

Title:	Letters from Agnes Fitzgibbon to Henry James Morgan, 1861		
Creator:	Agnes Fitzgibbon		
Dates of Material:	August/September, 1861	Record Group Number:	RG 652
Summary of Contents:	<p>Two letters to Henry James Morgan from Agnes Fitzgibbon, dated at Toronto, 1861. The first letter is dated August 20, 1861 and marked “private”. The letter mostly discusses a box of books written by Ferdinand Brock Tupper on Isaac Brock, and her family’s efforts to dispose of the books. The possibility of writing a biography of Colonel [James] Fitzgibbon is also mentioned.</p> <p>The second letter is dated September 1861 and mostly discusses the writings of her mother, Susanna Moodie, and aunt, Catharine Parr Traill.</p> <p>Transcripts of the letters follow.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Private Toronto August 20, 1861</p> <p>My Dear Sir,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">As Mr. Fitzgibbon is engaged the greater part of the day in his office and not very partial to writing when he comes home he generally expects(?) me to answer all private letters.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I send you by express the volumes you desire.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">These books I may say have been a thorn in our sides for many years. Mr. Fitzgibbons brother William brought them out from England about ten years ago—but dying only a few months after his return we were unconscious of their existence till the Colonel mentioned them in one of his letters.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Some years afterwards while on a visit in Belleville to my mother (Mrs. Moodie) I heard that there were some cases of books & c in Papers Office in the Court House which had been removed from the Office of the late “Clerk of the Peace” (William Fitzgibbon) and placed there.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Upon examining these I found one box to contain “Tuppers life of Sir Isaac Brock” many of which were nearly destroyed by dust and damp. I however brought them to Toronto with me.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Mr. Fitzgibbon has made various attempts to dispose of them but with no success.</p>		

During the Prince of Wales' visit to and visitation of Brocks Monument he thought they would certainly sell. We accordingly took a dozen down to...the bookseller who advertised them at five shillings a volume. They never sold one. The price was subsequently lowered to 3/9 and I heard some months ago that he had succeeded in selling one copy.

If you think there would be any possibility of disposing of them in Lower Canada Mr. Fitzgibbon would be glad to do so. I would not have entered so much into particulars about these books but hoping that if you were at any time writing to Mr. Tupper you would be kind enough to mention the facts to him.

I have no idea of the number of books now remaining as they were never wholly unpacked.

As you desire some account of Colonel Fitzgibbon's life I have packed one volume on the various places that the Colonel is mentioned...as a gallant young Irish man and subsequently as an officer.

Mr. Tupper has refrained from giving his name till he could do so as an officer...perhaps that his family might be ashamed of his being spoken of as a "common soldier" instead of that being the case we are proud of his having risen from the Ranks.

We have many materials in the house from which a memoir of the Colonel might be compiled. As he is still living I could not use them without his consent as it might clash with something he may be writing with the intention of publishing.

Should you wish it I could write to him for his views upon the subject.

He is now at Windsor Castle (one of the Military Knights). He is I think in his eighty second or third year and still healthy and strong.

With many apologies for Mr. Fitzgibbon for not writing himself.
Believe me...,
Yours truly,
Agnes Fitzgibbon.

Toronto
Sep. 1861

My dear sir,

I think I could give you a slight sketch of my Mother's early and later

	<p>life.</p> <p>“Roughing it in the Bush” will give you the first ten years of her life in Canada as it is strictly true. The names of other parties mentioned being the only fictitious part of it. As she declined giving you any account herself I must find out if she has any objection to my doing so.</p> <p>I almost wonder that you did not prefer having some account of my Aunt, Mrs. Traill, as she has written many books upon Canadian subjects. Her “Backwoods of Canada” was published as far back as 1832 and was very popular in its day. Her “Canadian Crusoes” & “Canadian Emigrants Guide” you have most likely seen.</p> <p>She has just published a botanical book upon Canadian wild flowers called I think “The Canadian Florist”. You of course are aware that neither Mamma or Mrs. Traill are Canadians by birth. They being the two younger sisters of Miss Agnes Strickland the authoress of “The Queens of England”. In fact the whole family (eight) are more or less celebrated as authors. I could not promise to send you a sketch of Mamma’s life just now.</p> <p>To tell you the honest truth I have very little time to spare with a very large family and small means. I have as much to do as it is possible for one person to accomplish. The consequence is that if I have to do anything beyond the usual routine I have either to employ some one to help me or “steal a few hours from the night”. I will however endeavour to manage to do it sooner or later. With many thanks for your informing Mr. Tupper of the fate of his books.</p> <p>Believe me Sir Yours Sincerely Agnes Fitzgibbon</p>
<p>Physical Description / Condition:</p>	<p>2 letters</p>

Other Notes:	<p>Agnes Dunbar Moodie Fitzgibbon (1833-1913) was the daughter of John and Susanna Moodie. She married Charles Thomas Fitzgibbon (son of Colonel James Fitzgibbon), a barrister, around 1850. His death in 1865 required her to find a way to support her family. She decided to compile a volume of flower illustrations, having learned how to paint from her mother. Catherine Parr Traill, her aunt, provided text for the book. In 1868, Agnes published <i>Canadian Wild Flowers</i>, one of the first serious botanical books published in Canada. While in Ottawa to sell subscriptions for her book, she met her second husband, Colonel Brown Chamberlin, whom she married in 1870. He was later appointed the Queen's Printer.</p> <p>Henry James Morgan (1842-1913) was a Canadian civil servant, lawyer, and author. He is best known for his brief biographies of well-known Canadians, including <i>Sketches of celebrated Canadians</i> (1862) and <i>The Canadian Men and Women of the Time</i> (1898).</p>		
Location:	Brock University Archives		
Source Information:	Purchased from David Ewens Books in 2018.		
Described by:	Chantal Cameron	Date:	June 2018