

INVENTORY DESCRIPTION

Claus Family.

Papers : 1755-1886.

Claus Papers, bound and labelled "Macdonald Papers,
Gen. Haldimand - Capt. Claus, 1777-1784".

These two volumes, one of original correspondence, the other of typed copies, were placed by mistake or misunderstanding in the Macdonald Papers. This is, I believe, quite clear from an examination of the circumstances of accession:

In 1883 the Claus Papers (see M.G. 19, F. 1) were purchased by the Department of Agriculture from the descendants of Daniel and William Claus and deposited in the Public Archives. Negotiations for the sale were carried on by the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. J.H. Pope, and Senator Plumb of Niagara and before the papers were transferred the latter examined them with the assistance of William Kirby, author of Le Chien d'Or. In the course of this examination approximately one hundred letters which were regarded as exceptionally important were removed and marked "reserved for further consideration". This was all correspondence of Col. Daniel Claus with Carleton, Haldimand and others during the American Revolution and dealt with the use of Indians during the war particularly as scouts and in raids. Senator Plumb felt that "great mischief would be made out of these papers if they fell into the wrong (presumably American) hands" and that they should not be sent to the Public Archives with the bulk of the Claus Papers. He asked William Kirby to look after them and apparently spoke of them to Sir John A. Macdonald who seems to have approved the temporary separation of the selected correspondence from the main collection.

This correspondence remained in the possession of Kirby after the death of Plumb in 1888. In 1890 John Lowe, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, wrote to Kirby saying that he had been directed by the Minister (Sir John Carling) to request that the remainder of the Claus Papers be sent to the Public Archives to complete the collection. Kirby wrote to Sir John A. Macdonald explaining the

reasons for the reservation of Senator Plumb and asking Sir John if he would look at them and decide what should be done with them. He felt that neither Lowe nor Brymner realized the contents of these papers and that it would be very dangerous for "Yankee writers" to get access to them, as they would if they were in the Public Archives. Sir John agreed to look at them and when Kirby sent the letters to him (1 Feb. 1890) endorsed them "to be looked at after the session" i.e. August, 1890.

No action was taken by Macdonald and after his death Joseph Pope never regarded them as a portion of the Macdonald Papers but as "unfinished business" of Sir John's. When the Macdonald Papers were purchased for the Public Archives, Pope retained the Claus correspondence and sent it separately to Dr. A.G. Doughty (16 Dec. 1916) saying "These documents should, I think, go at once into your possession", apparently leaving their disposal to Doughty's discretion. In acknowledging receipt of the letters (28 Dec. 1916) Dr. Doughty said that "these documents will be bound and placed in the Archives amongst other confidential papers". Finally in 1927 Dr. Doughty (in a note which was attached to the bound volume of original correspondence) explained that these letters were not purchased with the remainder of the Claus Papers, nor were they purchased with the Macdonald Papers, but they were handed to him by Sir Joseph Pope to do as he thought best with them. His conclusion was "for the present I think they should be locked up. Some day perhaps they may become a part of the collection of the Public Archives".

At some time after 1927 the volume of original correspondence and that of typed copies were placed in the Macdonald Papers but not given a volume number.

My recommendation is that now, 172 years after the last date of the correspondence and 73 years after the purchase of the Claus Papers, this volume of letters should be returned to the original collection.

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