



Signature of Lt. John Macdonald

## Appendix F:

### Excerpts from the Autobiography of Lt. John Macdonald

#### Introduction

In 1884 and 1885, Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the “*nom de plume*” M. A. Rose, authored three articles for *The Celtic Magazine* of Inverness, Scotland, which provided excerpts from the autobiography of Maj. John Macdonald, who served as a Lieutenant in the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regt. in the first part of the War for American Independence.

Mrs. Mackenzie introduced the autobiography writing: “*For some time we had in our possession an old manuscript, the ink of which is so faded, and the paper so yellow and worn, that it is with difficulty we are able to decipher it. It is the autobiography, in his own handwriting, of a Highland soldier, John Macdonald, who rose from the ranks to be a major in the army.*” Unfortunately Mrs. Mackenzie only selected limited excerpts of the autobiography dealing with the American war to publish in her articles reasoning “*The exploits of the gallant 42nd have been so frequently and fully told that is unnecessary here to dwell on Macdonald’s individual share of the campaign.*” Unfortunately, there is no record of the location of the remaining parts of the Macdonald Autobiography that were not published.

John Macdonald was born about 1719 to Angus Macdonald and his wife in the village of Braegrudy, in the parish of Rogart, Sutherlandshire, about thirty miles north of Inverness. Following a twenty-year career as a private soldier and non-commissioned officer in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regt. beginning in 1739, John Macdonald was commissioned Ensign in the Sutherland Fencibles and then as a lieutenant in the 101<sup>st</sup> Regt. (Johnston’s Highlanders) near the close of the Seven Years War. He went out on Half-Pay when the war ended but was given the opportunity to resume active service in the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regiment during the American War for Independence. Macdonald served with the Royal Highlanders from Oct. 11, 1775 until Nov. 11, 1777, when he retired from the regiment to take a Provincial appointment as Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Maryland Loyalists. He commanded that battalion in the Siege of Pensacola, Florida until its capitulation on May 10, 1781. Macdonald returned to New York as a prisoner of war on parole on July 6, 1781 and retired four months later on Nov. 30, 1781. After retiring, Macdonald returned to Britain arriving at Portsmouth, England on Jan. 2, 1782. Maj. Macdonald’s detailed biography is provided in this volume in Appendix A: Biographies of the Officers of the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regiment During the American War for Independence, 1775-1783.

The bracketed material and footnotes have been added by the editor.

#### Documents

**Mrs. Emma Rose Mackenzie’s 1884 *Celtic Magazine* Introduction to the Autobiography of Lt. John Macdonald, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt., 1739-1782**

For some time we had in our possession an old manuscript, the ink of which is so faded, and the paper so yellow and worn, that it is with difficulty we are able to decipher it. It is the autobiography, in his own handwriting, of a Highland soldier, John Macdonald, who rose from the ranks to be a major in the army. The various incidents in his career, and the numerous adventures he met with are so interesting, that we make no apology for making the following selections.



Battle of Fontenoy, 1745, by Pierre Lenfant, 1747

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons

He accompanied his regiment to Flanders, fought under George the Second at the battle of Dettingen, and had his full share of the hardships of that memorial campaign; was at the battle of Fontenoy, where he received three wounds; was ordered home with his regiment to quell the Rising in Scotland in 1745; but on arriving at Stafford information came of Prince Charles's retreat from Derby, when Macdonald's regiment was again ordered for foreign service. He was engaged at the battle of Prague, and, after peace was concluded, served in Gibraltar; then returned home on recruiting service. In 1759 he secured a commission as Ensign in a regiment raised by the earl of Sutherland. In January 1763 he obtained a Lieutenancy in the regular army; but in March of the same year was reduced, and he again retired to Sutherland and took to farming. When the American War of Independence broke out, he again joined the army, although then in his 56th year, and took with him his son, aged only fifteen, to serve as a volunteer. He was appointed to the 42nd Highlanders, and served all through the war with distinction. At length, after serving for forty-three years, and attaining to the rank of Major, he settled down in his native county to spend the remainder of his days in peace.

The first few pages have altogether disappeared, but we gather from a pedigree at the end of the manuscript, that John Macdonald came of a respectable family in Sutherlandshire.

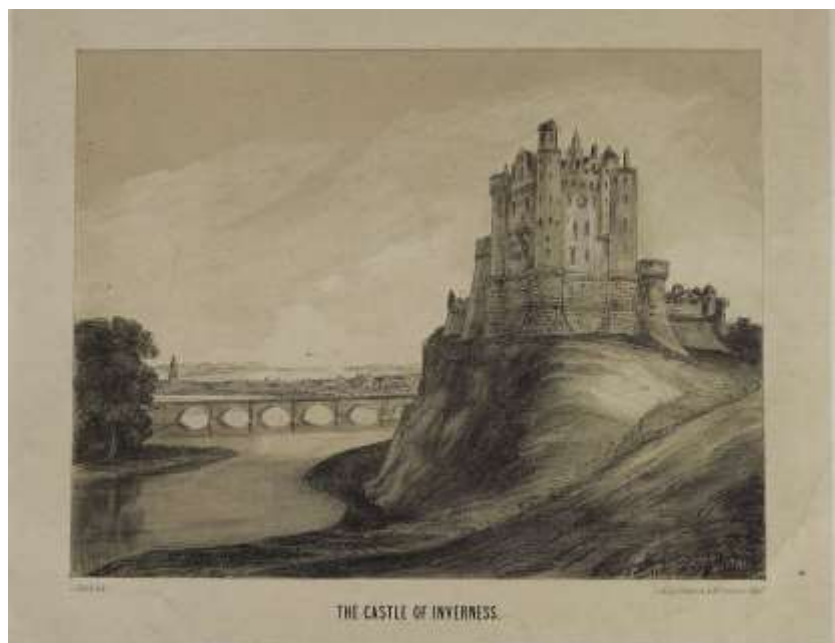
Source and Note: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography," Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "*nom de plume*" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine*, No. CX, December 1884. Vol. X, pp. 67-68. Ms. Mackenzie implies in this section Macdonald served the entire war in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders. As discussed in the introduction, Lt. Macdonald retired from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. in Nov. 1777 to join a Loyalist regiment as its Major.

### **Macdonald's Account of his Enlistment in Colonel Simon Descury's Regiment of Foot at Balchraggan and His Quarters in the Castle of Inverness, Aug. 1739**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Introduction] In August 1739, we find him – a young lad – in company with a cousin, William Macdonald, engaged in driving some cattle to Moinbuy, to deliver them to a dealer who had previously bought them. After fulfilling their task, the two lads, being tired and hungry, went to the inn at Balchragan<sup>1</sup> to obtain some refreshment. On arriving they found the inn full of soldiers – a recruiting party – of the 32nd, or Colonel Descurey's Regiment of Foot<sup>2</sup>, under the command of Lieutenant John Munro. In the servant of this gentleman the lads recognized a distant relation, so that they were soon quite at home. The sergeant of the party, seeing two such likely lads, wished to enlist them, but this John Macdonald at least had no intention of doing. How he was entrapped, we will leave himself to tell in his own words. –

*“Meantime (as I found afterwards) William hinted to his friend that he would list if I could be got to go with him. But they found this could never be brought about by fair means, therefore fell on the only scheme that could favour their purpose, viz., using the bottle freely, and I became so intoxicated that I could not recollect my crossing the water; but when I came to my senses I found myself in an inn at Culrain<sup>3</sup> surrounded by military men and uniforms. I got up much disordered in body and worse in mind, went to a stream to wash, and taking out my pocket-handkerchief to dry my hands and face, half-a-crown dropped out of it. Though there were many to spy how I would behave, none were then near me but my cousin William. I expressed my surprise at seeing the half-crown there, as I did not keep my money so loose in those days, when he immediately told me that was the money I got from the Captain. I then, with great concern, asked him whether it was given, or put in my pocket. He said I might remember that I took it cheerfully to serve his Majesty. I asked him then if he would say so before a Justice of Peace, and was answered, to be sure he would. My next question was – Are you listed, too? and was answered in the affirmative. Then musing a little, it occurred to me that since he was against me, I had now no evidence on my side, and, therefore, had better submit to my hard fate, than provoke (to no purpose but torment and ill usage to myself) those who had me entirely in their power, and had colour of law on their side, and then I went with him to the company with as much spirits as one in the utmost despair could feign. But my cousin William did not escape the drunken farce, having fallen and hurted his knee so much that he could go no further than Kincarden. This was another mortifying circumstance to poor despairing me; but I saw no remedy. I then went quietly with the party to the house of Newmore<sup>4</sup>, where we found one of the most cheerful landlords in the universe at the door with a magnum of brandy, and drank to the poor penitent to whom he handed the first bumper, though there were two sergeants and eighteen good recruits present. We were then conducted to the dining-room, where we got a most sumptuous supper, with plenty of strong ale and punch, which went merrily round, every one drinking to poor miserable me; but all entreaty was in vain, having formed a steady resolution to keep in my senses for the future.*

*At bedtime I was shown with the most alert serjeant to one of the best beds. In the morning the Captain's principal servant came in with the brandy bottle, took a bumper, and began with pilgarlic<sup>5</sup> to put it round. But I was the only person in the company that did not turn up the bottom of the glass.*



*Jacobite broadside - Castle of Inverness.*

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, from Nat. Lib. of Scotland

*After a good breakfast we were paraded to march to Inverness, when I stepped out of the rank, and telling the captain if he meant I should be a soldier, I hoped he would not take every advantage of my folly, and put me off with half-a-crown listing money, to which he answered – my good lad, the serjeant will give you a guinea and half-a-crown<sup>6</sup>, when you arrive at Inverness. Thus their suspicions continued, but we got to Inverness that evening, and we were led to a canteen kept by Serjeant M<sup>c</sup>Bride, and everyone but myself drank heartily till the garrison regulations made it necessary to retire to the barracks.”*

[Castle of Inverness<sup>7</sup>]

*“Hitherto, I had seen nothing of the army, but what was tolerable, and rather decent. But behold! I was shown to a room where there were four soldiers three-fourths drunk, playing at cards, cursing, swearing, d-----ing one another, the cards, their own limbs, eyes, and joints. Then, indeed, had there been open doors, I certainly would have taken to my heels, but that benefit was denied, the Castle gates being locked. I lay down, but could not sleep for the noise these wretches made, and the dread of the barracks sinking with them. At last I slumbered, but was soon wakened by a dreadful weight coming thump across me. I started up, and found this to be one of my room-mates, knocked atop me by another who fell out with him at the cards, the other two being seconds to see fair play. It is easier to conceive than describe the figure I made, standing in my shirt against the wall like a statue, meantime one of the seconds taking notice of me, desired me to lie down, as he would take care they should keep the middle of the floor and molest me no more. He was as good as his word, and the battle was soon over, as well as my rest for that night. This was a sample of my future companions.”*

Source: “Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography” by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the “*nom de plume*” M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine*, No. CX, December 1884, Vol. X, pp. 67 -70.

Notes:

1. Balchraggan is located on the west side of Loch Ness ten miles southwest of Inverness.
2. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Regt. was subsequently titled the 32<sup>nd</sup> (the Cornwall) Regt. in 1782, the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry in 1881, the Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry after amalgamation with the Somerset Light Infantry in 1959, the Light Infantry after further amalgamation in 1968, and currently “The Rifles.”
3. Culrain is located about three miles northwest of Bonar Bridge, to the west of the Kyle of Sutherland.

4. Newmore is a crofting township located on the western margin of the Black Isle about two miles south of Conon Bridge and a similar distance northeast of Muir.
5. Macdonald's usage of "*pilgarlic*" here is unclear. Samuel Johnson's 1795 *Dictionary of the English Language* defines it as "*a name of ridicule.*"
6. Under the previous British Monetary system a guinea was equivalent to 21 shillings and a half crown was two shillings and six pence.
7. Inverness, "the capital of the Highlands," is located at the northeast end of the Great Glen, where the River Ness reaches the North Sea. A royal castle stood there until it was destroyed during the 1745 Jacobite rebellion.

**Excerpt of Certificate of Recommendation for Sgt. John Macdonald, 32<sup>nd</sup> Regt.,  
by Grenadier Capt. John Masline, Sept. 1756**

This certificate in favour of Sergeant Macdonald, of Colonel [Francis] Leighton's regiment, at his friend's desire and his own, is most cheerfully signed by his present Captain, who has been for over sixteen years an eye witness of his sobriety, courage, and honesty. He has been seventeen years in the regiment, and behaved to the satisfaction of his officers at the four battles during the last war, was twice wounded at that of Fontenoy, and notwithstanding turned out volunteer, when the late [Maj. Gen. John] Lord Crawford called for a platoon to cover the retreat of his [4<sup>th</sup>] troop of Life Guards. As this is due to his behaviour, it is wished it may prove beneficial to his interest.

A true copy.

John Masline, Captain, 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography" Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "*nom de plume*" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* No. CXII. February 1885. Vol. X, pp. 176-177.

**Letter of Recommendation for Sgt. John Macdonald from Maj. William Macdowall, 32<sup>nd</sup> Regt., to  
Capt. Hon. George Mackay of Skibo, Member of Parliament, Inverness, Oct. 19, 1757**

Inverness, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1757.

Sir,—I have a letter from Sergeant Macdonald, who writes me that you have applied to Mr Mackay to recommend him for a commission. I had an opportunity to know him all the last war; he always behaved well. As he was long my Sergeant when I had the Grenadiers, made me know him better than the rest of the officers. I wrote Mr Mackay in his favour, and hope he will recommend him, as in my opinion he is a very good man, knows his duty well, and a very proper man to be advanced; and what is done for him will greatly oblige,

Sir, yours, &c.

William Macdowall

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography" Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "*nom de plume*" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* No. CXII, February 1885. Vol. X, pp. 177-178.

**Macdonald's Account of his Initial Commission as Ensign in the Earl of Sutherland's  
Battalion of Highlanders, or First Sutherland Fencibles, Nov. 1759**

*In 1758, [Maj. William] Macdowall purchased the Lieutenant-Colonelcy, and [James] Seton the Majority [32<sup>nd</sup> Regt.]<sup>1</sup>. They were my friends, and with Captain [John] Masline did all in their power to get me advanced, but nothing took place till 1759, when the [Lt. Col. Commandant William] Earl of Sutherland got the raising of a battalion to serve in Britain during the war. The commissions had no exceptions in them, but by a previous agreement the officers had no title to half-pay or any other reward for their services. His Lordship promised me a lieutenancy in this corps, but at filling up the commissions the Duke of Argyle<sup>2</sup> would allow me no more than an ensigncy, which my friends of the 32<sup>nd</sup> advised me to accept, as his Lordship gave reason to believe that he meant to get me into an established corps when his own was reduced. In consequence of this ensigncy, I appeared at Dornoch<sup>3</sup> in kilt in the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1759, after being twenty years and three months in breeches, long coat, and splatterdashes, etc, and no*

*man in that corps used the native dress more than I did, notwithstanding my being early and late teaching the men, while drilling was necessary, but the trouble was uncommonly short, the men as well as officers striving who should exercise or perform any part of duty best, by which they soon became, not only an honour to their teacher, but to discipline itself. And I was exceedingly happy with them, and so far in his Lordship's favour, that he made strong application with the Secretary of War for my removal to an established corps. In May 1762 he joined at Aberdeen, and acquainted me that Mr [Hon. Charles] Townshend, the Secretary [at War], had assured him of a lieutenancy for me in a few weeks. The regiment marched to Edinburgh and made an excellent review.*

Source and Note: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* No. CXII. February 1885. Vol. X, p. 173.

Notes:

1. Macdonald's service as a private soldier and non-commissioned officer in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regt. (Descurey's) is quite interesting and the summarized in his biography in App. A. Ens. John Macdonald's date of rank was Sept. 6, 1759 per TNA, *Printed Annual Army List for 1760* at WO 65/8, p. 153.
2. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Argyll (from 1743 to 1761) was Archibald Campbell. The Duke had control of political patronage in Scotland.
3. Dornoch is located on the east coast of Scotland, about forty miles northeast of Inverness.

### **Macdonald's Account of His Commission as Lieutenant in the 101<sup>st</sup> Regt. (Johnstone's Highlanders), Aug. 1762**

*"In August his Lordship [Earl of Sutherland] went North. All parties seemed now tired of the war, and I longing for a bit of sure bread wrote to his Lordship for leave to go to London, which I got in course, with a letter to the Secretary, and went with the Hon. Captain Perigrine Barly, in the Dispatch Sloop of War, to Sheerness, from thence to Gravesend, and dressing myself in my Highland regimentals waited on Colonel Barre at Chatham. The Colonel did not choose to intercede for me, and seemed certain of my being disappointed. However, as he was well acquainted with the ceremonies of that department his hints were of great use to me, in course of the eleven weeks that I attended the Secretary at the office as constant as his shadow, and I managed matters so with his attendants that I never missed audience at his levee. In short he was so tired of me that he began to think seriously of giving me something in order to be rid of my trouble. I always appeared in my full Highland dress – that is a bonnet with a large bunch of feathers, great kilt, broadsword, pistol, dirk, large badger skin purse, and a pair of locks as big as besoms [brooms], with an amazing strut, to set the whole off in the most marvellous manner, and though this was in a great measure forced work, I found my account in it; but 'tis too tedious to explain how.*

*"The guns fired in the Park at one o'clock in the morning<sup>1</sup> for the preliminaries of peace being signed, this could not add to my diligence, but it augmented my concern. I attended at the War Office as usual, and the Secretary's patience being worn out, ordered his first clerk to set me down Ensign to Major [Commandant James] Johnson's corps, or the 101<sup>st</sup>.<sup>2</sup> I paraded his promise to the Earl of Sutherland<sup>3</sup> of a lieutenancy; he in seeming friendship desired me take this in the meantime, and when a lieutenancy appeared vacant I should have it, perhaps to-morrow or next day. I answered that there were two vacant in that same corps; he observed that I was very intelligent, but these two were promised. I found him now so far disposed to be rid of me that I had no doubt of getting the ensigncy, therefore with a little unusual freedom told him that the army looking on the Secretary of war as their common father, expected that he looking on them as his family would reward merit and long service liberally; instead of this old servants were glad to get anything, when every youth who had never served an hour, but had a friend in favour with the man in office, could get a commission they pleased, that I did not doubt but these lieutenancies would be disposed of in this manner, and therefore hoped he would pardon my disclosing my indignation at being put off with the lowest pittance given to any officer under his Majesty after twenty-four years constant service, a broken constitution, and a body hacked with wounds. He then, as if surprised, asked if I had been in any other than the present Sutherland regiment. I answered that I was*

*upwards of twenty years in the 32nd in the whole of the last war, and in all the battles, and often wounded, which I could prove by general officers then in town. He then expressed his concern that he had not known this sooner. I observed that the Earl could not miss informing him of my services, as it was his Lordship's only argument for demanding such a commission for me. He then, with great grace said that he had no notion of putting an old servant off with a trifle, and calling to the clerk ordered him to set me down Lieutenant to the 101st. This produced my best bows, scrapes, and acknowledgements of his goodness. Still, if I had not been attentive I have occasion to believe that I had got nothing. At least, this is certain, that the second day after stalking about the War Office, and going into a particular room, the same clerk who set me down as a lieutenant asked what I expected, and when I answered a lieutenancy, he said, "In Crawford's?" I replied, no, sir; Mr Townshend ordered you to set me down to Johnson's. This ignorance, whether pretended or not made me uneasy, and still troublesome, till I found my name notified.<sup>4</sup> Then your humble servant was an officer; and here I beg leave to confute, what was firmly alleged by a gentleman, afterwards repeated and believed by many, that I had drawn my dirk on the Secretary in the levee room, and pent him up in a corner till I forced him to promise me a lieutenancy. Was I capable of such a desperate action, it would appear unnecessary at this time, having a memorial prepared, and one of the Lords-in-Waiting engaged to deliver it to his Majesty, in case my success at the War Office did not answer my expectations. Meantime, my commission being expected, I joined the 101st at Perth in January 1763, and on the 30th of March following was reduced with that corps. I went home to my native country, but was too late to get a farm that year. My uncle, Mr Hugh, and Mrs Sutherland insisted on my living with them at least until their sons came home – both being in the Queen's Highland Regiment in Ireland<sup>5</sup> which being likewise reduced, they soon arrived, and I was not allowed to think of quitting the family till I got a place of my own. There I lived with my family fifteen months, I may well say the happiest of my life, being esteemed as the eldest son or brother, and my wife as the only daughter or sister by one of the most decent and sensible women existing, and three near relations of consummate sense and liberal education."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* No. CXII. February 1885. Vol. X, pp. 179-180.

Notes:

1. The preliminary Treaty of Paris was approved on November 3, 1762.
2. The 101<sup>st</sup> Regt. (Johnstone's Highlanders) was raised in the year 1760 and were sent to Germany in 1761, to reinforce Keith's and Campbell's Highlanders. Their officers did not accompany them, but were ordered back to raise six additional companies which were soon assembled at Perth. The regiment was reviewed at Perth in 1762 and declared fit for active service. The regiment was not sent abroad, however, and was reduced at Perth in August 1763.
3. William Gordon, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Sutherland (1735-1766).
4. The Annotated War Office Copy of the Annual Army List for 1763 is annotated to list John Macdonald a Lieutenant with a date of rank of Oct. 22, 1762 (Ref: TNA, WO 65/12, p. 167, f. 173.)
5. 105<sup>th</sup> Regt. (Queen's Own Royal Regiment of Highlanders).

### **Macdonald's Account of his Joining the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regt. for the American War, 1764 - Apr. 1776**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] In 1764 our hero took a seventeen years' lease of some land in Moy, and settled down, as he thought, to end his days in the peaceful occupation of a farmer. The Earl of Sutherland still continued his patronage towards him with great courtesy and respect. He thus describes his position, in a few words –

*"While my noble friend lived, I was not only too happy in his favour, but found myself as easy with every gentleman of the country as if I had been their college companion, and when to my grief I lost him, I did not feel their esteem abate in the least; but rather increase. This will appear evident from their calling me to their general meetings on different occasions, and particularly my being called to the Council of our Royal Burg every second year, and I was included in the Commission of the peace, and acted accordingly."*

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Macdonald was, however, destined to go through further adventures. The American War broke out, and in 1775 an information appeared from the War Office, to the effect that officers who had been reduced with their corps when peace was concluded, and who were willing to serve again in the same rank they formerly held, should send in their names at once to the Secretary of War. Macdonald pricked up his ears at this notice, like an old war horse that smelled the battle from afar. He had another reason for wishing again to take up a military life, besides his mere fondness for the profession. His son was now a strong promising lad of fifteen, who inherited his father's martial spirit; and Macdonald wished to get him into the service, although he was not able to purchase a commission for him. He says –

*“I looked upon this as a decent call that merited an answer from every one in these circumstances, and without hesitation wrote that though I was then in my 56th year of age, and 36th year of service, still stout and hearty as could be expected at such a time of life, I was willing as ever to serve my King and country, though I could not expect to be better settled after a few years service than I was at present. From all this, I little expected to be called; but behold! I am appointed to the 42nd or Royal Highland Regiment.”<sup>1</sup>*

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Taking his son<sup>2</sup> along with him, he went to Fort-George, where a detachment of the 42nd was then stationed, under the command of Major Murray<sup>3</sup> By this officer he was sent with some recruits to join the regiment at Glasgow. [Gen.] Lord John Murray, who was in command, enrolled young Macdonald as a volunteer in the same company as his father. Their reception is thus described –

*“I became rather a favourite with his lordship; but I had better be so with Colonel Stirling<sup>4</sup>, who was to go with and command the corps; but I soon became well with Major Murray, who applied to have me in his company to take care and charge of the men and their money. My friend the Earl of Eglinton<sup>5</sup>, being then in town, received me with his usual humanity, and spoke to Colonel Stirling in my favour; but the Colonel seemed cool, perhaps naturally judging that an old man and a boy were rather likely to be a burden than a credit to that distinguished corps. And though he did the highest justice to every individual in the regiment, I could not reckon myself a favourite with him until the reduction of Fort Washington<sup>5</sup> By that time he found the boy act the man on every occasion, and that the old man acted his part as well as any subaltern in the regiment.”*

Source: “Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography’ Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the “*nom de plume*” M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* The Celtic Magazine, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 219-220.

Notes:

1. Macdonald's commission date in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders was Sept. 3, 1775 per the War Office annotated copy of the Annual Army List for 1775 at WO 65/25, p. 96.
2. Macdonald's son was William Macdonald who served as a Volunteer in the early part of the American War before obtaining a commission as Ensign in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. in Oct. 1777.
3. Maj. William Murray of the Murray of Lintrose family. Murray commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. in America.
4. Lt. Col. Thomas Stirling, younger of Ardoch
5. Maj. Gen. the Hon. Archibald Montgomery, 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton (1726- 1796), former colonel of 77<sup>th</sup> Regt. (Montgomery's Highlanders).
5. The British capture of Fort Washington on northern Manhattan Island occurred on Nov. 16, 1776.





Gen. Lord John Murray, Colonel, 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regiment of Foot

Portrait Source: “The Black Watch at Ticonderoga,” by Frederick B. Richards, in *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, Vol. X, New York Historical Association, 1911, Google Books , opposite p. 429.

**Excerpt of Letter from Gen. Lord John Murray, Col., 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt., to Secretary at War Viscount Barrington, Regarding Lt. Macdonald’s Assignment, Oct. 10, 1775**

My Lord...

Lieu<sup>t</sup> John M<sup>c</sup>Donald was not amongst the Names I had the honour to Recommend to your Lordship, but whomever you think most proper, shall always be acceptable to me...

I have the honour to be with the Greatest Regard

My Lord

Your Lordships most faithful  
and most obedient Servant

*John Murray*

Chesterfield 10<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1775  
L<sup>d</sup> Viscount Barrington

Source: TNA, *Secretary-at-War, In-letters* at WO 1/993.



Detail from Portrait of William Barrington, 2nd Viscount Barrington, by Charles Knight, 1791

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons

**Excerpt of Letter from Secretary at War Viscount Barrington to Gen. Lord John Murray, Col., 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. Regarding Officer Appointments, Including Lt. Macdonald, London, Oct. 11, 1775**

War Office 11<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1775

My Lord

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's Letter of the 2<sup>d</sup>. Instant, with an annexed List of Officers of the Royal Highland Regiment of Foot, under your Command.

I herewith to answer to your Lordships a List of Notifications for your Regiment which have been issued from this Office, and beg leave to add the following Observations on your Papers... Lieutenant George Mackenzie from Half Pay in the late 87<sup>th</sup> John Grant of the late 111<sup>th</sup>. and John M<sup>c</sup>Donald of the late 101<sup>st</sup> Regiments are this day notified for your Lordship's Regiment...

I have the honor to be My Lord &c  
Barrington

Right Honble Lord John Murray

[Enclosure]

42<sup>d</sup> Regiment ...

To be Lieutenants...

Lieut<sup>t</sup> John M<sup>c</sup>Donald from half pay 101<sup>st</sup> Foot...

Source: TNA, *War Office Out-Letters* at WO 4/94, pp. 384-6 (ff. 195-196).

**Excerpt of Advertisement in Scotland for Recently Assigned Officers of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt., Including Lt. Macdonald, to Report to the Regiment at Glasgow, Oct. 24, 1775**

ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT. WHEREAS the KING has been pleased to appoint an additional LIEUTENANT to each company of the 42d, or Royal Highland Regiment of Foot, under my command, and their notifications having accordingly been issued from the war office, amongst others for ... Lieutenant John Macdonald from half pay, 101 foot;... These gentlemen are desired forthwith to write to me, and to the Commanding Officer of the said regiment at Glasgow, a proper direction where they now are, and where they wish to be stationed, in order that recruiting instructions, and levy-money may be sent them, and what other orders are necessary for recruiting. *Bannercross near Sheffield, Yorkshire, 18 Oct. 1775*} JOHN MURRAY, General.

Source: *Edinburgh Advertiser*, October 24, 1775.



Site of Principal Action of the Battle of Harlem Heights Looking North, circa 1897 ("Buckwheat Field" at top of Photograph)

Picture Source: *Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776*, Henry P. Johnston, McMillan Co., 1897, opp. p. 88.

**Macdonald's Account of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. in the Battles of Harlem Heights, Sept. 16  
and Fort Washington, Nov. 16, 1776**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] The 42nd embarked at Greenock on the 12th of April 1776, and landed on Staten Island on the 4th of July...The exploits of the gallant 42nd have been so frequently and fully told that is unnecessary here to dwell on Macdonald's individual share of the campaign. His son, although but a boy, bore himself bravely during his first engagement [at Harlem Heights, Sept. 16, 1776], as shown by the following reference: –

*“The enemy finding us thus give way, came on furiously, and I had hot work. This was the first opportunity I had of seeing my son fairly engaged, and I will be allowed to say that it gave me pleasure to see him active and cool; but with only one company there was no keeping of that ground, therefore we retreated in good order. In this engagement I had a ball through the cuff of my coat, which made a trifling contusion. We had two Captains wounded slightly, and Ensign [Alexander] Mackenzie mortally. In consequence of his vacancy I was advised to memorial the Commander-in-Chief, in order to push for my son.”*<sup>1</sup>

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Macdonald did not succeed at this time in getting a commission for his boy, although he took a great deal of trouble in waiting on different officers; but they all considered the lad too young to recommend. General Pigot<sup>2</sup> received the father kindly and told him to not be in too great a hurry to push his son, but by exerting himself to do his duty, and encouraging his son to do the same, gain the favour of their Colonel, and no doubt he would provide for them. Macdonald followed this good advice, and soon had the pleasure of hearing Colonel Stirling speak well of the lad. It was during the attack on Fort Washington that the following occurred: –



Photograph of Morris-Jumel Mansion

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, by I, Sailko

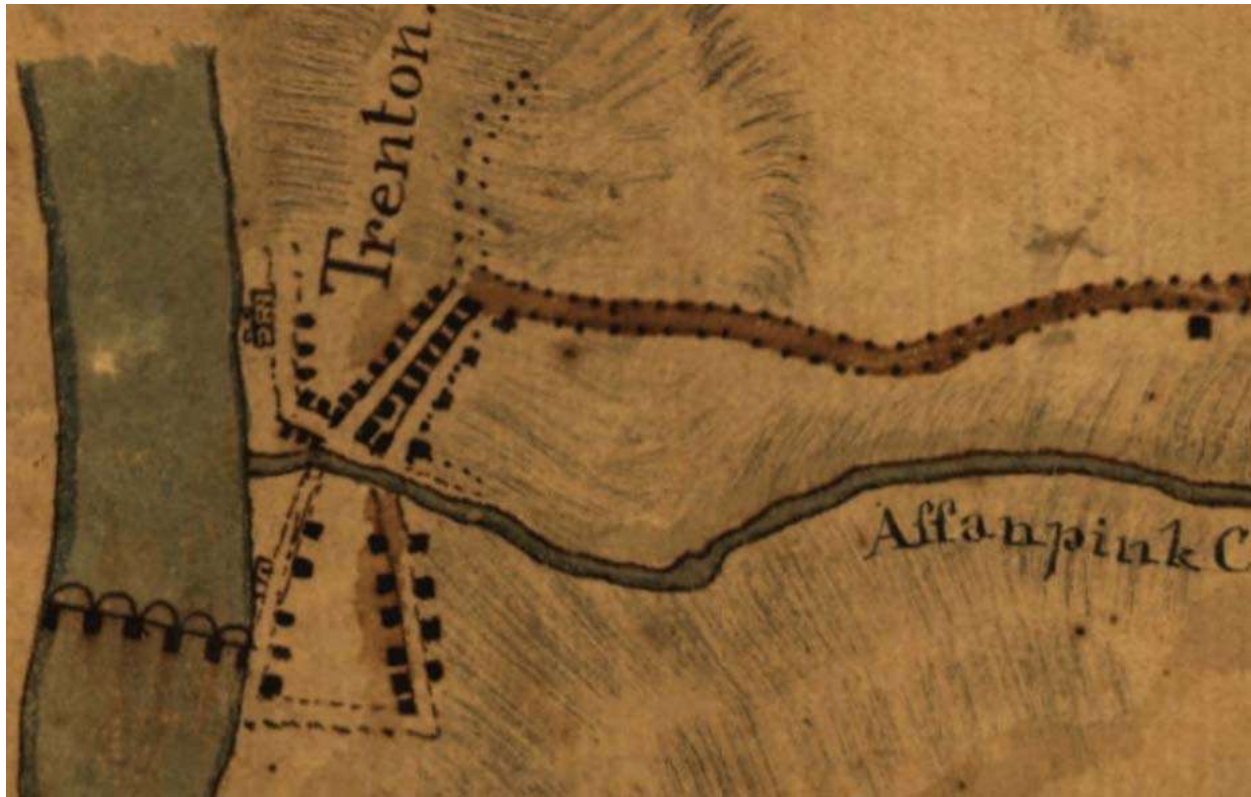
*“Whether my son landed before or after me, it is certain we lost each other in scrambling up the rocks, and knew nothing of each other's fate till the evening, when it will be allowed, when hot firing ceased, natural concern took place After mounting the hill, and firing ceased, to capitulate, our party sat down under trees to rest. I soon observed to Colonel Macpherson (Cluny)<sup>3</sup> that we had better look for our Regiment. He answered, as there seemed nothing to be done, we were as well there for the present. I replied, My dear Duncan, you have no son on the Island this day. Very just, says he, let us move, and we soon find the corps, when Colonel Stirling shook hands with me, and thanked me for my activity in*

*dispersing the rebels at Morris' House, adding, Your son has been with me through all this day's danger to yourself, and trust him to me in the future."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* The Celtic Magazine, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 220 – 221.

Notes:

1. Macdonald is describing the Battle of Harlem Heights, which was fought with the rebels on Sept. 16, 1776 on Manhattan Island, New York. Macdonald is likely misremembering the number of companies of the regiment heavily engaged in the battle. Other period accounts indicate Maj. Murrays 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of four companies was heavily engaged, while Brevet-Maj. Grant's three-company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion provided overwatch. (Ref: "*Short account of the movements and engagements of the two battalions of the 42<sup>nd</sup> from 22<sup>nd</sup> August to 16<sup>th</sup> December 1776*" in the Stirling Papers). Ens. Alexander MacKenzie, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. died of his wounds shortly after this battle.
2. Maj. Gen. Sir Robert Pigott, Colonel of 38<sup>th</sup> Regt.
3. Macdonald is actually referring to Maj. Duncan M<sup>c</sup>Pherson, son of Breakachy, one of the Company Commanders in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. and brother-in-law of Macpherson of Cluny. Capt. Duncan Macpherson of Cluny was in the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regt. and did not take part in the action near the Morris House.



Detail of Map of Trenton, New Jersey, showing Assunpink Creek and Road to Princeton, c-1800

Picture Source: Lib. of Congress, Geography and Map Div., *A Map of the Trenton and New-Brunswick Turnpike-road.*

### **Macdonald's Account of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders at Trenton and Princeton, Dec. 30, 1776 –Jan. 3, 1777 and the Battle of Piscataway, New Jersey, May 10, 1777**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] His age did not prevent the gallant old soldier from taking his share in the hard work of the campaign, as shown by the following extract. At this time the 42<sup>nd</sup> was at Princetown [New Jersey]–

*"Here it happened my turn to go with the baggage of the army to Brunswick. The weather was very bad, with snow, frost, and sleet alternately. The road was still worse in returning with ammunition*

*and prisoners, and the baggage horses being very ill-shod, and as ill-fed, it was the fourth day before we got back to Princetown, though constantly on duty. Here finding the 42nd with the bulk of the army had marched towards Trenton, I followed, and late at night [Jan. 2] found them near that place, and I found a little rest on a wisp of rotten hay. Next morning the army followed the rebels to Princetown; but proved too late to save the 17th from a severe handling from a large body of them on their way to the Blue Mountains. But [Lt. Gen. Charles] Lord Cornwallis, dreading the danger of Brunswick; where so much valuable stores lay, marched with all expedition to save that place, from whence the 42nd was detached to Piscataqua<sup>1</sup>, and arrived there on the evening of the 3rd January 1777; and I have given the reader all this trouble to tell him that then I finished my eighty-two miles march with only one bad night's rest."*

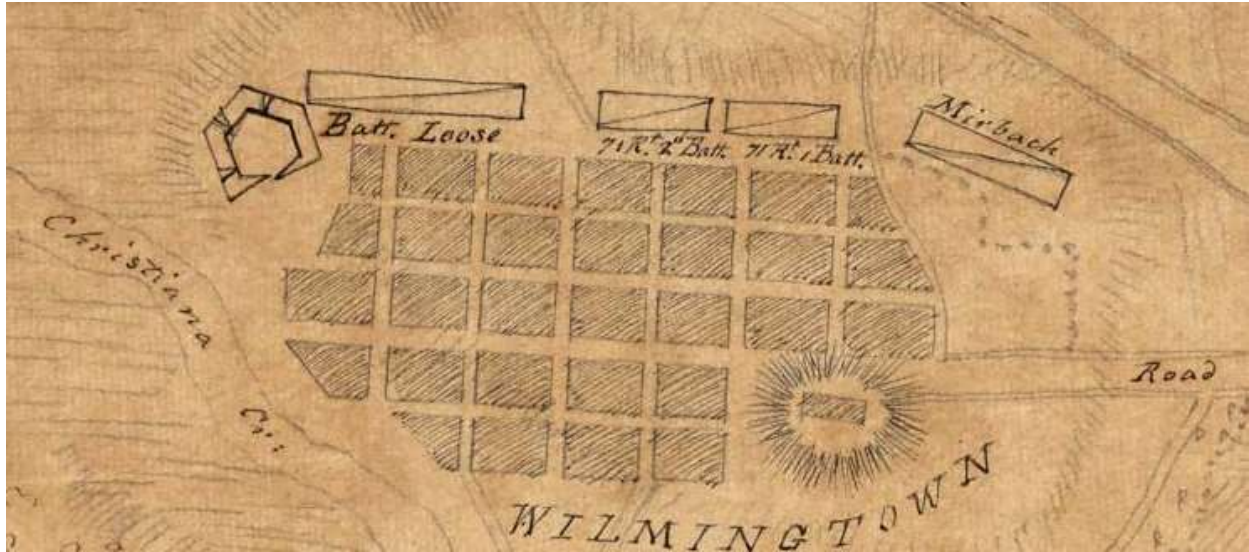
[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] On another occasion [on May 10, 1777] he became separated from the regiment for a while, when the Colonel sent a party to look for him –

*"On the 10th of May the rebels made a formidable attack on our picquet in front, and took the officer<sup>2</sup> and sergeant prisoners, after killing or wounding most of the men. When I came up with Major Murray's company I released them, and took a wounded officer with thirteen rebels prisoners. Our people were so enraged at their continual harassing that post, and in particular at this last attempt, that I, finding them in humour to bayonet the prisoners, took some time to put them in discreet hands, with positive orders not to hurt them. By this little delay I missed the regiment, which halted at a proper distance. I followed a firing, which I found to be a few mad fellows of ours and a company of Light Infantry, that had joined them and followed the chase too far, and to no good purpose. When I came I used all arguments that would occur to me to make them return to the regiment, but all in vain, until they approached an encampment of the enemy where only a tent was standing, and saw them forming behind their encampment. I then told them in a very serious manner that cannon would soon appear, and hoped they would give up such folly as must endanger their not their liberty, if not their lives; thus I at last got the better of their impetuosity, and retired a little. At that instant my son joined me, with a sergeant and fifteen men. It seems Colonel Stirling, missing me, asked the lad where I was, the latter answering that he left me giving charge of prisoners to Corporal Paul Macpherson, and that he believed that I was forward. The Colonel ordered him to take a party and find me, and directed I should declare his displeasure to these men for venturing so far from the regiment, and, at their peril, to return immediately. In this place, gratitude leads me to say that Major Murray's company of the 42nd was the most alert, most decent, and best principled soldiers I ever had the honour to command or be connected with."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* The Celtic Magazine, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 221-222.

Notes:

1. Piscataway, New Jersey (now part of Edison Township, New Jersey).
2. Lt. William Stewart commanded the picket and was badly wounded in the thigh and temporarily taken before the rebels were pushed back by the arrival of the companies of the regiment.



Detail of Map of Wilmington, Delaware Showing 71<sup>st</sup> Highlander's Camp, 1777

Picture Source: Lib. of Congress, Geography and Map Div., *Plan du camp retranché à Wilmington pour y couvrir notre hospital apres la Bataille de Brandywine*, by Friedrich Adam Julius von Wangenheim, No. gm71000673

#### **Lt. John Macdonald's Account of the Beginning of the Philadelphia Campaign, Aug. 24, 1777**

*"When the army, after going by Chesapeak Bay, landed at the head of Elk,<sup>1</sup> I was in a high fever, and left on board an Hospital Ship, and relapsed often, which brought me very low. Still on coming up the Delaware I landed with the first convalescents at Wilmington. Here I found my friends of the 71st, and Major Macdonald<sup>2</sup> of that corps being ordered from the convalescents into a Battalion, choose to have me Adjutant to that corps. I then commenced in that duty."*

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Some little time after, on reaching Philadelphia, officers and men were ordered to join their respective corps, and Macdonald had the pleasure of meeting his son, and hearing how he got on during his absence. –

*"Now, my son gave me a long detail of the kindness and attention of all the officers to him in my absence, in particular that, when Colonel Stirling found I had been left behind, he called him out of the rank of privates where he always stood, telling him he was sorry he had been so long in that rank, and he would take care he should appear no more in it, ordering him at that same time to command half the company on a march or action, that is, to act as subaltern in the company till his father joined, or his being otherwise appointed. This was very flattering to a lad of seventeen, and two years service; but this was not all. After the battle of Brandy Wine, the Colonel gave him a copy of a memorial addressed to General [Sir William Howe] Stowe, setting forth his own short, and my long, services, desiring him to transcribe and sign a fair copy of it, which the Colonel presented in order to procure a commission in some other regiment, as there was no vacancy in the 42nd. This was done, and a favourable answer received. Soon after, Major Murray being appointed to the 27th, and the General being pleased to give the commissions in succession in the 42nd, my son got the Ensigncy, date 5th October 1777. Thus one of my grand points being obtained, there remained only to realise a penny for my Lieutenantcy, and retire after serving upwards of thirty-eight years, and at the age of fifty-eight."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography" Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* *The Celtic Magazine*, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 222 - 223.

Notes:

1. After sailing from New York the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. disembarked at Head of Elk, Maryland on Aug. 24, 1777. The purpose of the campaign was to capture the rebel capitol of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. An early preliminary objective was to clear the Delaware River for shipping to support the campaign.
2. This reference is to either Maj. John M<sup>c</sup>Donnell of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regt. who commanded the regiment, or Maj. Alexander MacDonald of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., 71<sup>st</sup> Regt. This regiment marched to Wilmington on Sept. 12, 1777, escorting the wounded from the Battle of Brandywine and remained until Sept. 30. (Ref: *71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regiment in the American War of Independence*, Ed Brumby, 2012, p. 57.)



Reproduction of Provincial Regt. Uniform Button

Picture Source: Roy and Debra Najecki's American Revolutionary War Reproductions at [www.najecki.com](http://www.najecki.com)

### **Macdonald's Account His Retirement from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. and Appointment as Major, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Maryland Loyalists, Nov. 11, 1777**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] While the Lieutenant was deliberating how he could retire with a good grace in time of war, and at the same time get the money for his commission, which was a great object to him, fortune favoured him with one of those rare opportunities which sometimes occur. It was found necessary to raise Provincial troops to assist the regular army, and just at this time the order came to raise a battalion in Maryland. There was no lack of volunteers, but there was a difficulty in getting officers, for the men of position and influence in the district who had been appointed, were as a rule quite ignorant of military duty. Lieutenant Macdonald had got acquainted with several gentlemen of position, and one of these, a Mr Chalmers<sup>1</sup>, got the commission of Lieutenant-Colonel of the newly raised battalion. Not being a military man himself, he was anxious to procure those who were, for his officers, and offered our friend a Commission as his major, if he could arrange to leave his present post. Here was the very opportunity Macdonald wished for. He immediately laid his case before Colonel Stirling, who cheerfully promised to do all in his power to assist him. How he succeeded we will leave himself to tell.

—

*"He (Colonel Stirling) wrote strongly in my favour, recommending me to the general as well qualified for the intended office, and meriting the indulgence of settling my present office. But instead of giving me the trouble of delivering this letter, he put it in his pocket, went to Head-Quarters, sent it in to the General, and soon followed in person, and, without doubt, confirmed what might be alleged in his letter. The General graciously owning himself no stranger to my character, matters were then and there settled, and next day, the 10th of November, Ensign John Spence<sup>2</sup> was appointed Lieutenant in the 42nd Regiment, vice Lieutenant John Macdonald, who retired. That same day orders contained the following: - Lieutenant John Macdonald appointed Major to the First Battalion of the Maryland Loyalists. Mr Spence gave me bills immediately for the Lieutenancy. . . . . And General Howe having complimented the Colonel on getting such a man to be his Major, I joined immediately, and the corps was soon recruited to 335 privates and 42 non-commissioned officers, the establishment being only 448 of both, and I had very flattering compliments from Generals [Sir Charles] Grey and Peterson, and several other officers of experience, for their appearance and alertness in going through their exercises and different manoeuvres. By the latter end of April, I was vain of the figure they made."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* *The Celtic Magazine*, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 223 – 224.

Notes:

1. Lt. Col. James Chalmers, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Maryland Loyalists.
2. Ens. John Spens, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt.

**General Orders Announcing the Retirement of Lt. John Macdonald, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt.,  
Philadelphia, Nov. 11, 1777**

Head Quarters Philadelphia 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1777...

The Commander in Chief has been pleased to make the following Promotion:

42<sup>d</sup> Regiment. –

Ensign John Spence [Spens] to be Lieutenant by purchase vice John M<sup>c</sup>Donald } 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1777  
who retires } }

Source: The Kemble Papers, Vol. I, 1773-1789 in *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1883*,  
Publication Fund Series, Printed for the Society, New York, 1884, Google Books.

**Summary of Letter from Capt. Robert MacKenzie, Sec. to Gen. Sir William Howe, to  
Lt. Col. James Chalmers, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Maryland Loyalists Announcing Appointment of Lt. John  
Macdonald, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. as Major, Nov. 11, 1777**

Philadelphia Nov. 11, 1777,

Lieutenant John McDonald, late lieutenant in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, is appointed major to the corps under his  
command...

Source: *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, Vol. I, Historical Manuscripts  
Commission, His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1904, Google Books, p. 151.

**Commission of John Macdonald (Former Lt. 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt.) to be Major,  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Maryland Loyalists, Philadelphia, Nov. 10, 1777**

[Seal]

**By His Excellency Sir William Howe**, Knight of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath,  
General and Commander in Chief of all His Majesty's Forces within the Colonies laying on the Atlantic  
Ocean from Nova Scotia to West Florida inclusive &c.,

To John M<sup>c</sup>Donald Esq.

**By Virtue** of the power and authority in me vested, I do hereby constitute and appoint you to be  
Major to the First Battalion of Maryland Loyalists, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Commandant  
James Chalmers, and likewise to be Captain of a Company in said Battalion: you are therefore to take the  
said Battalion as Major and the said Company as captain into your care and charge and duty to exercise as  
well the officers as soldiers thereof in arms, and to your best endeavours to keep them in good order .and.  
discipline. And I do hereby command them to Obey you as their Major and Captain respectively; and you  
are to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as you shall receive from the  
General or Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in North America, now and for the time being,  
your superior officer, according to the rules and discipline of war, in pursuance of the trust reposed in  
you. Given under my Hand and Seal at Head Quarters, Philadelphia, the tenth day of November, one  
thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Our Sovereign **Lord  
George** the Third by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith  
and so forth.

By His Excellency's command  
(signed) Robert Mackensie (signed ) W. Howe



Source: Photocopy of transcription in author's collection.

**Excerpts of the Journal of the Voyage to Pensacola (Which Included Maj. Macdonald's Maryland Loyalists) by Corp. Carl Philipp Steurnagel, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waldeck Regt., Oct. 19, 1778 - 28<sup>th</sup> of Mar. 28, 1780**

Description of the journey of the Prince of Waldeck's 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment from North America to the West Indian Island of Jamaica and from there to West Florida.

As the regiment was ordered by the Commander-in-Chief to go to Jamaica and from there to Florida, Pensacola to be exact, they boarded ships in the harbor between New York and Staten Island on 19 October 1778. As all the ships which were to sail together had not yet assembled, we had to be at anchor until the last of October. Finally, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, when the ships had met a few miles from the harbor at a place called Place Land Hoock, they sailed here and gathered with us to make a flotilla.

Therefore, we raised our anchor and departed the following morning, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, with this fleet into the ocean...

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1778, was a joyous day for us, on which Jamaica showed itself to us. The same day, we ran into the harbor Port Royal, and dropped our anchor before the city of Kingston...

1779

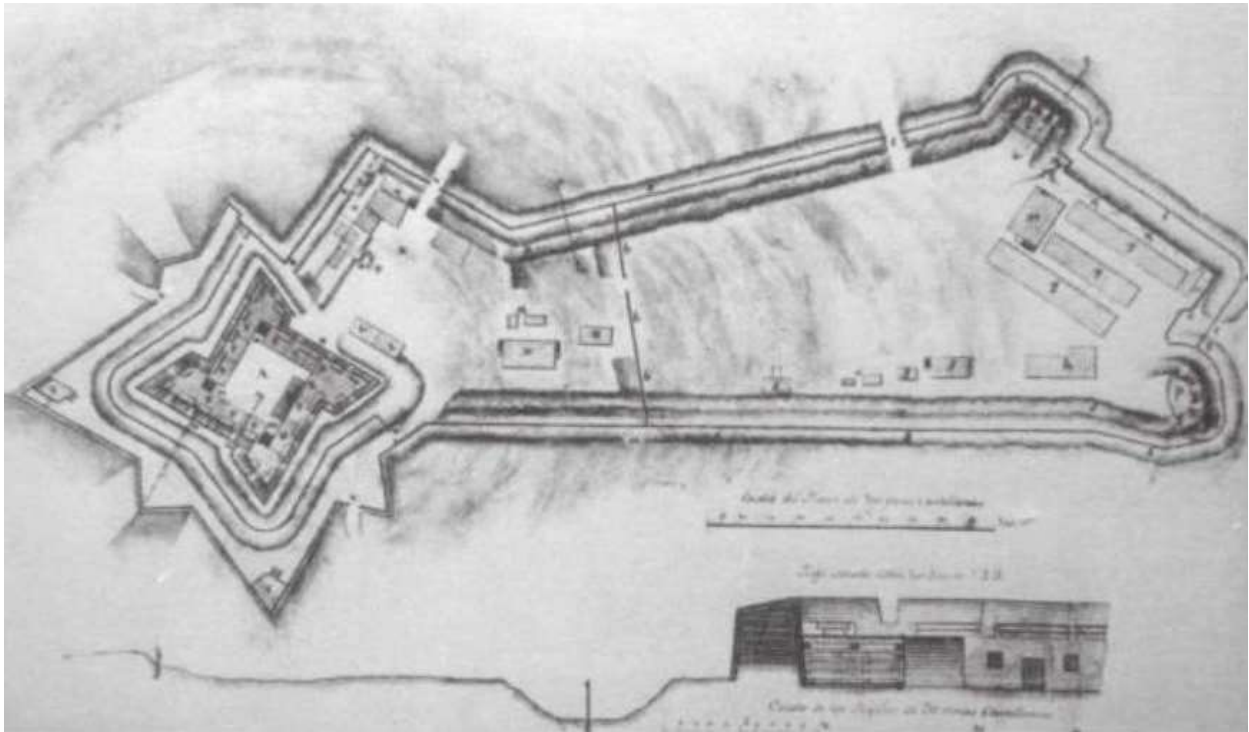
As we had obtained and loaded new provisions and fresh water here (Jamaica), we set sail on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December (1778), on a New Year's Saturday, in the most terrible summer heat. Initially, we were greeted by sailing by the side of the Island of Cuba, but in a few days entered the Gulf of Mexico. In this Gulf of Mexico we observed not only that the water had a brown color, but also, that in various places the white, sandy bottom could be seen, and that at times the wind was so weak, that, to our great impatience, the ship barely moved from where it sat and had to be soaked down with water daily so that it would not rot. From here, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1779, we saw Ross Island and the following day the Pensacola coast. Because of a contrary wind we could not enter the harbor as quickly as we would *have* wished.

After tacking around for twenty-four hours, our luck finally changed, and on the 18<sup>th</sup> we were able to land at the designated disembarkation point at Pensacola. As the necessary repairs on the barracks were not completed, initially only three companies were put ashore, and the remainder on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February. Pensacola, which has only lain so close to the water for nine years, is still at this time small and scattered, and suffered a great amount of damage from a severe hurricane the previous autumn. The stores-businessmen's houses-which were near the water were completely flattened, and further, the 48 pounder cannon in the fort were carried away by the angry waves.

This land lies very low and flat...

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1780, all the troops from Pensacola were moved to the camp at the nearby constructed Fort George...

Source: "Memoir of Carl Philipp Steurnagel, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waldeck Regiment," trans. by Bruce E. Burgoyne, *Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association*, Volume 6, Number 1, 1997, pp. 45-47.



Plan of Fort George, Pensacola, 1778

Picture Source: "A plan of Pensacola and its environs in its present state, from an actual survey in 1778," Joseph Purcell, Library of Congress, Maps of North America, 1750-1789.

### **Macdonald's Account of his Service with the Maryland Loyalists and the Siege of Pensacola, West Florida, 1777-1781**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] A few months, however, changed the aspect of affairs. The British troops lost ground, and as consequence their prestige; Republicanism gained strength, until even the Provincial troops became infected with it, and deserted daily in large parties, to join their countrymen in their struggle for liberty. This state of affairs necessitated the amalgamation of three provincial regiments into one, viz, the Maryland Loyalists, the Pennsylvania, and the Waldeck Regiments.<sup>1</sup> This combined corps was ordered to Jamaica. On the voyage, it came to the ears of the Major that in case of an American vessel coming into sight, that the men were determined to mutiny and join the Americans. This caused him great anxiety. We will give his own version. –

*"This made me lay at night with a loaded blunderbuss under my head, all the rest of the voyage. After being a month at Jamaica, on the 16th January 1779, we arrived in the Bay of Pensacola; but the men having the smallpox among them, were ordered to the Red Cliffs, ten miles distance from the town. Here it might be naturally supposed that all apprehensions of mutiny or desertion was at end, as there were no enemy in arms within five hundred miles of us; but behold! on the 14th of March, a sergeant with sixteen men deserted in a body, with their arms, and more ammunition than their ordinary complement. At this time Colonel Chalmers got leave of absence for New York, and I being informed that a more formidable desertion was designed, took all the ammunition from the men, lodged it up in a store, and ordered the Quarter-master to lay there with it, and I visited it myself at all hours of the night. Indeed self-preservation kept me on the watch, as if once they got masters of the store to pursue their design, I could not expect that they would be very ceremonious with me."*

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Thus, by his prompt action, the Major prevented any further attempts at mutiny. He, however, did not feel himself at all comfortable in his new position. The men were discontented, and the officers were incapable, and spent their time in quarreling amongst themselves, so that to support his authority he had to be pretty severe with them. A Court-Martial was held, and three officers, a captain, a lieutenant, and an ensign, were dismissed the service. With all this, he seems to have had the entire confidence of his superior officers, as is shown by the following extract: –

*“Meantime a Spanish invasion being apprehended, the General<sup>2</sup> joined the Pennsylvania and Maryland Battalions into one corps, under the command of Colonel Allan<sup>3</sup> That Colonel getting leave of absence a few weeks before the siege, the command of the battalion fell to me, and in a great measure that of the British troops too, as there was no other Field Officer of either line in place. The only other Field Officer was the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Waldecks<sup>4</sup>, but except as Field Officer of the day, he did not interfere with British or Provincial troops, and for good reasons the General never employed him or his troops out of the works.”*

Source: “Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography’ Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the “nom de plume” M.A. Rose in The Celtic Magazine The Celtic Magazine, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 224-225.

Notes:

1. Mrs. Mackenzie misstates the consolidation of battalions. Although the Pennsylvania, Maryland and German Waldeck battalions sailed with Brig. Gen. John Campbell to Pensacola, they were never combined into one corps. As discussed immediately below, Maj. Gen Campbell requested to combine the two Loyalist battalions under Maj. Macdonald in Dec. 1779, but Gen. Sir Henry Clinton did not approve the consolidation. Despite Headquarters’ formal disapproval, Macdonald did exercise tactical control of the two small battalions in the siege of Pensacola in 1781.
2. Maj. Gen. John Campbell of Strachur, British Commander, West Florida.
3. Lt. Col. William Allen, Pennsylvania Loyalist Bn.
4. In 1783 Albrecht von Horn, is listed as the Lt. Col. of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regt. Waldeck with a date of rank of Apr. 14, 1779.

### **Summary of Orders by Maj. Gen. John Campbell, British Commander, West Florida, Appointing Former Maj. John Macdonald to Command Combined Maryland and Pennsylvania Loyalist Battalion, Pensacola, Dec. 26, 1779**

Head Quarters Pensacola. December 26. 1779

Orders signed by James Campbell, M.B. Uniting into one corps the Pennsylvania and Maryland Loyalists for present service including Arrangements, Rank of officers, &c.

*Endosed by* Maj. Gen. Campbell to Sir H. Clinton 10 Feb. 1780.

Source: *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, Vol. II, Historical Manuscripts Commission, His Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1906, Google Books, p. 76. “James Campbell, M.B.” was Capt. James Campbell, 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. who served a Major of Brigade to his uncle, Maj. Gen. John Campbell of Strachur, British Commander, West Florida. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton did not approve Campbell’s request to combine the battalion.

### **Summary of Approval by Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, Commander-in-Chief, North America, to Maj. Gen. John Campbell, British Commander, West Florida, of Maj. John Macdonald to Command Combined Pennsylvania and Maryland Loyalist Battalion at Pensacola, Oct. 21, 1780**

New York October 21. 1780,

Receipt of dispatches...Withholds consent to the union of the Pennsylvania and Maryland Loyalists on account of injury done to the commanding and other officers... Appointment of Maj. McDonald is right. ..

Source: *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, Vol. II, Historical Manuscripts Commission, His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1906, Google Books, p. 193. Maj. Gen. Campbell was the commander of British West Florida at Pensacola.

### **Macdonald's Account of Preparations for his Sortie from the British Lines, Fort George, Pensacola, May 4, 1781**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] This additional responsibility made him so anxious that for weeks he never retired to rest at night, for fear of a surprise. This naturally told on a man of his age; but could not subdue his spirit, or his determination to do his duty. He thus describes his situation at this time. –

*“Thus being extremely fatigued, besides other disorders, raised a swelling on the side of my head, which was blistered in the evening of the 3rd of May. That night I had the rounds, and my head running. Next morning in course of duty I was obliged to attend General Campbell with my report. He expressed great concern at seeing me in that condition, as he meant a sally at twelve o'clock that day the fourth (the sixth in the newspapers is a mistake), and he did not know who else to appoint to that command. I told him to be under no apprehension but I would do my duty while I had whole bones, nor would I yield a command of that nature to any man alive, and begged he would give myself the necessary instructions, and not puzzle me afterwards with messages by aide-de-camps, which I had found on other occasions contradictory and ambiguous.”*

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] The Major succeeded so well in this attempt, that his name was mentioned with honour in the General's report.<sup>1</sup>

Source: “Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography’ Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the “nom de plume” M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* *The Celtic Magazine*, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, pp. 225-226. A more detailed look at the Siege of Pensacola is provided in Attachment H: Captivity of Major of Brigade James Campbell by the Spanish Army.

Note:

1. Maj.-General John Campbell to Lord George Germain, May 12, 1781 in TNA, *Colonial Office: Original Correspondence, West Florida* at CO 5/597, f. 310 as shown in, *Documents of the American Revolution 1770-1783, Colonial Office Series*, Vol. XX, Transcripts 1781, ed. K. G. Davies., pp. 138-142.(shown below).

### **Royal Gazette Account of Maj. John Macdonald's Sortie, Siege of Pensacola, West Florida, May 4, 1781**

EXTRACTS from REBEL PAPERS.

CHARLESTON, June 10...

Yesterday arrived a cartel ship from Pensacola, in which came passengers the Hon. Peter Chester, Esq; Governor of West Florida, and sundry other officers belonging to that garrison. We have been favoured with the following account of the siege of that place... A number of sallies were made after that of the 12th of April by the besieged, in which the enemy always suffered considerably, but none of consequence until the 6th of May, when 100 men commanded by Major M<sup>c</sup>Donald, about twelve o'clock with fixed bayonets attacked and drove 8 or 900 of them from their works which they had advanced within 600 yards of our outer redoubt, made one Captain, two subalterns, and four privates prisoners, killed three officers, and about 50 men, spiked five pieces of cannon, and set fire to their works, with the loss of only one serjeant killed, and two privates wounded...

Source and Note: *Royal Gazette*, New York, July 21, 1781. Maj. Macdonald claimed the date of the 6<sup>th</sup> should read the 4<sup>th</sup>.



Spanish Troops Surge over Damaged Fortifications at Pensacola

Picture Source: *The American Soldier*, U.S. Army

**Excerpts of Journal of Surrender of Pensacola and Return to New York, by Corp. Carl Philipp Steuernagel, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waldeck Regt., May. 8 – June 15, 1781**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, at nine o'clock in the morning, we had a misfortune when an enemy bomb ignited our powder magazine in the outermost battery, which blew 52 men into the air, wounded many, and completely ruined our fortification, also.

This very unfortunate accident made such a favorable opportunity for the Spaniards, in that now everything was in the greatest confusion. The enemy pressed us with such strength and determination that we had to raise the white flag, whereupon the Spanish adjutant general was sent over to discuss a capitulation. In the meantime, however, all our still serviceable cannon were loaded with grape and canister. Despite this enemy pressure which mounted in strength, our brave General Campbell did not lose courage, but let the enemy know, that in case the proposed articles were not accepted, he, with his still few remaining troops, would resist to the last man.

Finally, the Spaniards understood that it would still cause many bloody heads. So they perceived it as advisable that they accept our proposed capitulation and concluded [the siege]. The adjutant returned a third time and presented the final articles signed by the Spanish general.

Still the enemy had more of which to be ashamed. Our weak force gained true honor, because the enemy, since the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, with 22,000 men besieged six hundred men and still on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March [May] we marched out of our fort with flags flying and with martial music, and Spain paid the costs when we were transported free to North America, specifically to New York...

I could say a great deal at this point about our captivity, but for brevity let me only say, that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1781, which was also the King of England's birthday, we sailed with eleven ships from West Florida to the Island of Havana and Dominica...

The 15<sup>th</sup>, in the afternoon we entered the harbor of Havanna in the West Indian island Dominica, and lay at anchor. After a few days we continued our journey onward toward North America, specifically Fort Reinfort, and upon our arrival [July 5<sup>th</sup>] there were disembarked near Brooklyn on Long Island, quartered in earthen huts, and thus sat out our period as prisoners of war...

Source: "Memoir of Carl Philipp Steurnagel, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waldeck Regiment," trans. by Bruce E. Burgoyne, *Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association*, Volume 6, Number 1, 1997, pp. 47-50.



Gen. John Campbell of Strachur

Portrait Source: History of the Fifty-Seventh (West Middlesex) Regiment of Foot 1755-1881, by Capt. H. H. Woollright, Richard Bentley and Son, London, 1893, Google Books, p. 90.

### **Maj. Gen. John Campbell's Commendation of Maj. Macdonald in his Report of the Siege of Pensacola, to Lord George Germain, May 12, 1781**

12 May, Pensacola

My Lord, when I wrote your lordship on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, although I then foresaw the probable fate of Pensacola, yet I did not apprehend that the decision of the contest was quite so near at hand as it has since proved to have been. An unfortunate shell from the enemy on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> precipitated its destiny and occasioned its falling under the dominion of Spain at least some days sooner than it would otherwise have happened...I assure your lordship that I was perfectly well supported by the field officers of corps under my command...Lieutenant colonel de Horn, of the Waldeck regiment, and Major M<sup>c</sup>Donald, of the Maryland provincial corps, the only field officers in the garrison of fort George, went through a great deal of fatigue in the execution of their duty with zeal, promptness and alacrity; and in justice to them I must observe, that the sally of the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, was led by them, when upwards of 400 men, actually on duty in that part of the trenches attacked, were routed by only a handful of men, their cannon spiked, works destroyed, &c. Major Macdonald headed the provincials, who attacked and stormed the trenches, and lieutenant colonel de Horn was at the head of the reserve...

Source: TNA, *Colonial Office: Original Correspondence, West Florida* at , CO 5/597, f. 310 as shown in, *Documents of the American Revolution 1770-1783, Colonial Office Series*, Vol. XX, Transcripts 1781, ed. K. G. Davies., pp. 138-142.

### **Account of Dinner with Maj. Macdonald Following Return from Pensacola Siege and Surrender, by Capt. John Peebles, 42<sup>nd</sup> Grenadier Company, New York, July 5-27, 1781**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July...Part of the Garrison of Pensacola arrived in transports from the Havanna, they Surrender'd the 10<sup>th</sup> May to Don Galvez the Spanish Gen<sup>l</sup> who had 16 ships of the line & 8000 land troops, in all a force of 23000, against 1100, who obtain'd an honorable Capitulation after being 9 weeks invested

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July 1781 – some more of the Pensacola People come in, Gen<sup>l</sup> [John] Campbell not yet arrived...

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> ... had old Major M<sup>c</sup>Donald to dine who gave us part of the history of the siege of Pensacola...

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July...Gen<sup>l</sup> Campbell arrived from Havanna...

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> ...The last ship of the Pensacola Garrison arrived, she was taken by the Rebels, & retaken.

Source "13 notebooks containing the journal of Lt. [latterly Capt.] John Peebles of the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regiment, during the American War of Independence," National Records of Scotland, *Papers of the Cuninghame Family of Thorntoun, 1776-1782* at GD21/492/2.

### **Maj. Macdonald's Account of his Return to Moy, Scotland, July 6, 1781 – Jan. 20, 1782**

[Mrs. Mackenzie's Comments] Soon after, Articles of Capitulation were agreed upon, on very favourable terms, and the Major became, with the rest of his comrades, a prisoner of war, and was sent home to New York. He now determined to leave the army and return home. –

*"At this time, I had the confirmation of bad news from home. My trustee having become insolvent, my affairs mismanaged, my wife and daughter distressed, while my effects were a wreck in the hands of those who never dreamed I should appear to bring them to account. The conclusions are obvious. At this time I considered that having passed my grand climacteric<sup>1</sup>, there was no depending on a constitution, always at severe trial from my twelfth year. My last service was finished decently. In any future service I might fail of ability. I hope the judicious reader will, from what has been said, see good reason for sacrificing my commission, to escape with the little life left to my family and friends. This was effected by landing at Portsmouth, 20th January 1782 – a few days in London – then Edinburgh by land. Engaged Drumuachter<sup>2</sup> in the memorial storm in March of that year; arrived at Moy, 6th April, in tolerable health, though I was obliged to march on foot all the way from Dunkeld.<sup>3</sup>*

*"Thus at the end of forty-three years I quitted a service to which Providence, contrary to my own inclination, directed me, after such a variety of hardships as few constitutions could bear. In balancing the general usage I met with in the army, I find it most favourable, as I had not many friends, not remarkable talents that could recommend me to much notice. Perseverance, honesty, and sobriety I take credit for; but who can say that merit is neglected, or finds no reward in the army, when such slender parts as mine could make a Major.*

*"I now rest well pleased with my success in the world, and in general with my own conduct, even where my designs failed most. Remembering that they were always fair and prudent at the time; but that no human sagacity can guard against future events."*

Source: "Major John Macdonald, Selections from his Autobiography' Part III, by Emma Rose Mackenzie, writing under the "nom de plume" M.A. Rose in *The Celtic Magazine* The Celtic Magazine, No. CXIII. March 1885. Vol. X, p. 226.

Note:

1. "Grand climacteric" was defined as the sixty-third year of life.
2. Drumochter is a pass within the Grampian Mountains (now A9 which covers the old military road of Gen. Wade).
3. The distance by road from Dunkeld to Moy is about 87 miles.