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Dear Molly,

It was such a pleasant surprise to get your letter today, and so far from an imposition that I am starting, at any rate, to reply to it immediately. I have a very vivid recollection of your 1932 visit and seeing you in Newcastle and also going out in the tender in Belfast Lough to say goodbye on the liner! I hope that you will forgive a typewritten letter, I discovered long ago that although I don't type very fast, I type as fast as I can think and at least the result is legible. How did you manage to qualify as a doctor with such good handwriting? In England you would have failed as lacking in one essential qualification. Jack's letters used to provide an interesting three days' deciphering.

Jack died suddenly from a coronary in December 1971. It was completely unexpected as far as we were concerned, but I think now that he must have had an inkling himself, as just before we came to Canada in September he gave one of my father's watches and Timothy one of his own. He had a month or six weeks off in the summer ("extra systoles" I think, is that right). Poor Rene has never really gotten over it. She sold the Belfast house and moved to their bungalow in Newcastle and is living there now more or less on the side of Slieve Donard at Tullybrannigan. He address is 6 Slievnabrock Avenue, Newcastle. My father died in April 1970 (on his 57th wedding anniversary) and my mother last August. Dorothy's married name is Mrs. Clements and they are still living in Newry where her husband is headmaster of the High School, her address is "Hillcrest", 42 Rathfriland Road, Newry. They have one daughter Lorna who finished her PhD last summer at Imperial College, London and is now a PDF at Queen's.

I joined the Army from school in 1942 and met Maureen, an Army Nurse, in India where we got married and Michael was born. Maureen is also from Belfast and our marriage caused a certain amount of alarm and despondency in both families, first of all because my mother knew that neither of her sons would ever be old enough to get married, but also because Maureen is a Catholic – in fact we got married in India because we knew no one would ever let us get married in Belfast! However all that was 28 years ago and the families gradually got reconciled to it – needless to say our side was the slowest! The army had put me through three quarters of an engineering degree and when I came out I went to Liverpool and did Physics and then went into the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell. In 1971 I took a long hard look at myself and decided that I was in a nice comfortable rut and that the sooner I got out of it the better, so I came to Canada to be a Professor of Physics at York University. I have never regretted it although I don't think Maureen has ever forgiven me for uprooting her from Abingdon which is a delightful small town six miles from Oxford where we had lived for 17 years. I

don't really think I would like to live in Canada for ever, probably because we were really much too old when we emigrated, and I would really like to live in the south of Ireland, certainly not the north – I was offered a chair at the New University of Ulster at Coleraine about a year after we came to Canada, but in our particular situation, it would probably, incredible though it may seem to you, lead to endless trouble from the Protestant underworld were we ever to live in the north.

Michael got married just before we came to Canada and is now finishing his PhD in parasitology at Cambridge. He gave up school for a couple of years at 18, partially due to the aftermath of meningitis, but did very well when he went back. Luckily his wife is a school teacher and can keep him in the style to which he is accustomed! Our daughter Maura who is 23 came to Canada with us but went straight back to finish College, commuting across the Atlantic three times a year, and she is now teaching here. Timothy who is 20 is in his third year at York, he started off doing Physics but somehow switched to Psychology, I think he has dreams of eventually doing medicine.

Now you're up to date and we can get on with the more interesting family history. There was always a story that our family sprang from the younger son of a fairly well off farmer near Ballymoney who had a row with his parents and stormed out "without a shirt to his back". He settled 12 miles away at Cullybackey. Needless to say he was never as well off as the rest of the family. The other branch did well and the most eminent one was a high court judge in Northern Ireland up to about 1945. His son is now Lord Justice Megaw in London. Jack operated on his old mother about 20 years ago and when he went to see her later she produced an old family bible which had been found on a shelf in the chimney when the family farm house near Ballymoney had been demolished. This was bought in Ballymoney market for 4s 6d in (I think) 1740 and all the family events were recorded in it. At the start I think the name was spelt McGaw (which, Maureen says, proves that we are not really Irish at all) but at some stage in that bible they started spelling it Megaw. Sure enough the fact the one son left the house in a rage and "has never been heard of since" is faithfully recorded. Lady Megaw lent the bible to Jack and he made photocopies of the relevant pages and I think that Rene will still have them, and perhaps she could get photocopies made for you (and maybe for me too, for I would like to have them). I was talking to Wesley about this about ten years ago in New York and he remarked "Yes and it has taken us four or five generations to catch up with them!"

My grandfather was John Megaw and he was brought up in Cullybackey and became a school teacher. He was headmaster of a little school near Gilford, Co Down and married a Miss Chambers from there. They had a big family but only my father and Auntie Jo survived, I think the rest of the children were wiped out within weeks by diphtheria. They are all buried in Newmills Churchyard near Gilford. Auntie Jo died in 1942, she was a schoolteacher too and a really fabulous person. She made a trip to the States in 1936 and brought back my grandfather's brother Robert (who had a fairly big family in the States) and he was then immured in Cullybackey for the rest of his life. I always thought this was a great tragedy, for I don't think he ever saw any of his children again, the war intervened and he died before the end of it. My grandfather was born in

1852 and died, I think, in 1945. His sister Eliza lived in Cullybackey all her life and Willie Megaw is her son. She was a fabulous person too and I loved her dearly. She never married but no one ever thought any the less of her for that. Willie married a Cullybackey girl Cis (I can't remember her maiden name, but Margaret Megaw in Cullybackey could tell you). They had one daughter Jean, who is a teacher. Cis died some years ago. I have met one of Robert's children since I came to Canada. She lived in Fort Lauderdale with her son a Mr. Porter and his family and Maureen, Maura and I spent some time with them in January 1973 when I was at a meeting there. She died about a year later and I was very glad that I had had the opportunity of meeting her.

My mother's name was Agnes but she had a rather strong willed elder sister who gave all the family different names (and other birthdays – my mother apparently only found out her real birthday after she was married and had to get a birth certificate!). It was my mother's luck to be called Birdie and the rest of her sisters were Ia, Lily, Cherry, Gladys, Mollie and Ruby none of which as far as I know bore any relation to their real names! I even have a cousin who as far as I know was actually christened Birdie after my mother! Lily, Cherry, Gladys, Mollie and Ruby are still alive and Cherry lives in San Diego! Their name was Munn and Cherry, Gladys never married. One of Ruby's daughters, Joy, lives in Kincardine about 120 miles from here so we see her quite often.

Now you can tell me something! I have never been quite sure of the relationship between the other Cullybackey Megaws and me, but they are obviously on your side of the family, also the Aulds of Broughshane!

I used to go back and forth to the States when I was at Harwell and nearly always stayed in New York with Eileen and Wesley. Neil and his family visited us once in Abingdon and Malcolm spent a week end with us once. I have only managed once to get to California, that was in 1966 when I spent a short time at Cal Tech. However if we ever do get there we will certainly look you up. I expect everyone in California has more sense than ever to come to Toronto, although I have recently had Sherry Rowland from the Irvine campus up here to give a talk and W.B. Thompson from San Diego (a Canadian educated in Belfast or a Belfast man educated in Canada, I can never remember which!) is coming here in a couple of weeks, but anyway of course you must come and see us if ever you are near. Maureen is in Belfast at present, she went four weeks ago and intended to spend ten days with her mother and the rest of her 22 days in England. However when she had been there for four or five days her mother had a cerebral hemorrhage and Maureen has been looking after her. However she rang tonight to say that she would be coming back on Monday next 26th, although there is no change in her mother's condition. We will be very glad to see her back.

We have gone back to England for ten weeks every summer since we came to Canada as I am doing some research in Greenland and we have taken a house in the Isle of Wight, and I went to Greenland (via Denmark as I have some Danish associates in this work) from there. However this summer I will not be going to Greenland and we thought we might drive across Canada to Vancouver, probably a foolhardy thing to do, but I would like to try it once!

You have probably guessed that my initial impetus eased somewhat and I am finishing this letter a week after I started it, mainly due to Maura deciding that the house should be redecorated (or at least some of it) and the garden made to look reasonable before her mother returned!

I forgot to mention that my father's name was William Alexander and to confirm that John Megaw and your grandfather were first cousins.

We hope to hear from you again soon.

Best wishes,

Jim