

Title:	Handwritten Letters Book, Canada West, 1862-1865		
Creator:	John Rowe		
Dates of Material:	1862-1865	Record Group Number:	RG 818
Summary of Contents:	<p>A letters book belonging to John Rowe of Port Stanley and Hamilton, Ontario, 1862-1865. The book consists of handwritten duplicate copies of correspondence sent by Rowe. He writes to a variety of people including business associates, family members and friends. Rowe discusses romance, commerce, and war, specifically Canada's attitude and involvement in the American Civil War. He regularly travels for business and this is reflected in the letters he writes that are dated at Amherstburg and Brampton. His correspondents include his cousin Sergeant Ford, 2nd Battal Sco Fusilier Guards Montreal, his sister in Devonport, Devon, England, Schell of Campbellton, and Grace Rosevear of Guelph.</p> <p>Pages 1 to 40 have been used as a scrapbook and many pages are covered in news clippings that cover the written text beneath. Excerpts from some of the entries follow:</p> <p><i>Please note: This record contains language that reflects the time when it was created and the view of its creator(s). This can include offensive and negative language, references, and stereotypes that are no longer used or appropriate today. The item(s) retain their original content to ensure that attitudes and viewpoints are not erased from the historical record. The Archives & Special Collections are actively working on including more respectful and representative language in our descriptions now and into the future.</i></p> <p>Port Stanley, August 4, 1862 to his cousin (p. 46): <i>"I still live in Hamilton. I have been here over a month attending to some business for our firm...Port Stanley is on the north shore of Lake Erie some 20 miles south of London, a very pretty little place with lots of pretty girls in fact it is proverbial for it and as I am still a bachelor this helps to keep me from getting the blues"</i></p> <p>Hamilton, November 20, 1862, to his sister (p. 68)<i>"I was amused at your anxiety about the war although it is not in Canada, neither can it ever be unless the United States go to war with England which I trust will not come to pass. I see not the slightest chance of the war closing for some time yet"</i></p> <p>Hamilton, December 24, 1862 (p. 84) <i>"with regard to the war I shall say but little, you see all the accounts in the papers. The north will never conquer the south...they are beaten in every great battle...the north are making a great blow about the President's Emancipation Proclamation, as if they were doing it from love to the n_____ whereas it is a military necessity they see they cannot anger the south by fair fighting...if they attempt to carry out the proclamation (which I think they will not) you will find the south will retaliate"</i></p>		

and fight under the black flag... We are busy in Canada now getting our Militia into thorough efficiency. We are raising a Battalion in Hamilton as an 'active force' something similar to the English Volunteers, whilst everyman between 18 & 45 is on the roll of the sedentary militia. I have volunteered with the active force"

Hamilton, January 8, 1863 to Wm. Stuart (p. 86) *"I expect to go down to the Falls on Monday about that Customs matter, but will not be gone more than 2 days"*

Hamilton, January 14, 1863 to his cousin (p.90) *"Since I last wrote you we have formed several companies of volunteers in Hamilton, we are gazetted as 'Light Infantry' and formed into a Battalion of which Mr. Buchanan (my governor) has been appointed Lieut. Colonel. I have joined one of the Companies."*

Hamilton, February 7, 1863 to R.S. Schell (p. 92) *"Pete Buchanan is Ensign. Stuart enjoys the rank of Corporal of which he feels very proud. He has just returned from New York where he went to see his brother who was wounded before Fredericksburg where I believe Stuart had the great honor of drinking with the Governor of Nebraska & some U.S. Generals... Since his return he is full of his exploits—dining with 'General-Char-them-up'."*

Hamilton, February 10, 1863 (p. 98) to his cousin *"I suppose you will be glad to get away from Canada as soon as possible. I did not like the Country at all at first but have got now quite reconciled and may say I like it."*

Hamilton, July 8, 1863 (p. 119) to his sister in Devonport, Devon, England *"We have commenced the Volunteer movement in Canada & have already 25 thousand—I belong to them. I am the best shot in the Company I am in. I hope to get a prize"*

Hamilton, October 20, 1863 to Schell (p. 126) *"The Guards are a splendid lot of fellows. On seeing them parade...in full dress we feel proud of being a Briton, they look like a brigade of Giants and appear to be about 8 feet high"*.

Hamilton, November 18, 1863 to Mr. A. Anderson (p. 130) *"I refer to Jamie's marriage. She was married some six weeks ago...I must confess I felt somewhat blue at the time. She did not treat me right for up to the time of her marriage she boldly (stated?) that there was nothing in it, and gave me every amount of encouragement any dis-engaged girl could...I was invited to the wedding 12 hours before the event but of course did not go & I hear it turned out a very tame affair as hardly any of the invitations were accepted"*

Hamilton, November 24, 1863 to "my dear Lizzie" (p. 136) *"I have no doubt you will be greatly surprised on receiving this letter from me but I feel I can offer no apology for this seeming strange conduct on my part but will proceed at once to lay my case at your feet—I know not whether in the many happy"*

moments I have spent in your company you ever suspected I loved you, nevertheless such was the case”

Hamilton, January 9, 1864 to “my dear Anderson” (p. 150) *“Keltie(?) has commenced business at Fonthill near St. Cath and told me he thought it would turn out well”*

Hamilton, April 23, 1864 to “my dear Anderson” (p. 165) *“We are having a Volunteer Receiver (?) on the 12th of this month at Niagara Falls for the Volunteers of Western Canada. I intend going and expect to have a jolly time of it”.*

Hamilton, July 13, 1864 to Joseph Williams (p. 180) *“The step you are about to take has my entire approbation. I think it is a step you should have taken years ago but better late than never. I am sure I wish you every happiness...I only wish I was similarly situated”.*

Hamilton, July 18, 1864 (p. 182) *“I see you note my success here last fall at the Rifle tournament. I was very successful having won ‘the Ladies of Hamilton prize’ (a purse of £25) & also the Champions Gold medal of the district which comprises the seven counties of Wentworth, Halton, Haldimand, Welland and Lincoln, of which I am the champion Rifle shot. I was quite the Lion of the place for some time as I was the only Hamilton volunteer that took a first class prize”.*

On page 184 he writes *“You ask me when I am coming home. This is a question I often ask myself without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion...I think I shall before a great while, my greatest objection is crossing the Atlantic, this to me is a horrible business. If it was over land I should have been there long ago.”*

Amherstburg, November 12, 1864 (p. 212) *“We had a little excitement here a day or two ago, the ‘so called’ Confederate Pirate ‘Georgian’ came here for wood & was seized by the Customs house office & in the afternoon down came a Yankee tug boat from Detroit with a huge brass gun on board & filled with soldiers...”* He recounts the same story in a letter dated November 28 (p. 214) and continues that *“we expected she would bombard the town & had some ideas of getting the women & children into the cellars but to our infinite relief she steamed back again without any further demonstration”.*

Amherstburg, January 5, 1865 to his sister (p. 221) *“You will doubtless be surprised to find this dated at Amherstburg, this is a little town some 200 miles west of Hamilton on the Detroit River which is the boundary between Canada and the State of Michigan one of the United States. I have been here off and on since July last. I am looking after some business matters for the firm. I have been travelling about a good deal of late on business and think nothing of going off 2 or 3 hundred miles”.*

	<p>He mentions the Civil War of p. 222, writing that <i>“the Canadian government have called out 3 Battalions of our volunteers to guard the frontier in all about 2500 men—it is in order to prevent organized bands of Southerners from making raids into the northern states from Canada. 2 Companies are stationed here at Amherstburg none of the Hamilton volunteers have been called out yet”</i>.</p> <p>On page 224 he writes of his concern of England being drawn into the war, noting that <i>“It looks a little like trouble ahead in Canada if this war continues much longer. I fear England will be drawn into the conflict if or Canada will be the battle ground but I hope it will not end so”</i>.</p> <p>Amherstburg, March 27, 1865 to “my dear Gardner” (p. 234) <i>“I have also had an idea of the States & like yourself am getting more & more disgruntled with Hamilton & Canada generally”</i>.</p>
<p>Physical Description / Condition:</p>	<p>1 book (284 pages)</p>
<p>Administrative/ Biographical Sketch:</p>	<p>John Rowe worked for merchants Buchanan, Harris & Co. The company had offices in Liverpool, Hamilton, Montreal and New York. The firm was owned by brothers Peter and Isaac Buchanan and Peter Harris. Isaac Buchanan resided in Hamilton and was active in business and community affairs. He founded the 13th (Hamilton) Battalion of Infantry and served as Lieut.-Col. for about two years. Rowe was active with the Hamilton Volunteers and had a keen interest in the military, firearms, and drilling, which is reflected in his correspondence.</p>
<p>Location:</p>	<p>Brock University Archives</p>

Source Information:	Acquired from Katz Fine Manuscripts in 2022.		
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