

Two Letters from Walter Colquhoun Grant

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Walter Colquhoun Grant, the first "independent" settler in what is now the province of British Columbia, is best remembered by students of the period for two papers he delivered before the Royal Geographical Society in London—"Descriptions of Vancouver Island," in 1857, and "Remarks on Vancouver Island, Principally Concerning Townsites and Native Population," in 1859. Both accounts contain much first-hand, factual information about the island; the first is especially vivid and reveals the author's considerable powers of observation and description. Grant also served as the first surveyor for the Hudson's Bay Company on Vancouver Island.

More than twenty years ago Willard E. Ireland proceeded to assemble all available information about Grant, particularly the references to his activities contained in the records of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, London. These findings he incorporated in a paper presented before the Victoria Branch of the British Columbia Historical Association and subsequently published in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*.¹ The letters that follow tend both to confirm and to supplement many of Ireland's conclusions.

As Ireland noted, Grant was descended from an ancient and honourable Scottish family. His father, Colquhoun, was a military man who had distinguished himself during the Peninsular campaign against Napoleon and was hand-picked by Wellington to head his intelligence division during the decisive Waterloo campaign in 1815. Five of Grant's six uncles also entered the service of their country during these troubled years, and one of them, James McGrigor (later Sir James), became Wellington's principal medical officer and director-general of the army's medical department. A filio-pietistic biography of Colquhoun Grant, published in 1969,² contains additional information about the Grant family.

¹ Ireland, "Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant: Vancouver Island's First Independent Settler," *BCHQ*, XVII (January-April 1953), 87-125.

² Jock Haswell, *The First Respectable Spy: The Life and Times of Colquhoun Grant*,

In March 1820 Colquhoun married Margaret Brodie, daughter of James Brodie, and Walter, their first and only child, was probably born early in 1821.³ Colquhoun took his family with him to India, where as a regiment and then brigade commander during the First Burmese War, 1824-26, he contracted malaria. In the spring of 1828 Margaret also became ill and died at sea while returning to Scotland with Walter, who would then have been about seven years old. Walter was taken into the household at Brodie Castle by William Brodie of Brodie, a cousin more than twenty years his senior and the man to whom the letters that follow are addressed. William also provided a tutor for his young charge, a man by the name of John Lawrie. Colquhoun was invalided home in 1829 but was too ill to make the journey from London to Scotland; he died on September 28 at Aix-la-Chapelle, where he had been sent by his doctors to "take the cure." Walter and John Lawrie visited Colquhoun in London and accompanied him to Aix-la-Chapelle, where Lawrie signed the certificate of death.⁴

With this background one can readily understand why Grant elected to pursue a military career, but the reasons for his decision to abandon the army and seek his fortune in the remote colony of Vancouver Island remain less clear. We know little of his later childhood or of the nature of any inheritance he might have received from his parents. Presumably he continued to live at Brodie Castle. He is reported to have entered the army at an early age and attained the rank of captain in the 2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys) by the time he was twenty-four years old. According to Richard Blanshard, governor of Vancouver Island when Grant was here, he attended Royal Military College at Sandhurst for only "a short time."⁵ In the letter from RMC that follows, August 29, 1848, Grant implies that a bank failure had drastically altered his situation. This suggestion is in accordance with information later supplied by the youngest son of John Muir, who acquired Grant's property at Sooke. In a letter

Wellington's Head of Intelligence (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969). This account includes a slightly more liberally edited version of Grant's letters of August 29, 1848 and August 9, 1851.

³ Haswell states Grant was born in the spring of 1821 and arrived in Madras, India, in "early summer," 1822 (*ibid.*, pp. 232, 234); Ireland (*BCHQ*, XVIII, 90) gives the date as May 27, 1822, on the basis of information supplied by Sir Francis Grant from *Scots Magazine*. Grant's obituary (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, XXXII [1862], p. cviii) states he was 39 years old at the time of his death, which corroborates the 1821 date.

⁴ Haswell, *First Respectable Spy*, pp. 245-47.

⁵ Ireland, *BCHQ*, XVIII, 90, 103.

apparently written in 1908, Douglas R. W. Muir, who was about twenty-three years of age when the family began residing at Sooke, stated that Grant had been "worth about £75,000 but owing to the failure of the bank he lost every cent he had, therefore he was not able to keep his position in the Army."⁶

There can be little doubt that Grant found himself hard pressed financially while he was out here because he was forced to borrow privately on numerous occasions, leading Sir George Simpson to observe that he must possess "a peculiar talent for getting into the pockets of his friends." Nor is there much doubt that Grant was ill-equipped to play his self-appointed role as colonizer of virgin territory: he had no previous experience with farming; his services as a surveyor were less than satisfactory; and he proved to be an improvident and incompetent manager of men. In his second letter reprinted here, dated August 8, 1851, Grant states that none of his men left him "except by my own consent," but in a letter of March 25, 1850, in which he tendered his resignation as surveyor for the Hudson's Bay Company, Grant informed Douglas that "having been obliged to discharge half of my own men for misconduct, I am unable without totally neglecting my own interests, to employ the remainder in exploring or surveying." Nevertheless it would be a mistake to judge these men too hastily; Eden Colville, who visited Fort Victoria in 1849, concluded that Grant's "flightiness" amounted "to near lunacy."⁷

Grant is nevertheless important in the history of British Columbia because he was the first individual not sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company who purchased land and attempted to establish himself on it. Not only does he represent a source of knowledge and point of view that is independent of the company, but he represents in his very person the kind of gentleman-farmer the company was seeking to attract. In keeping with the ideas of E. Gibbon Wakefield, the company sought to transplant to Vancouver Island a social class of small yeomen farmers and a landed squirearchy. To this end the company set the price of land at £1 per acre and required purchasers to bring out five single men or three married couples for every 100 acres of land purchased. As the company's secretary wrote to James Douglas in December 1849,

⁶ Muir to Donald A. Fraser [1908?], Walter Colquhoun Grant, Miscellaneous Information, PABC.

⁷ Simpson to James Douglas, August 30, 1850, transcripts, PABC; Grant to Douglas, March 22, 1850, cited in Ireland, *BCHQ*, XVII, 103; Colville to Simpson, December 7, 1849, in E. E. Rich, ed., *London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colville, 1849-1852* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956), p. 187.

The object of every sound system of colonization should be, not to re-organize Society on a new basis, which is simply absurd, but to transfer to the new country whatever is most valuable, and most approved in the institutions of the old, so that Society may, by as far as possible consist of the same classes, united together by the same ties, & have the Same relative duties to perform in the one country as in the other.⁸

Like many others who were to follow him to Vancouver Island, Grant clearly aspired to the life of the landed gentry. Douglas Muir credited him with introducing the first broom plants to the island, and James R. Anderson remembered him for presenting a cricket set to the boys in the HBC school in Victoria, and for bringing with him sets of carriage harness and other articles "of no earthly use."⁹ In the first letter reprinted here, Grant indicates he hoped to bring out about twenty men, which would have presupposed an estate of about 500 acres, but he actually succeeded in getting only eight men to Vancouver Island; a ninth man in his employ, a school teacher, died at sea while en route to Victoria in 1850. Moreover, he applied for 484 acres of land from the Hudson's Bay Company but apparently could make payment for only 100 acres.¹⁰

Despite his failings as a colonist, Grant was clearly a well-educated and articulate individual, and a person of some amiability and charm. J. S. Helmcken, who has recounted a number of Grant's behavioural antics, recalled him years later as "a splendid fellow and every inch an officer and gentleman."¹¹ After leaving Victoria, Grant mined for gold for about two years in southern Oregon and northern California, eventually making his way to San Francisco. He returned briefly to Victoria in September 1853 and disposed of his property; he then apparently returned to England, rejoined his old regiment, and saw service in the Crimean War. In November 1857 and December 1859 he presented papers on Vancouver Island to the Royal Geographical Society and was made a fellow of that body in December 1858. With the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, his regiment was transferred to India, and he participated in the siege of Lucknow. He died at Saugor, Central India, August 27, 1861.

The letters that follow are of interest for additional snippets of information they provide about Grant and particularly for what they reveal about

⁸ Archibald Barclay to Douglas, December 1849, Fort Victoria, Correspondence Inward, PABC.

⁹ Anderson, Notes and Comments on Early Days and Events in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, typescript, PABC, p. 158.

¹⁰ Douglas to Barclay, July 9, 1853, cited in Ireland, *BCHQ*, XVII, 117.

¹¹ Helmcken, "A Reminiscence of 1850," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, Holiday Number, December 1887, p. 3.

his expectations before coming to Vancouver Island and his subsequent disillusionment. The letters are on deposit in the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, and are published here through the kind permission of their owner, Nivian Brodie of Brodie, a great-grandson of the original recipient of the letters. In editing them every effort has been made to retain the original capitalization and spelling, but capitals and periods are supplied at the beginning and end of each sentence. Periods have also been added after abbreviations, except when missing letters have been supplied as necessary in italics. Paragraphs do not appear in the original.

R. M. College

Augt. 29—48

My Dear Brodie

I should not so long have delayed thanking you for yr. most kind letter, had I not been up in town arranging some affairs concerning my intended emigration, which occasioned my being absent when it arrived. With regard to my Mother's writing Desk, I sd. be much obliged if you will be kind enough to keep it for me for a short time, & I will send for or fetch it previous to leaving the country, as I sd. like to have it with me.

All attempts for me to remain [in] the army wd. be useless, my debts are so numerous & my creditors so pressing, that even if I got patched up in my present position for a short time, I sd. eventually be obliged to succumb. In military law when the garrison of a fortress obstinately hold out after they have been repeatedly summoned to surrender, and when they can have no hopes of being successful in the end, when the place is eventually taken, no quarter is given. So with me, if after seeing that my position was eventually untenable, I still endeavoured to hold on by my professions, the ruin which is now impending wd. be not the less sure to overtake me, and the crash with which I sd. fall wd. be the greater, the longer it was delayed, as the weight which is now pressing on me wd. insensibly continue to accumulate.

I am ashamed any more to beg, but I can still dig, to be enabled to do so I must however first throw off my red coat, a garment which to tell the truth, for the last six years, I have had no particular penchant for wearing.

You will probably next Tuesday week see my name in the gazette. I am selling out altogether in pursuance of my own resolve, & have not even told my old Aunt in Forres of my intention, as she wd. only kick up

a bobbery in endeavouring to persuade me to avoid a course which is inevitable. My uncles I have of course informed on the subject, & though contrary to their preconceived notions, I have no doubt they will eventually approve of my plans.

With regard to the future, I have determined on going to Vancouver's island. My preparations will scarcely be completed in time to Sail by the first packet (mid. of Septr.) but I hope to be ready to start by the next somewhere abt. the *beginning* of Octr.

The locale I have pitched on as the fulcrum whereon my future life is to rest, is an island in climate much assimilated to great Britain, but the genl. character of the soil is much richer, in extent some 12,000 sqr. miles, and as yet almost totally uninhabited, consequently presenting a grand field for fresh & vigorous enterprise. It has lately been granted to the Hudson's Bay Coy. who intend giving sub grants to individuals on condition of their paying £1 pr. acre, & depositing money for the transport of labourers (120 pr. head) in the proportion of 6 to every hundred acres, one half of whom are to be farm labourers & the other half mechanics.

The conditions appear fair enough coming altogether to about £220 pr. 100 acres. The only difficulty is securing the services of the rascals, at all events for a time after you have transported them, until they have remunerated you for the expence of bringing 'em out. That done there will be no difficulty in finding plenty of hands, Sioux & Blackfeet Indians par exemple can be transported from the neighbouring main land who will work for a week for the remuneration of "A shirt", an article which they prize more than all European Gold & Silver.

I think I shall have about £900 to commence my adventure with. My principal difficulty is in making an arrangement with my cousin Mr. McGrigor. Since the failure of my Bank he has already been put in possession of all my other resources, which will altogether pay him about £9500, out of a debt of £12,000, which I owed him under circumstances with which you are I think acquainted. The regulated value of my commission is now £100, but I shall prob. be able to get abt. £600 in addition. From this I have offered him the Sum of £600 at the same time binding myself whenever able to repay the remainder of my debt from any other resources which sd. Arise to me. In addition to this my life is insured to him for £8,000 so that altogether I think he has no reason to complain of my behaviour to him. He has not yet accepted my offer. Sd. he do so, I have then other debts to pay to the amt. of £900, which will leave me a similar sum in pocket.

I wish to get all my labourers from Moray or Strathspey if possible, & sd. be very much obliged to you if you wd. be kind enough to recommend me any whom you think may be depended on. Carpenters, Masons, blacksmiths, gardeners & farm labourers, wd. all be acceptable. I shall prob. want abt. 20 hands. My principle desideratum however by far, is a first rate grieve or farm superintendant, as besides knowing little about farming myself, I have been half promised an appointment to survey the island, which will occupy nearly all my time for at least several months to come. If therefore you cd. put me up to any trustworthy person of that sort, you wd. confer on me an inestimable favour, & I sd. be happy to give him the utmost remuneration present or prospective, which my resources cd. afford.

I shall stop here for the next week, & then go up to town, where my address will be No. 7, St. Alban's Place, Charles St. I trust you found Mrs. Brodie better on yr. visit to Huntly Lodge, pray remember me kindly to her if with you, as also to all the cottage party & Believe me my Dear Brodie

Yr. affectionate Cousin W. Colqn. Grant.

Oregon City Augt. 8th 1851

My Dear Brodie

I remember when starting from the Old Country, I promised to write you whole Folios of News concerning the New one to which I was emigrating. I must beg you to accept my Excuses. It is not that "hors de vue hors de pensee" applies to us on this side of the water, for however much the emigrant may be forgotten, he rarely forgets the country which gave him birth, & those who have the good fortune still to reside in it. Somehow however, living as we do in the far West, far out of the range of the Genl. or any other post Office, one gets altogether out of the habit of letter writing, & I do not think while on the island except within the first few weeks after my arrival I have put my pen half a doz. times to paper. When I first arrived, I wrote as in courtesy bound to all those who had in any way by loans &c assisted me in coming out, acquainting them with my arrival & giving them some acct. of the country. With few exceptions I have had no answers to my letter, & those which did arrive have been upwards of a year en route. Here however (in Oregon) the case is different, their means of communication are complete & well connected throughout the country, & their postal arrangements so excellent

that though I am now writing in the centre of a wilderness 150 miles from the sea coast, I am pretty certain that within 6 or 7 weeks you will have the satisfaction, or bore, as the case may be, of perusing my note.

I arrived here yesterday fm. Vancouver's Island, and seeing this morning a notice that the Mail wd. start at noon for California, I have determined not to loose a post in writing to you. I will at once come to my object, & give you a short acct. of the country afterwards, for without an important object in writing you, I must frankly confess, that though with all the good will to you in the world, I might have put off writing to you for months or years, as has been the case with most of my other relations & correspondents.

I wish you to oblige me by acting postman for the nonce, i.e. to be so kind as to convey the enclosed note to My Lord Fife. It is a sort of application for a commission in the Austrian service. I send it open that you may read it, & so not forward a communication without knowing its contents, & if you are on sufficiently intimate terms with his Lordship, & on sufficiently amicable terms with myself after my sins in never writing you until I wished to avail myself of your good offices, may I ask you to do me the great favour of enclosing my application, in a letter of introduction from yourself. I am totally unknown to Ld. Fife myself, & consequently do not like taking so great a liberty as to write him unannounced, having never seen his Lordship but once when I was a little boy at your house. If however my request give you any bother, pray do not hesitate to put my note into the post & leave it to its fate, or even into the fire if you think it adviseable.

Vancouver's Isld. which has now been my home for the last two years, is as you may perhaps have heard, little better than a mass of Rock, with a few little garden patches as it were, interspersed at intervals along the sea coast. The land where it is at all capable of cultivation, is of the richest possible description, & produces abundantly as far as my experience goes, any of the crops grown in Scotland or England. I have however been across the island in one or two places, & along it in others, & from what I have seen & heard, I sd. say that, 19/20ths of the island at the very least were useless rock, in some parts covered with a scanty growth of timber, but in most parts not even affording sufficient moss or mould for fir or shrub to hold on by. Of the remaining 20th the great portion is covered with a fine growth of timber, there being only a very small proportion of open prairie, & the open land is generally inferior to that covered with timber though settlers prefer the former, being in too great a hurry to make money, to take time to clear the latter.

Where I am settled i.e. in the Neighbourhood of Soke Harbour, there are 6000 acres of available land, of which 430 are open prairie, the remainder rich woodland. I have got 34 acres under cultivation & sown with Wheat Barley oats Potatoes & Sweedish Turnips. They all look well, and this week they are to commence their harvest. Of the crops hitherto grown on the island there has been no regular return kept. The average yield is estimated at fm. 20 to 30 Bushels pr. acre. The Wheat Crop particularly is very fine. I have seen some ears 5 inches long with fm. 120 to 160 grains in each ear. My tenant expects this year to have a yield of over 30 Bushels pr. acre, & what little I had last year weighed 60 Lb. to the Bushel. The Pasture on the open land is of a very inferior description & soon eat bare by a few cattle. In the woodland there is none whatever, & there is in the summer months everywhere a great scarcity of water.

The climate is very delightful to the labourer, but I do not think very favorable for the ripening of crops. Heavy rains fall from October till Feby. a few intermittent showers betn. Feby. & April, but during the remainder of the months not a drop falls morning noon or night, & the drought & heat become excessive. The Savages have an abominable custom of burning the woods, & the smoke arising hence, together with a fog which hangs over the country eternally during the summer months, wd. prevent one recognizing one's dearest friend at 100 yards distance, nay sometimes at 100 feet. This country (Oregon) is much freer from Smoke & Fog, & is more plentifully supplied with water. The heat however in the Summer months here also is excessive. At Nisqually within the last fortnight the Thermometer rose as far as 92° in the shade. At Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia river, the Therm. was on one occasion as high as 104° in the shade, the average height during the last fortnight having been 98° Fahrenheit. Our sea breezes in Vancouver's Island cool us a little, but the parched dryness of the atmosphere make a lesser heat more oppressive than a greater wd. be in this region.

The only other establishment except my own on Vancouver's Island is Ft. Victoria the post of the Hudson's Bay Compy. distant 25 miles from Mullachard (I have called my place Mullachard after the possession of my forefathers in Strathspey). At Victoria they have got abt. 150 acres under cultivation and have a stock of about 1000 cattle & 2000 sheep. They are however miserable farmers, they ruin the land by paying no attention to the Succession of crops, & never applying manure, & they ruin their stock by paying no attention to breeding and allowing the majority to run wild in the woods. They imported them from Nisqually

to which place they had driven them several years ago, overland fm. California.

There is a small Harbour at Victoria well sheltered but fit only for small vessels. At Soke on which I have placed the new Mullachard, there is a magnificent Harbour, but with a narrow & dangerous entrance. The best Harbour on the South coast is Esquimalt, into it a line of battle ships cd. beat without any difficulty. The whole Island is abt. 250 miles long with an extreme breadth of 60. In some places however arms of the sea run in so far as to be within 2 or 3 miles of the opposite coast. The coast on both East & west is studded with excellent Harbours, & the neighbouring seas as well as the straits of Fuca swarm with fish. Cod Ling Herring & salmon of two or three descriptions, are caught in abundance. On one day a few canoes brought as many as 3000 Salmon to trade. The only Fishermen as yet being Indians their supplies are precarious and uncertain. I am convinced however if any of my countrymen who understood the subject wd. embark in the fisheries on these coasts they wd. find them very profitable.

The descriptions of the coal found in the island have been much exaggerated, both as to quantity & quality. At Ft. Rupert on the N.W. coast of the island to which place 6 miners were sent by the Hudson's Bay Coy. There was a seam found on the surface of two or three feet in thickness but of very inferior quality. This coal the Indians cut out with axes and traded with the H.B. Coy. They have however I believe already extracted nearly all that cd. be procured in this way, & they sold this quantity (abt. 2000 tons in all, at so high a price, viz £2.12s. pr. ton, that other vessels are not very likely to come and make purchases. The miners sank a Shaft of 90 feet the only advantage was the discovery that no workable coal existed to that depth. They passed through a few seams but none of them was over 4 inches in thickness. Subsequently the workers came to loggerheads with the Company, and ran away to Oregon and California, not having raised one square inch of Coal during the whole time that they were employed on the island. Another coal seam has since been discovered on the East Coast of the island. It is about 4 feet thick on the surface, and situated in the country of a very friendly and hard working tribe of Indians. I suspect it will turn out however like the other, to be merely a surface bed and the Geological structure of the island as far as I am acquainted with it, does not lead me to suppose that coal mining will ever turn out very productive in it. The prevailing formations below the metamorphic or Upper primary class of rocks, & where the Sandstones occur, they are of the old Paleozoic period, a formation

anterior to any in which repaying coal mines are found in England. Salt Springs have been discovered, & Limestone is abundant.

A few specimens of gold Have been brought by the Natives of Queen Charlotte's Island, to Fort Simpson a Post of the Hudson's Bay Compy. on the opposite mainland. I saw some of the specimens. One was a solid mass of gold about two inches long by an inch broad. It had been broken out by the Indians from the Quartz rock in which It was contained. We know nothing more as yet, but two Ships have gone up to make further enquiries, & will prob. return this autumn.

The native population of the island amounts to fm. 10 to 20,000. They are a most interesting race, as useless as they are harmless. All attempts to civilize or Christianize them have completely failed, & though several White men have intermarried with the women of the various tribes, the result has always been that the white man has lowered himself to the standard of his wife, instead of the savage becoming at all elevated herself by the connexion. They live altogether upon Salmon & shell fish during the summer, & on wild Fowl and Potatoes during the winter. They seldom hunt though Capital Shots with the bow when they try. They have nearly given up the bow however for the musket, with which latter they are plentifully supplied by the Hudson's Bay Coy.

The Sporting [potential] of the country is decidedly bad, and seldom repays the trouble of going out. There are two kinds of bear the brown & Black, neither of them savage. Elk are occasionally met with, & there are two kinds of small deer, one some think like the Fallow deer. None of these animals are however numerous. I believe I am the only white man who has as yet killed a deer on the island.

Until this year I was entirely alone as a settler, but within the last few months 3 old servants of the Hudson's Bay Coy. have taken claims of land, though none of them have as yet either pd. any-thing for the land or brought out men to cultivate it. The Hudson's Bay Coy. having claimed 40 Sqe. miles in the neighbourhood of Victoria; although I had pd. for my land in Engd. with the understanding that I was to have free choice on the island, I was obliged to go 25 miles off, where I have been living a totally solitary life ever since. I soon got tired of my own society & except when a stray ship came along the coast, never saw a creature save my own men and a few rascally Indians. I got quite weary of my existence, and if it had not been for the episode of a 2 months trip down to the Sandwich Islands last winter, I really believe I sd. have committed Suicide by hanging drowning or otherwise. I returned fm. the Islands with fresh vigour, but soon got disgusted again, seeing that no other

bonâ fide settlers were coming out to enliven my solitude. I therefore was glad enough to let my place, which I did on a lease of 5 years for £70 pr. annum. I also let a flour & sawmill which I had built, for a similar sum & similar period. My property will at all events never be less valuable than it is now. I may therefore calculate to a certainty on having a provision of £200 pr. anm. at all events made for my old age. At present it is not much use to me as I owe some £400 to the H. B. Coy. & gave up the rental to them of my mill & farm until that debt is paid. I have then other debts in the old country which must be settled as soon as circumstances will enable me to manage it, & indeed unless I can establish a town on the surface of my land, or find coal below it, it will I fear take me more than a lifetime to get rid of the Millstone of debts, which are hanging round my neck. I have had pretty hard work to keep a float since coming out here, now selling a Spar now a Potatoe &c. All my personal property had likewise to be made available, & guns, furniture, Books clothes &c successively found their way up the spout and were converted into dollars & cents.

I have done better for the men I brought out with me than for myself. I employed them at high wages, and have now established them on plots of land of their own. None of them left me except by my own consent, & they are all except 3 now established on the island — of these 3 one was drowned, one died of cholera, and the other is now working in Oregon.

As for myself I find myself here without more than 30 dollars in my pocket, but with the great relief of having no mouths to feed but my own. As soon as I have made sufficient to pay my passage Back to England, I shall be off & endeavour to enter some foreign service, be it Austrian or Spanish.

Pray give my kind love to Mrs. Brodie, who I trust with yr. young family is well, & Believe me my dear Brodie,

Affectionately yours, W. Colqn. Grant

[P.S.] My Direction is, care of Messrs. Allan & McKinlay, Oregon City via New York. That will be quite sufficient direction, & a letter so directed wd. reach me in abt. 7 weeks. Mr. Kinlay & Allan will forward letters to me wherever I am. I am not likely to be further off than the Umqua [Umpqua] valley, where I think I shall get some surveying to do. I will look out for some seeds of the large Pine grown there (the largest in the world) and send some to you & Dalvey [?]. Sd. you go into Forres any

of these days, perhaps you wd. be so kind as to mention to one Mr. Grigor, a nurseryman there, that I received his letter asking for seeds, & sd. have sent him some last year had I any opportunity. I have left directions with my gardener to look out for them this fall, & will send him specimens of all the firs grown on the island. They are however a bad lot; the wood is generally flinty & cross grained, & with the exception of some cedars, there is no wood worth introducing. W.C.G.