns, either directly or indirectly by furnishing the insurgents with provisions or aiding or abetting them in any way; at the same time would recommend that great caution may be used in the apprehension of any persons other than those where there is strong presumptive evidence of their guilt adduced.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter by return mail, communicating with me by the same channel once or twice a week while the present excitement prevails. I have the honour, &c.,

A. H.

To George Rykert, Esq., St. Catharines  
Henry Mills, Esq., Grimsby.  
David Thompson, Esq.  
A. S. St. John, Esq., Dunnville.  
William Smith, Esq. Fort Erie.  
James Cummings, Esq., Chippewa and others.  
Queenston, 29 June '38  
Hon John Macaulay.

Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your circular of 20th instant, and in reply have to say that I lost no time in accordance with that and your previous letter of the 18th in employing a confidential person to watch the movements of the insurgents and their abettors in the disturbed part of my district, and in addition have now to say that I have since opened a correspondence with the following magistrates and others for carrying into effect the views of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor as then expressed, and trust that no seditious or traitorous meetings or conspiracy can now be held in any part of the district without our knowledge and consequent immediate suppression. George Rykert, Esq., St. Catharines; Henry Mills, Grimsby; David Simpson, York; A.S. St. John, Dunnville; J. Black, Port Colborne; J. Johnston, Humberstone; Wm. Smith, Fort Erie; James Cummings, Chippewa; John Davis, St. Johns; Duncan McFarlane, Port Robinson.

I have the honour &c.

ALEX. HAMILTON, Sheriff.

P.S. In accordance with your late instructions, the prisoners committed on charges of high treason, 23 in number, were this day shipped on board the steam vessel Transit for Toronto in charge of my deputy, Mr. McLeod.

Government House, 30th June, 1838.

Dear Sir: I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letters dated 23rd and 26th instant, informing me of what you had done in pursuance of the Instructions from His Excellency, which I was recently directed to transmit you.

It is a happy circumstance that by the prompt military movement under His Excellency's guidance the insurgents in your district were put down before the invasion of the Western District by armed bands from the State of Michigan occurred to call off the attention of the Government.

I have the honour to be, Dear Sir, Your very obed. serv.,

JNO. MACAULEY.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.  
Dunnville, 6th July, 1838.

Dear Sir: Your circular of the 27th ult. was received last Friday evening but I was away on business to Niagara, and have but now returned, which is my apology for not writing before. The contents of said circular shall be strictly attended to as far as I am able to attend the same, for really the conduct and wicked actions of those Rebels or Pirates has

been such as to call forth the exertions of every well wisher to the Government and to Society to put them down.

I am Sir, Your Obedient Servant,  
(Signed) A. S. ST. JOHN

Alexander Hamilton Esq., Sheriff, Niagara District.  
Sheriff's Office, Niagara, 19th July, 1838.

Hon. John Macaulay,

Sir: I have the honour to report for the information of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor that the guard ordered by His Excellency on his former visit to this place, or an officer and twenty men of the Frontier Light Infantry being discontinued during the time the prisoners were at Toronto, has since been supplied by successive officers in command in numbers wholly inadequate for the security of the gaol.

I have also to say that within a few days I have seen a letter from the District Attorney of the United States to the marshal of the same country, stating that the refugees, he had reason to believe, were in very considerable numbers along the Frontier from Buffalo to Niagara, and that he was apprehensive of some intended movement on their part against this country. This, taken in connection with the enclosed letter from Mr. Davis of St. Johns, one of the gentlemen with whom I am in communication with respect to the suppression of unlawful meetings in the disturbed part of my district, leads me to suppose that there is every probability (from the known resources of the refugees) of an attempt by them, probably in conjunction with some from our side, to force the gaol and liberate the prisoners, now amounting to a very large number, mostly on charges of high treason, and beg leave to suggest the propriety of a guard of at least two companies of regulars supported by the remaining troops in the place should be ordered for the protection of the gaol until the prisoners are disposed of.

My own opinion is that, should an attack be made, it will not be with less than from 200 to 250 men landing during the night from a steamboat or schooner on the Lake Shore as near the gaol as convenient, in hopes of effecting their object before sufficient forces could be collected to oppose them.

I have the honour, &c.

A. H. Sherriff.

The present guard consists of a sergeant and six men of the Dragoon Guards only.

Bertie, 4th July, 1838.

Alex. Hamilton, Esq., Sheriff, Niagara District.

Sir: I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication and His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor's confidential circular, to which all due attention shall be paid by me. I have at present merely to state that the Township of Bertie appears to be peaceable and the generality of the inhabitants well disposed. There are nevertheless a few suspicious characters who will be strictly watched.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Obedient Servant.

JAS. JOHNSTON, J.P.

Queenston, 16 July, 1838.

Hon. John Macaulay,

Sir, In compliance with the part of your confidential circular of 20th June last requesting from time to time as occasion may warrant to report thereupon for His Excellency's

information, I am happy to say that the lately disturbed part of this District is now in apparent peace and quietness. As a mark of the diligence of the magistrates and others with whom I am in correspondence on this subject, I take the liberty of enclosing a letter from Ducnan Macfarlane, Esq., on the subject of a slight alarm in his neighbourhood, which proved to be entirely harmless.

I have the honour to be, &c.

A. H.

Confidential Circular.  
1838.

Government House, Toronto, 27th Oct.

Sir; Referring to my confidential communication of the 20th June last, I am now directed by the Lieutenant Governor to call your immediate attention to the political state of your district, and request your utmost vigilance in observing the movements of suspicious persons and in discovering, if possible, the number and strength of any secret societies which may have been recently formed in connection with the conspirators against this country, who have organized themselves into lodges of Hunters, with secret signs, passwords and degrees of membership, along the whole United States Frontier bordering on Canada, and who fully intend to attack our Government.

For your aid in executing this duty, I am commanded to communicate to you the several orders of Hunters -- which may be found very useful, if employed with care and discretion. It is, however, His Excellency's desire that you will not reveal this information, except on occasions when you may think it advisable to employ a trusty agent to mix with disaffected persons, for the purpose of collecting intelligence.

You will have the goodness to understand that His Excellency does not object to your incurring some little expense in collecting intelligence and watching the disaffected, where the propriety of doing so is evident; at the same time, it is hoped that by active correspondence with loyal, judicious and observant individuals in the various parts of your district, on whom from your knowledge of their character you can rely, the amount of your expenditure may be rendered. (\_\_\_\_\_)

In collecting information, I am directed to express to you His Excellency's request that every person's statement may be taken down clearly and fully in the extended form of a deposition on both, in which should be noted all particulars, such as the name, present residence, place of nativity, occupation and of the deponent, and the most explicit details respecting the individuals informed against and their plots and proceedings. I beg your careful attention to His Excellency's wishes in this respect.

The duty which in connection with other good subjects you are now called on to perform is, doubtless extraordinary, and may be onerous; nevertheless His Excellency trusts that as the circumstances in which the undertaken with alacrity, and performed with that zeal, promptitude and efficiency which its importance requires at your hands.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Most Obedient, Humble Servant.

JOHN MACAULAY

St. Catharines, 8th November, 1838.

Sir; I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential Circular of the 6th Inst., stating that you have received a communication from the Government Office calling your "immediate attention to the political state of this district" and "requesting the

utmost vigilance in observing the movements of suspicious persons, and in discovering, if possible, the number and strength of any secret societies.

I am not aware of any such societies, nor have I heard of any having been formed in this district.

I shall however, take all proper means for discovering the movements of the disaffected, and should anything of importance come to my knowledge, shall not fail to communicate with you, and take such other steps as I may find necessary to lead to a full detection.

I yesterday saw Col. Booth, of the 43rd, who called my attention to a similar communication from the Government Office.

I have the Honour to be, Sir, Your Obedient Servant. (signed) GEO. RYKERT.

Alex. Hamilton, Esq., Queenston.

Port Robinson, 9th Nov. 1838

Sir: Yours of the 6th instant came to hand this morning, and in reply I will do all in my power to further the object, so necessary for the safety of the country. I have not been idle, although I think it nonsense to trouble you with half of the reports in circulation. When I discover anything of importance I will report. I have just returned from the lake shore last night. I have been placing outposts to give the alarm, if any, or in the event of their making any discoveries of arms or ammunition, to report to me. I have gone further than this, even to make offers - in the meantime, I will be on the lookout in this quarter and be otherwise useful.

I am, dear Sir, Your Obedient Servant.

DUNCAN McFARLANE

Alex. Hamilton, Esq. Sheriff, Niagara District, Queenston.

Chippawa, 9th November, 1838

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.,

Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your Confidential Circular of the 6th inst., and will attend to the contents thereof, as I have, however, to remark that no secret meetings in this section of the country, to my knowledge, have taken place, neither has anything of the kind been intimated, that I am aware of. There is, I find, more dissatisfaction than has been heretofore in consequence of the militia being called out and placed under an officer not belonging to the Regiment, even the Officers, I am told, intend remonstrating against it. All the young men are going out of the country rather than serve, but would willingly turn out under their old Officers in case of emergency. Such is the state of our country, and our Government are making things worse, in place of better.

Yours Truly, JAMES CUMMINGS.

Grimsby, 12th November, 1838

Sir: Your confidential circular of the 6th inst. was duly received, and in compliance thereto, I have made diligent enquiry in this part of the country, and I am happy to say that I have not heard of any secret meeting or other rebellious attempts whatsoever. You may rely that I will be vigilant and upon the alert, should anything transpire of a suspicious nature.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant, (Signed) H. NELLES

Alexander Hamilton, Esq., Queenston.

Bertie, 13th Nov. 1838.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.,

Sir: Yesterday, I had the honour of receiving your "Confidential circular," dated 6th instant, in which, after referring me to your favour of 27th June last, enclosing a copy of a communication from the Government Office bearing the date the 20th of the same month. You request me to use my utmost diligence to discover any secret meetings or societies formed or forming in this part of the District in connection with the apprehended movements of conspirators on the other side. I beg that you will feel fully assured that I shall exert myself to the utmost of my ability in so doing, and will be guided, in the discharge of this duty, by the principles laid down in the concluding part of your circular. I have to observe for your information, that I have every reason to believe that no description of political organization exists in this part of the Township at present. Should, however, anything of the kind appear to be on foot, at any future period, I shall lose no time in apprising you and the officers in command, and at the same time do all I possibly can to counteract them, and bring the delinquents to Justice.

I have the honour to be Sir, Your Most Obedt. Servant. JAMES JOHNSTON, J.P.

P.S. I would observe in reference to the length of time elapsed between the date and receipt of your letter, as above, that I reside about 8 miles nearly a westerly course from Waterloo, in the Township of Bertie. You will therefore readily see that it is not every day that an opportunity offers for obtaining my letters.

Queenston, 21 Nov. 1838

Hon. John Macaulay,

Sir: I now write to say that in furtherance of your letter of 5 instant communications were opened with a number of respectable persons in my district with regard to the political state of the district, from nearly all of whom I have received answers stating that everything was as yet quiet in the respective neighbourhoods and that every precaution was taken to discover any secret or political meetings that might be formed. A report has since arisen as to the landing of some arms from a wreck at Port Albino, which was strictly investigated by William Smith, Esq., of Fort Erie, in conjunction with the commanding Officer, Col. Webb, and was found to be groundless. Reports are in circulation of an intended attack on the Frontier, but as yet we have not been able to discern any crossing in the neighbourhood as far as Buffalo, Lewiston, Lockport or elsewhere on the lines. We are in readiness for them, and have no fears of the result, if they should dare to come.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

#### IV. INQUIRIES INTO DISAFFECTION

Government House, Toronto, 18th June, 1838.

Sir: Various reports having been made to the Lieutenant-Governor within the last few days, from different quarters, that parties of disaffected persons and even disposed persons have assembled in the neighbourhood of the Short Hills in the District of Niagara, and that they are probably in correspondence with persons in the United States who entertain projects of hostility against the Government of this Country,

I have it in command from His Excellency to request that you will immediately take measures to discover precisely what foundations exist for the rumours which have obtained currency on the subject. His Excellency directs to say that he desires you to employ some discreet and confidential person to proceed into the disaffected part of the country, to which I have adverted and there institute the most particular enquiries into the movement and plans of those bands of men who are said to have assembled secretly in swamps and other places in rear of Dunnville, Chippawa for rebellious purposes.

You are authorized to incur the necessary expenses attendant on this service and are requested to use all convenient diligence and activity in its performance. His Excellency trusts that you will be successful in discovering the real state of things in the suspected quarter and that you will soon be enabled to report satisfactorily thereupon. I have the honour to be, &c. JNO. MACAULAY, Secretary.

Queenston, 23 June, 1838.

Hon. John Macaulay.

Sir: I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 18th inst. on my return from Kingston on the 21st, and I lost no time in proceeding the following morning to St. Johns and its vicinity in company with Messrs. Rykert and Mittleberger, two of Her Majesty's justices of the peace, for the purpose of taking information on oath as to the proceedings of a band of outlaws in an attack on the night of the 20th, upon a small body of Her Majesty's Lancers stationed at that place, who were taken prisoners by the insurgents after a very spirited resistance, but afterwards set at liberty, deprived of their horses, clothes, &c., but which I am happy to say were recovered by a party of our militia and others sent in pursuit, together with eight prisoners of the Rebels taken during the day. The information on oath, I am sorry to say, implicates some of Her Majesty's subjects residing in the vicinity of St. John as being parties in this most nefarious transaction, immediate measures for whose apprehension have been taken, as also to follow up the enquiry against all who may have been concerned with them directly or indirectly; copies of which informations shall be forwarded to you in the course of a day or two. I have also, in pursuance with the directions of His Excellency the Lt. Governor, employed a confidential person residing in St. Johns to continue a strict surveillance of all proceedings in the neighbourhood and to ascertain by every means in his power the names of all persons in any way aiding or abetting the insurgents, and also to employ scouts to follow and watch their movements in order to their final capture or destruction, which I trust is near at hand. The marauders have added to their other crimes the robbery of two of our most respectable farmers in the neighbourhood of the fruits of a long life's industrious earnings amounting to between three and five hundred pounds. I shall communicate with you further on this subject as occasion may require.

I have the honour, &c.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

25th June, 1838.

Dear Sir: I got your letter late on Friday, my brother was away somewhere on duty. I know several loyal and trustworthy persons about the Shorthills; if necessary to establish a surveillance in that vicinity David Disher, John Davis, P.M. and Joseph Disher, Wm. Adams, J.P., and even Winchester, who was to be Captain of the Rebels, he

has of late veered round. If I can go this week, to his place, which I shall try and do, I think I can get important from him.

I enclose a letter received on Saturday -- you may depend no exertion shall be spared on my part to comply with the spirit of said letter.

I shall send Mr. Smith the papers relative to the convicts this week.  
Your Obt. Servant.

A. McLEOD.

Upper Canada - Meeting at Drummondville for investigating certain letters and papers produced charging certain individuals of Pelham offering to assist the Rebels while there. Niagara District Present: Alexander Hamilton, Sheriff. P. Delater; J.J. Lefferty, J. Cummings, Esquires.

Letter produced, signed by John Davis, who denies having signed such letters, and says it is not his handwriting -- the same being compared with other signatures of his -- the Court are quite on the opinion the letter produced is a forgery, and done with intent of injuring said Davis. Davis says he is not acquainted with the handwriting in said letter - says he thinks he has writing in his possession similar to that signed by M. Slough and dated Pelham 20th, 1838, now produced, and thinks it is that of John Carpenter of Pelham -- says he does not think the letter produced and signed Moses Mither, dated 19th June, 1838, to be the handwriting of Moses Mither. Mr. Davids states that he was in his bed during the night of the 21st June - does not know Samuel Clothier, there are two persons of that name in that neighbourhood, but does not either, understands they are Radicals, neither does he know George Beckett. (John Davis). Moses Mither says the letter produced bearing his name and directed to Isaac Smith, dated Pelham, 19th June, 1838, is not of his handwriting; that he does not know such a man as Isaac Smith, that he spells his name with two t's and the forgery only has one, thinks the letter is in the handwriting of John Snure, is not positive. Does not know either of the clothiers, knows George Beckett, son of Samuel Beckett, understood by report that Clothier was a Miller for Samuel Beckett and by general report, said Beckett belonged to the Radical Party. Thinks the letter signed by John Davis to be something similar to that of Stephen Beckett Junr. handwriting. Moses Mither. Michael Slough cannot write at all, has no education, but thinks it looks very much like the handwriting of Andrew Brady, that is the letter produced and signed M. Slough, dated Pelham, 19th June, 1838. Mr. Philip Mither examined, signed his name as per document herewith - does not know the handwriting of the letter signed John Davis, does not know the handwriting in the letter signed Ph. M., and M. Slough, a son in law to Michael Slough, who does not write, that there is another Michael Slough, son of George Slough, does not think the handwriting of the letter signed M. Slough to be his - does not know the handwriting of the letter signed Moses Mither, does not think it is his brothers, thinks he has writings in the handwriting of Henry Snure, formerly a cloth draper, whose note he thinks he holds. Philip Mither. Samuel Clothier, sworn, deposes and saith that he made the expression to Beckett, who was with him, the right saddle ought to be put on the right horse, meant by that the people who had wrote them ought to be found out. Beckett asked me to go to the woods with him - I said I would carry the letters to some magistrate and might get some money by them. I was not acquainted with the roots we went for, and supposed he only wanted me for company with him. When Beckett read the letters, he said he did not know what to

make of them, said I had better take them to some magistrate, and was anxious I should go that night -- I showed the letters to John Ostrander, who said he could swear to Mr. Davis' handwriting - made no other remarks.

Samuel Clothier.

Sworn before us at Stamford, 7th July, 1838.

James Cummings, J.P.      John J. Lefferty, J.P.      P. Delater, J.P.      John  
McGlashan, J.P.

Sir: If you will send some of your men that is acquainted with the road into the woods between my Mill and Martin Overholt's about 12 o'clock to-night, I will meet them there with some bread and other provisions.

I shall be known by a piece of white cloth which I shall hold in my hand. If you attack St. Johns, make a diligent search at my house for me and I will hide myself, which will leave no suspicion of me be shure to burne or hide this letter out of the way. In case of any accident. It may be brought as a witness against me.

Yours truly,

JOHN DAVIS.

St. Johns, 21st. June, 1838.

Captain Smith sir, we understand you are in want of Provisions for your men. If you send some of your men to the west side of your Camp with Password Patriot we will meet them there about eleven o'clock tonite with a few loves of bred and small crock of butter which will be some help to you not forget to destroy this letter that it may not betray us, yours truly,

Ph M.      M. SLOUGH.

Pelham, 20th, 1838.

Upper Canada

Niagara District. Special session of magistrates held this 7th day of July, 1838, at Adam Frankells in To Wit.

Stamford. Esquires present: P. DeLatre; J.J. Lefferty; J. McGlashan; J. Cummings.

On comparing the forged (?) letters produced on the 4th July with various documents brought forward, the Court are strongly impressed with the opinion that the letter signed Moses Mither is in the handwriting of Moses Brady of Pelham.

That the letter signed John Davis is either in the handwriting of Mrs. Smith or Henry Snure.

That the letter signed M. Slough appears to be in the handwriting of Eber Rice. Niagara District Personally appeared before me, A. Bradshaw, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Justices of the to wit

Peace in and for said District, Samuel Clothier, of said District, Labourer, and on his oath saith that on Sunday afternoon, the first day of July instant, he together with George Beckett was in the woods near Hadslers School House looking for some roots to cure the rheumatism for John Culver's wife, that while he was looking through the woods, he discovered a considerable number of pieces of paper torn into fragments and (and) thrown about the ground, that on passing near to a log with the middle of it clear from the ground, he observed three letters tied together with white thread that were directed as follows: Mr. Frederick Smith, Patriot Camp, and signed John Davis; one to Mr. Isaac Smith or Samuel Chandler, Patriot Camp, signed Moses Mither and one to Captain F.

Smith, Pelham signed M.Slough, the whole of which papers I have delivered to the  
Justice as I found them. SAMUEL CLOTHIER.

Sworn before me at Thorold, this 2nd day of July, 1838

A. Bradshaw, J.P. Upper Canada, Niagara District, to wit.

Examination of George Beckitt of the Township of Pelham, butcher, who being  
duly sworn deposes on oath that on Sunday, the last the first instant I wanted Samuel  
Clothier to go with me up the creek to look for some roots for medicine we travelled over  
the hill saw about of sheet of paper torn into small pieces, I could make nothing of them.  
Whilst I was looking at the pieces, Clothier found some letters which had been sealed but  
broken open. Clothier called to me. I opened them and read them. They were found  
under a log as Clothier told me, did not see him pick up the letters. He might possibly  
have had the letters about him at the time. He, however, showed me the place where he  
had found them. They might have laid there for a length of time without receiving  
damage from rain. When I read the letters Clothier remarked the right horse ought to  
wear the right saddle. Did not ask him what he meant by it, we got what roots we wanted  
on coming into the road, Clothier said he might get some money by them – think the way  
Clothier, expressed himself, it would be from the Magistrates he would get the money.

GEORGE BECKETT.

Sworn before us at Stamford, this 7th day of July, 1838.

James Cummings, J.P. P. Delutre, J.P. John J. Lafferty, J.P.

John McGlashan, N.P.

Upper Canada John Davis of St. Johns

Niagara District Maketh oath saith - that on Saturday last, the 30th day of June, John  
Snure of Pelham

To Wit. was at Deponent's house, said to me I had been trying to bring them all over to  
my terms, but I had failed, and now you are telling all the lies you can and swearing to  
them, that you can invent but we have found you out. I then replied your party imagine  
you have found me out. Snure said yes, and your own party will soon find you out, we  
have got you in the trap now and they will know you before you get out. I made a reply,  
I hope they will find me out.

JOHN DAVIS.

Sworn before us at Stamford the 4th of July, 1838.

John J. Lafferty, J.P.; P. Delutre, J.P.; James Cummings, J.P.

Mr. Isaac Smith,

Sir: Your man says that you are in want of bread. If you will meet me about one o'clock  
to-morrow morning at the road on the north side of your Camp in the bush near Brown's  
Field and let the Countersign be union I will bring you five loaves of bread and as soon as  
I can get some more flour from the Mill I will have some bread baked and will fetch you  
eight or ten Loaves more. I wish you to take care of this note that no persons sees it but  
yourself. Your most obd. servt.

MOSES MITLER.

Pelham, 19th June, 1838.

P. S. D.

To l hen

Pounds

0

Shillings

1

Pence

0

Two bushels of sweet apples at 2s per bushel	0	7	0
3-1/2 pounds of pork at eightpence	0	2	4
7-1/2 bushels apples at the rate of 1s per bushel	0	7	6
1 bushel of sweet apples	0	2	0
1-1/2 bushels corn at eight shillings per bushel	0	12	0
4 quarts salt	0	1	0
5 bushels of apples		5	
	-----		
	3	4	10
			MRS. SMITH

Port Colborne, November 10, 1838

A. Hamilton, Esq.

I beg to acknowledge your favour of the 6th recd. yesterday and also the one your refer to of 27th June. Be assured I shall use all diligence in watching over the movements of this neighbourhood. On Saturday last, I took the deposition of a man respecting a vessel which went ashore at Port Albino on board of which were arms and ammunition bound westward. I immediately sent express to the Commanding Officer at Fort Erie inclosing it and the next morning received a letter from Major Webb, who with the Collector had been to the wreck and was satisfied there were no arms and permitted the Captain to land the goods and forward them by Steamboat to Buffalo. I have since had conversation the deponent above mentioned who insists there were no arms on board which were conveyed back to Buffalo. There was a quantity of powder which was all spoiled. With regard to my personal attendance, in case of my discovering any illegal meeting or conspiracy, you must not attribute any disaffection or indifference if I do not comply thereto. My age (72) must plea my apology and as there is no other magistrate within 12 miles, I am probably of more effective service at home than absent from it. You speak of remuneration of incident expenses. I have incurred considerable expense heretofore and although excepting in one instance (which is unpaid) I have made no charge, I should like to know to whom I am to apply on any further occasion. I had to hire a man and horse last Saturday night of an innkeeper, who will of course expect to be paid, but it is not right I should the expense.

I remain Sir, Your Obed. Servant.

J. BLACK.

Port Robinson, 29th Dec. 1838.

Sir, An apology is due for not communicating with you oftener. In consequence of Capt. McMicking getting a fall from his horse, the whole duty of the Troop devolves upon me, such as making reports, travelling around to see the different stations, paying the men, and keeping the accts for them, besides several other matters to attend to. I start this morning to again see the stations, a distance of about 88 miles, and should anything occur worth communicating, I leave orders to do so with my Deputy P.M. I have at this time, two scouts belonging to 2nd S. Drgons, Robt. Watson and Geo. Bouck. I do not allow them to appear on duty among the other Dragoons in day time, their duty is to travel ten to fifteen miles at night, always taking different roads. One night, the one goes through by St. John's and then returns by way of Pelham, the other takes quite a different course,

then the next night the other takes through the same neighbourhood, and sometimes one of them goes over towards Limestone Ridges. They are at all times clad in homemade clothes. Watson sometimes goes in an old sleigh. The other Dragoons are not acquainted with the exact nature of these two men duty. They are not allowed to carry arms or to get into any arguments about politics. This I cause to be done in order that the men may get all the information and not be suspected.

I have thus given you a plan of the arrangement and I think you will approve of it. Some little things I have heard, but I did not think it worthwhile to trouble you with the relation of them. They appeared idle until the night of the 26th inst. the scouts are only requested to report to me every night at 9 o'clock as they start out what they have seen the night previous unless they deem it important from something they may have discovered. Robt. Watson while traveling in the direction of Hauns Mills in the rear of Lyons Creek met three sleighs one of them had in it 2 men and other 4 men. He did not know them. This he thought nothing of. The next day, one of the Snures and young Chandler brought a load of hay from one of the \_\_\_\_\_.

This circumstance connected with the other awakens my suspicions for I think it more possible that this said load of hay contained arms or ammunition, for I cannot see any good reason for these two individuals going such a distance say fifteen miles for hay, you will observe this was not reported to me in time for me to have taken any steps to discover what the sleigh really contained. I have given instructions should any more hay come from this quarter. The same night, the other scout met five men nearly all together, coming from Gillems corners in Pelham. It may not appear to you so extraordinary about a few men travelling in the way described, but let it be remarked that latterly it is quite an unusual thing in these unfrequented parts of the country. At all events I think it my duty to report the occurrence and leave it for you to come to a conclusion. I will be again at Port Robinson, say in four days.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most Obedt. Servant.

To. Alex. Hamilton, Esq.

DUNCAN McFARLANE

Sheriff, Niagara District, Queenston.

## V. SUPERVISION OF THE MAILS

General Post Office

Quebec, 22nd May, 1838.

Sir: You will please to stop all the numbers that may reach you of a paper published by W.L. Mackenzie at New York, called "McKenzie's Gazette," and send them to me. I am Sir, Your Most Obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. A. STAYNER

A. Hamilton, Esq. P.M. Queenston.

Post Office, Cooksville. May 31st, 1838.

Dear Sir: In case you may have observed one of McKenzie's Papers in a packet sent last Monday, through your office to my address, I think it right to let it be known, that it was without my sanction, and perfectly unknown to me. The principles of this and of similar publications are so repugnant to my feelings that I cannot suffer it to be supposed for an instant that I would be a party to their circulation in any degree whatever. I, therefore,

send the enclosed open for your perusal, and will feel obliged by your sealing and forwarding it.

I am, Sir, Respectfully yours,  
Alex. Hamilton, Esq. P.M., Queenston.

(Signed) JOHN H. SAVIGNY

Confidential.  
1838.

Toronto, 25 June,

Sir: I am directed by His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor to request that you without delay send to the Toronto Post Office, under cover to the Post Master, all letters which may reach your Office that are suspected of containing treasonable matter, or that are any way of a suspicious character.

You will please observe that this letter is headed confidential and its contents not to be communicated to any person.

I am Sir, Your Obedient Servant  
A. Hamilton, Esq. P.M. Queenston.

(Signed) JOHN STAYNER

#### VI. THE CASE OF BENJAMIN WAIT.

Government House,  
11th October, 1838.

Sir: I have the honour to transmit you a copy of the Petition of Benjamin Wait addressed to His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor on 6th instant from the Niagara Jail, in order that you may have an opportunity of inquiring into and explaining the charges incidentally made by that prisoner against the Jailer for bad treatment. In so doing, you will please notice the other reflections thrown upon all persons concerned in his safe keeping at Niagara, and I would recommend that the investigation should be made in the presence of the Magistrates who can certify to its result. You will observe that he complains of his health having been seriously affected by the bad state of the Gaol, and that it now is in an indifferent condition. The report of the physician who attends your Gaol should be appended to your own report in this case, which I am desirous of laying before His Excellency on his return in the early part of next week from Lower Canada, as I know it to be His Excellency's pleasure that all complaints of this nature should be fully and speedily inquired into.

I beg to remark that as you were required by my letter of 1st instant to send this prisoner with others to Fort Henry, it seems rather singular that the present petition should be dated from your Gaol five days afterwards.

In all cases of the transfer of person convicted of political offences from a district gaol to any other place of imprisonment, the due execution of the orders of the Government should be regularly reported, for the information of the Lieutenant-Governor.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient, humble servant, JNO. MACAULAY.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

Copy.

To His Excellency Sir George Arthur  
Lt. Governor of Upper Canada and Major General Commanding Her Majesty's Forces therein, etc.

The Petition of Benjamin Wait, now a State Prisoner awaiting orders for transportation.

Most Humbly Sheweth

That Your Excellency's Petitioner has received a pardon for his late offence through the Sheriff of the District from Your Excellency, for which he would humbly express his gratitude and further hope that Your Excellency will again favourably consider his case, his necessitous circumstances, the deplorable situation of his Family, his former good standing in Society, the causes which led him recently to throw himself among that party of the Province who were virtually opposed to the present institutions of the Government or those who presided over them; and allow him to return to his duty to his country - to his family - to his friends and to Society.

That Your Excellency's Petitioner is now and has been for some time, laboring under a severe depression of health lately brought on by the closeness, coldness and dampness of the cells he is obliged to inhabit and the want of sufficient exercise. That his constitution has been formerly enfeebled by a sedentary life which renders him more subject to severe attacks and less liable to bear them. That several times during his confinement at the Niagara Gaol he has been so severely attacked that his life has been despaired of, and that during those sufferings his usage by the keeper, Mr. Wheeler, has been such as to augment rather than relieve them. As for instance, his last almost fatal attack - his confinement continued for more than a week, during which pains were so unremittingly severe in the head, that he was deprived for most of the time of all consciousness, and would, were it not for the watchfulness of his companions in misery, have most assuredly proved fatal. They have finally resulted in depriving him of hearing by one ear and nearly of seeing from one eye. A part of the time when the worst, he was forced to be in the main hall, attended by night, only by one or two of his companions who volunteered for that purpose, the wind and rain beating into the hall, which was open to its full force, having no sash or glass in the large rear window. That the remaining part of the time he was locked into a small damp cell so closely that even the diamond door through the main door was fastened, thereby cutting off all communication with the outside, and the whole time, not allowed a light even for the purpose of making his bed - none of his friends allowed to visit him to administer the least comfort, even his wife, distracted on account of his situation, was not allowed to see him. That the keeper is in the habit of making use of language towards the prisoners too horrible and vulgar to report, much to the discomfiture of the quiet and devotionally disposed.

That Your Excellency's Petitioner's wife has invariably borne herself with the greatest complacency towards the keeper of the Gaol, yet has incurred his hatred unaccountably and has been subjected to, not only subjected to, but has received his brutal insults uncalled for either by her language or conduct towards him or any person; that Your Excellency believing these things wholly incompatible with Your Excellency's desire for clemency and determination of shewing \_\_\_\_\_ forbearance and mercy to the unfortunate and kindness to the sick, and that Your Excellency would most assuredly extend in his Christian Charity, his kindness as soon to the humble, incarcerated petitioner as to the more fortunate and less humble - has been emboldened to address Your Excellency thus and to hope that Your Excellency will favorably consider his sufferings, his family sufferings, and grant him and his family a mitigation if possible of their sufferings and bereavement by a full pardon, on his giving security for his future

good conduct, or a more lenient confinement and allow his family and friends access to him to alleviate in a manner, this unfortunate situation of himself. That Your Excellency's Petitioner's Wife and Father have written and directed a Petition (the enclosed) to Her Majesty, which they humbly hope Your Excellency will speedily forward, and further desire that Your Excellency will allow the subject to remain in Upper Canada if not pardoned until Her Majesty's pleasure may be made known - and as in duty bound, Your Excellency's Petitioner will ever pray.

(Signed) BENJM. WAIT.

Niagara Gaol, October 6th, 1838

May Your Excellency's Petitioner humbly implore an answer to his Petition.

Sheriff's Office, Niagara, 13th October, 1838.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

Dear Sir: The prisoners, Beamer, Wait, Chandler, McLeod, Brown and Warner, were safely delivered into the custody of the Sheriff of the Midland District on the 10th instant.

I herewith transmit you a copy of a Petition, received this day, it is lies from beginning to end, and of course can be satisfactorily proved, to have no foundation in fact. I was at the Gaol three or four times every week, and the only complaint the Major (as he was styled ) ever made to me was that his wife was not allowed to remain within the Gaol during the day, and as to his ear and his eye, it is all in my eye, he can see and hear as well as I can, he is one of the most consummate villains I have ever met. After cheating the public of all he could for the last four years, he turned patriot and public robber, and then petitions and prates about his standing in Society. The day he left the Gaol, he told me he would report me to Lord Durham for putting him in irons, so I have no doubt in a few days, you will have a copy of a Petition from him from that quarter. His wife is going to England with a Petition to the Queen. She is elegantly dressed, and generally has her pockets well stuffed with Martin Overholt's hard dollars, which she has been sporting very freely in this place. When the party were in the St. George on way to Kingston, Captain Moodie of that boat asked them if they were not sorry for their conduct. Wait and Beamer replied no, they would join the patriots again to-morrow if they were at liberty. They shook their chains and called to the passengers, to see what they were suffering for liberty.

Beamer, Wait and Chandler are three of the most notorious vagabonds unhung, the two latter I have known these several years, and I don't know one redeeming quality they possess.

If you write to Mr. Macaulay, on the subject, and suggest that as the Grand Jury assemble on the 18th instant, it might be well to lay the Petition before them on that day, and it can be fully investigated at once by them.

I am, Sir, Your Most obedient servant. (Signed)

ALEXANDER McLEOD

I find a complaint the prisoners were not at once removed on the receipt of the order. I did not think it prudent to take them down in the Great Britain, which was the first boat for Kingston after the receipt of the order, which was received on the 3rd instant, nor in any other boat that called at Oswego. I wrote to Toronto to know the first boat from Toronto for Kingston on the Canada side. On Friday I received an answer that the St. George was the first. I am, etc.

(Signed) A. McLEOD.

Queenston, 16 October, 1838.

Honourable John Macaulay,

Sir: I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of 11th instant enclosing the Petition of Benjamin Wait, late a state prisoner in my District, and do not hesitate to pronounce it a tissue of gross misrepresentations as well as inconsistency and absurdity. As the Assizes meeting on the 18th Instant, I shall not fail to lay the matter before the grand jury and have the whole matter particularly inquired into.

With respect to the detention of prisoners after the receipt of His Excellency's order for their removal, I have to say that immediate steps were taken for their removal on the receipt of your letter on the third instant, but that in consequence of no boat going from this port (Niagara) to Kingston without touching at an American Port on the way, it became necessary to open a correspondence with Toronto to ascertain at what time a boat would be in readiness to take the prisoners on their removal from this, and it was ascertained that the St. George would be the first, with whom they were accordingly sent. I have the honour, &c. A.H. Sheriff.

In event of my deputy, Mr. McLeod not having reported the delivering of the prisoners, I now have the honour to report the state prisoners, Jacob Beamer, Benjamin Wait, Samuel Chandler, Alex. McLeod, Brown and Warren were all safely delivered unto the Sheriff of the Midland District at Kingston on the 10th instant.

Court House, Niagara, 22 Oct. 1838.

Gentlemen,

I herewith enclose a letter from Government House of 11th October instant founded on a Petition of Benjamin

Wait, late a state prisoner in confinement in this gaol, of which I take the liberty to request on your part, a strict investigation. I enclose a report from Doctor Porter, Gaol Physician, on the subject.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, Yr. Obedient, ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Sheriff.

To The Grand Jury,

Oct. session, 1838.

Queenston, 27 Oct. 1838.

Honourable, John Macaulay,

Sir: Referring to my letter of the 16th instant, I herewith enclose a copy of a presentment of the Grand Jury of this date on the subject of Wait's Petition to His Excellency, the Lt.-Governor of 6th Oct. instant, together with Doctors Porter and Rolls' statement with regard to his health while in confinement in the gaol of this district.

With respect to his moral character, I will only say that after being thrown into gaol for his want of principle, he unhesitatingly took advantage, in total disregard of the rights of his creditors, of the ignorance of the gaol in giving him his liberty in one suit when he perfectly knew that there were other claims against him in the Sheriff's office to a very large amount, which but for his fortunate recapture in the insurrection at St. John's, we should have to pay for him. The Barefaced Robbery of the Overholts at St. Johns of upwards of Fifteen Hundred Dollars by him and his confederates, which there is every reason to believe his wife is now squandering. Together with his and Beamer's conduct

on board of the St. George on the way to Kingston, as reported by Mr. McLeod, stating to Captain Moody, "that so far from being sorry for what they had done, that they would join the Patriots again to-morrow if at liberty," shaking their chains and calling upon the passengers to see what they were suffering for liberty, together with the gross misrepresentation with respect to his treatment in gaol so completely disproved by the presentment of the Grand Jury, renders his petition to His Excellency for further clemency, in the opinion of the respectable part of the community here, one of the most barefaced pieces of of impudence that can well be conceived, but which we trust will be the means of unmasking him to those in whose hands he now is for the well merited punishment of his crimes.

I have the honour, &c.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Sheriff.

## VII. MISCELLANEOUS

Government House, 1st August, 1838.

Sir, His Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor, having learned that you were under the painful necessity of personally enforcing the extreme penalty of the law yesterday in the case of James Morrow, has commanded me to express to you his regret that a duty so very unpleasant should have been imposed on you by unforeseen circumstances and his approbation of the cool and firm manner in which it was performed,

I have the honour to be Sir, Your most Obedient, Humble Servant, JNO. MACAULAY

Alexander Hamilton, Esq. Sheriff, Niagara District.

Government House, 11th December, 1838.

Dear Sir: I duly received and laid before His Excellency and also communicated as you desired to Mr. Jarvis, your letter stating the providential escape from incendiarism which you had on Friday night last. It is, however, to be greatly regretted that the persons concerned in the wicked act have eluded detection.

I am, Dear Sir, Yours sincerely,  
Alexander Hamilton, Esq.

JNO. MACAULAY.

From Co. Kingsmill to A. Hamilton.

My Dear Sir: I have had with me the informer of the intended destruction of your house by fire - his information was most valuable, and I told him that I was quite assured that some remuneration would be allowed him. I received your letter by Mrs. Tench, and as I am on a better scent, I think you had better not take any steps at present. Accompanying this you will receive a letter for your brother the Doctor.

Yours sincerely, W. KINGSMILL.

3 o'clock, Tuesday, 11th Dec. 1838.

Queenston, 26th Jany. '39.

Mr. John Simpson, Editor, Niagara Chronicle.

Sir: I have to acknowledge rect. of your favour of 25th Instant with the two numbers of your paper containing notices of the attempt made to burn my house by incendiaries. The facts as stated in the first and second paragraphs of your paper of the 13th are perfectly correct.

With respect to the paragraph in your paper of the 20th I have to say that you have been misinformed, in confirmation of which I enclose you the letters received, by which you will perceive that my brother John's house is distinctly named in both letters, but not a syllable respecting mine, the tendency of which was to throw me completely off my guard. For being told of rumours abroad that my house was to be destroyed, I replied it as a mistake, "it is not my house, it is my brother John's." and I immediately placed Col. Kingsmill's letter in my brother's hands and consulted with him as to the necessary arrangements for securing his house and with certainty destroying or taking the perpetrators. Every arrangement being completed, I lay down in my clothes at half past eleven in order to be in perfect readiness to repair to my brother's on the concerted signal being made. In half an hour afterwards, I was aroused by Mr. Gilkinson with the intelligence that my own house was on fire.

I would not notice the circumstances but that I find much blame has been attached to me for neglecting any possible means of destroying the perpetrators of such nefarious schemes not aimed at me personally, but at the public peace of the two countries; which the foregoing statement will show does not rest in this instance with me.

As you have given publicity to the former statement, I trust you will do so with this in any manner you think best. The letters themselves cannot be published, as it might be injurious to the public service to do so, but I have no objections to their being shown to your informant. The letters you will please return at your earliest convenience.

I am Sir, Your obt. servant,

A. H., Sheriff.

My Dear Sir, I enclose you a letter from Mrs. Rolph when at Lewiston on Monday I promised to send any letter to or from Mrs. Rolph with which he pleased to make me the medium. I mention the circumstance that you may freely pass any letter to or from him on which my name in my own handwriting appears.

Yours,

(Signed) W. HAMILTON MERRITT.

Alexander Hamilton, Esq. 15th Dec. 1838.