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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **KIRKPATRICK PAPERS**

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# Kirkpatrick Papers (D1424)

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## **Summary**

The Kirkpatrick papers comprise c.800 documents and volumes, mainly deriving from the Rev. George Kirkpatrick and his son, the Rev. Alexander T. Kirkpatrick, of Craigs, Co. Antrim, successively (1840-1868 and 1868-1901) Church of Ireland Rectors of Craigs, and mainly dating from c.1820 to c.1900 (but with earlier material of 1697-1698 and 1760-1769).



## The Papers

The collection mainly consists of letters written to the Rev. George and the Rev. Alexander T. Kirkpatrick and miscellaneous family papers (D1424/1-D1424/4). There are also three volumes concerning trade and personal finance which do not appear to relate to the Kirkpatrick family at all (D1424/5); these consist of an abstract of the Inspector General's accounts of imports and exports for the port of London, 1697-1698, an account book detailing the income of a Mrs Ponsonby, Dublin and London, 1760-1769, and a broker's memorandum book of bills of exchange [Dublin], 1800-1815.

The correspondence comprises 550 letters, c.1820-1900, 250 of a general nature, and 300 from family members, arranged into bundles of 20 according to the alphabetical initial of the correspondent. They are largely divided between those addressed to the Rev. George Kirkpatrick and those to Rev. A.T. Kirkpatrick. Subjects are many and various: requests for baptismal certificates, the upkeep of Craigs Church and School, requests for help in obtaining employment, communications from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, etc. Those of particular interest include: an anonymous letter to the Rev. A.T. Kirkpatrick, concerning the evils of ballroom dancing; a letter from *The Daily Express* requesting the opinion of every Church of Ireland clergyman on the issue of Home Rule (c.1885); and a 'Valentine' from an unknown writer, also to Alexander. Two letters, one from E. Moore Esq. and the other to Alexander from his father (George), concern the 1859 Revival. There is also a copy of a letter from a Captain Stephens who describes Pitcairn Island, 1881.

In addition to family and business correspondence, there are 51 emigrant letters (D1424/3) largely from family members, but also from ex-parishioners, who had emigrated to Canada, the USA and Australia. The letters, 1815-1896, plot the development of a network of family members in Canada and the USA and give an indication of the value attached to correspondence with 'home'. The close ties with Ireland are displayed in a letter written by Ellen Dunlop to her uncle in 1881: 'Your steady interest in us has kept alive the loving interest my darling mother lived on for all those years of separation from her loved country and loving friends'.

The number of return visits to Ireland is a surprising feature which emerges as early as 1828 in a letter from Elizabeth Foster. She writes to the Rev. George Kirkpatrick concerning the young woman who had travelled with her from Canada. Elizabeth Foster was now returning and wanted to know if the young woman wished to travel with her again. If not, she desired Kirkpatrick to find another 'very decent and respectable person' to go back with her, 'who would be glad of a free passage and fair remuneration for her services'. Another return visit to Ireland is indicated in a letter from Thomas Kirkpatrick, who writes from Dublin in 1865: 'It is to my own surprise that I find myself once more on this side of the Atlantic and an inmate of our paternal roof'. In the same letter he writes of their arrival in Derry 'after a voyage of less than 9 days'.

There are also references within the letters to the development or otherwise of cities in the USA. George Kirkpatrick, Toronto, writes to his namesake in Co. Antrim concerning New York. In one letter, 1859, he likens Broadway to 'D'Olier Street in Dublin'. The Chicago fire of 1871 is described as a 'fearful calamity' Chicago 'has been literally swept from the face of the earth'.

D1424/3 also includes letters and extracts from the journal of Tom Hay, written while he was a member of a railway surveying party in Western Canada, 1877-1879. The journal gives a vivid description of a crowded steamboat passage down the Assineboine River, 1879.

Other components of the Kirkpatrick papers are title deeds and legal and testamentary papers of the Kirkpatrick family, 1818-1948, and diaries of the Rev. George Kirkpatrick, 1873-1878.

