

Two McIlvride Family Letters

Prepared by Nick Wallingford
23 December 2014

Introduction

The following two letters were provided by Joyce Montgomery, via Stephen Parker. The copies I have are photocopies, but are nearly clear enough to transcribe it all.

The first letter is from Grace MacKenzie (nee McIlvride), who had married Alexander McGregor Mackenzie and moved to India, to her sister Christina ('Tina') Prouse nee McIlvride. Tina was Grace's older sister, about 3 years older.

Names mentioned include Grace and Tina, Sandy (Grace's husband), one of their cousins Grant McIlvride (son of George and Janet McIlvride), Tina's daughter Grace and her daughter Christobel, and Tina's husband Richard Prouse.

The two letters are indicative of a lot of sibling arguments and disagreements - there are other such long-running feuds among the various McIlvride siblings.

Transcriptions

Letter from Grace

Days Bay
Wellington
New Zealand
19-6-28

My dear Tina,

I am on a 6 months' holiday to New Zealand and arrived home on the 22nd May (the anniversary of your wedding) and will not be leaving for India before the 1st week of November.

No doubt you will wonder why I am addressing you after so many years silence but necessity has no law.

Some few days before our dear Cousin Grantie died he asked Sandy & I to take care of a large photograph of your dear little Gracie and her child, which he intended sending to her from Inida but as he knew he could only live a few days more, would we promise to do the needful, and when we had the opportunity either send it to Gracie or take it to New Zealand and give it to her with his love.

I have brought the photograph with me and write to ask of you will you kindly allow me to call on you and make the same over to

little Chrystobel, seeing dear little Gracie has left us for ever, if it is not convenient for you to have me call on you will you very kindly permit Chrystobel to come to the Levin Railway Station and take delivery of the photograph as I intend visiting a friend in Wanganui whose brother was married from our house in Aywer two years ago - On learning from you I will arrange my plans accordingly & I do hope you will meet me half ways and thus enable me to carry out my promise to poor old Grantie.

Hoping this finds you and yours doing well dear Tina -

I remain
Your affect. sister.
Grace MacKenzie

Reply from Tina

Weraroa House
June 23rd 1928
Copy of answer

Dear Grace

Evidently necessity knows no law or I would not be *writing to you* (struck out) answering your letter.

It is a pity you should go to so much trouble over that picture and I don't see that any of your arrangements need be upset or interfered with on account of it. If you address it to me at Levin Railway Station and book it at Wellington Station it will come through alright - so you won't have any more trouble about that. If this does not meet with your approval I haven't any other suggestion. You mention my meeting you halfway. To me there isn't any halfway. When you were to leave NZ 40 years ago you certainly did not think me or mine were worth the trouble of seeing and bidding goodbye to. If my late husband and I had not gone to a good deal of inconvenience and trouble to come to Wainui you would have left without seeing any of us. Did you go halfway then? And I need scarcely remind you of the *reception* (underscore) we got on arriving there. Now the whole thing is in your own hands to do as you like about it. It does not make any difference to me what you do or what you think. It is many years since I troubled about you or what you did but this I do tell you I want no more your rows and troublemaking. I am a peaceloving woman myself and have always lived at peace with my own family and neighbours. But there are some people who neve rseem happy if they are not over the ears in rows. Mother was one of them and some of her family have kept it up pretty well. Now you know my mind about it - and you are free to please yourself.

I remain
Your Truly
Christina Prouse.

Days Bay
Wellington
New Zealand
19-6-28.

My dear Lena,
I am on a 6 months' holiday
to New Zealand and arrived home on the
22nd May (the anniversary of your wedding) and will
not be leaving for India before the 1st week of
November—

No doubt you will wonder why I am addressing
you after so many years silence, but necessity
has no law—

Some few days before our dear Cousin Gracie
died, he asked Sandy & I to take care of a
large photograph of your dear little Gracie
and her child, which he intended sending
to his home in India but as he died he could
only live a few days more, would we promise
to do the needful, and when we had the
opportunity either send it to Gracie or take it
to New Zealand and give it to her with his love.
I have brought the photograph with me and
write to ask if you will very kindly allow me
to call on you and make the same over to little
Christobel, seeing dear little Gracie has left us
for ever, if it is not convenient for you to have me

Wairoa House June 23rd 1928 Copy answer

Dear Grace

Especially necessity. I know no law or I would not be writing to you answering your letter. It is a pity you should go to so much trouble over that picture and I don't see that any of your arrangements need be upset or interfered with on account of it. If you address it to me at Levin Railway Station and book it at Wellington station it will come through alright - so you won't have any more trouble about that. If this does not meet with your approval I haven't any other suggestion. You mention my meeting you halfway. To me there isn't any halfway. When you were to leave h^h 40 years ago you certainly did not think me or mine were worth the trouble of seeing & bidding goodbye & if my late husband had not gone to a good deal of inconvenience and trouble to come to Wainui you would have left without seeing any of us. Did you go halfway then? and I need scarcely remind you of the reception we got on arriving there. Now the whole thing is in your own hands to do as you like about it. It does not make any difference to me what you do or what you think. It is many years since I troubled about you or what you did. But this I do tell you I want no more of your rows and trouble making. I'm a peace loving woman myself and have always lived at peace with my own family and neighbours. But there are some people who never seem happy if they are not over the ears in rows. Mother was one of them and some of her family

Copy

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mind about it - and you are free to please yourself.

I remain
Yours Truly
Christina House.