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COLIN MACLAURIN'S JOURNAL OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE

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edited by Bruce A. Hedman

INTRODUCTION

Colin Maclaurin (1698-1746) was Scotland's most brilliant mathematician in the eighteenth century. He occupied the chair of mathematics of the University of Edinburgh, and was an eyewitness to the events leading to that city's surrender to the Jacobite army in 1745. He compiled a journal of these events, which apparently was preserved in a file of evidence prepared for the trial of Lord Provost Archibald Stewart for treason after the rebellion. Maclaurin was a leader of the Hanoverian sympathizers who attempted to prepare Edinburgh to resist the Jacobites. This edition publishes for the first time the complete text of Maclaurin's *Journal of the 'Forty-five*.

Maclaurin's prolific publications anticipated much of the progress mathematics was to make in the next century.<sup>1</sup> However, due to his untimely death two of his most popular works appeared only posthumously. On his death bed Maclaurin dictated the final chapter of *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries*. Then *A Treatise of Algebra*, which had been circulated for twenty years as a working manuscript among his students, became the most popular algebra text in Great Britain for the next fifty years. Both were edited by Patrick Murdoch and published in 1748. The royalties benefited Maclaurin's widow and five young children. Maclaurin's *Algebra* went into a sixth edition at London in 1796.

Perhaps such rich posthumous material sparked an interest among Maclaurin's biographers as to the circumstances of his early death. Patrick Murdoch prefaced the first edition of *An Account* (London, 1748) with a 'Life and Writings of the Author'. There he blamed Maclaurin's death, which occurred on 14 June 1746, on his over-exertions to prepare

<sup>1</sup> J.V. Grabiner, *The Origins of Cauchy's Rigorous Calculus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 16-46.

Edinburgh to withstand a siege by Jacobite forces and on his subsequent flight to York in inclement weather. Alexander Carlyle, a former student of Maclaurin's, assisted him during this turmoil. He wrote of the conflict between Maclaurin and Edinburgh's lord provost over the city's defence.<sup>1</sup> Some letters of Maclaurin's during these months have survived.<sup>2</sup> But there is little primary source material available to Maclaurin's biographers from this period.

Much later there appeared in mathematical literature references to an unpublished manuscript written by Maclaurin about events in Edinburgh during September 1745. In 1919 Charles Tweedie published a private correspondence from Walter Bigger Blaikie, an Edinburgh publisher, who claimed to possess a manuscript by Maclaurin which he called 'Diary of the Siege'.<sup>3</sup> In 1989 Erik Sageng published a few sentences extracted from this document.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this edition is to make available the entire text of Maclaurin's manuscript, which is in the possession of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

*Provenance*

The Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Scotland possesses a manuscript entitled 'Mr. McLaurin's Journall of what passed relating to the defence of Edinburgh from Monday September 2nd till Monday September 16, 1745'.<sup>5</sup> It consists of five 8½ x 11 inch sheets, the cover sheet blank except for the above title, followed by four sheets written on both sides. The Library's *Catalogue of Manuscripts* records that MS 3142 was bequeathed to the Library in 1941 by Thomas Yule as part of the so-called 'Yule Collection'.<sup>6</sup> A hand-written note on the table of contents of MS 3142 records that Thomas Yule loaned this collection to Walter B. Blaikie on 23 August 1912, which explains Tweedie's reference above.

The *Catalogue* records that Thomas Yule acquired the bulk of his collection from Alexander MacDonald (1791-1850) who was the Keeper

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Carlyle, *Anecdotes and Characters of the Times*, ed. J. Kinsley (Oxford, 1973), 58-9.

<sup>2</sup> S. Mills (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Colin Maclaurin* (Nantwich, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> C. Tweedie, 'Notes on the life and works of Colin Maclaurin', *Mathematical Gazette*, ix (1919), 304.

<sup>4</sup> E. Sageng, 'Colin Maclaurin and the Foundations of the Method of Fluxions' (Princeton University, Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> NLS, Jacobite Papers, MS 3142, fos. 44-8.

<sup>6</sup> NLS, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Acquired Since 1925* (Edinburgh, 1966), 195.

of the Register of Deeds and Records in Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> MacDonald was elected to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1824, and was curator of their Museum from 1837. Here we can only presume that MacDonald salvaged these documents, perhaps from the Record Office in Edinburgh.

#### *Authorship*

In spite of a century's gap in the recorded whereabouts of this document there can be little doubt concerning its authorship, based on internal evidence. It is written in Maclaurin's distinctively round hand, which accords with his known manuscripts. The cover sheet bears his signature in full, and the text, written in the third person, refers to him by initials 'Mr. M\_L\_n'. The activities set forth accord with what we know from Maclaurin's letters and other evidence.

#### *Date*

Precise dating of this manuscript is more difficult. It is written in the form of a day-by-day journal, beginning with an entry for 2 September 1745, and ending with a final entry on 16 September 1745. Yet, it has a neatness and uniformity of purpose which bespeak a single writing, not a daily diary. Obviously, its composition lay between 16 September 1745 and Maclaurin's death on 14 June 1746.

I suggest that its date is early, lying closer to the earlier bound. In this *Journal* Maclaurin twice refers to himself only by his initials 'Mr. M\_L\_n'. Four times he relates conversations between 'one of the Volunteers' and the lord provost or General Guest. Presumably this is a device to guard his own anonymity in conversations he was privy to. I suggest that Maclaurin wrote this account after the army of Charles Edward Stuart entered Edinburgh on 18 September and before Maclaurin fled to York twenty days later. Prince Charles gave the Volunteers who had organized against him twenty days either to make submission to his government or to flee the city. During this interval Maclaurin settled his wife and young children in Dalkeith and made himself ready to ride to York. This is the only period during which Maclaurin was in any peril from Jacobite reprisals and so in need of anonymity. The signed cover sheet could have been added later.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, 189.

#### *Purpose*

The consistent theme running through these entries is the lord provost's hindrance of the Volunteers. The entry of 2 September complained that the lord provost 'ridiculed' proposals to defend the city. On 3 September he refused to deprive Jacobite sympathizers of arms. The entry of 6 September complained that the lord provost would neither allow the Volunteers to choose their own officers nor appoint them himself. He refused to lend his name to a call-up of volunteers to defend the city. On 7 September the lord provost refused to order work done on the walls without a time-consuming financial estimate. On 11 September the lord provost blocked requests for hand grenades from castle stores. On 15 September the lord provost delayed a vital order to load the cannon, then did not provide the necessary sentinels from the town guard. On 16 September the lord provost refused to order the removal of the cannon to the castle, so that they fell into Jacobite hands.

I suggest that Maclaurin wrote this *Journal* to chronicle how Provost Archibald Stewart thwarted the defence of Edinburgh. He may have wanted to leave this indictment behind him before he left Edinburgh. Had he written it in York, there would have been no need for the third person anonymity.

The Highland army of Charles Edward Stuart left Edinburgh for England on 31 October 1745. On 13 November 1745 the officers of State returned to Edinburgh, as did Maclaurin on 16 November. Archibald Stewart was charged with 'neglect of duty, misbehavior in public office, and violation of trust and duty', and sent to London that month for trial before a cabinet council.<sup>1</sup> He was remanded to appear before the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh on 23 January 1746 on a charge of high treason. Had Maclaurin's *Journal* been written in November 1745, or after, as a deposition against Stewart, it would not have been so guarded in the third person.

The *Catalogue* of the National Library of Scotland says of this collection of Jacobite papers, 'The majority of these papers relating to the '45 deal with the surrender of Edinburgh to Prince Charles Edward, and appear to belong to a file made up for the trial of Provost Archibald Stewart'.<sup>2</sup> Presumably, this chronicle of events Maclaurin left behind became incorporated as background material for the prosecution along

<sup>1</sup> James Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh: Its History, Its People, and its Places* (London, 1880), 321

<sup>2</sup> NLS, *Catalogue*, 195.

with signed depositions. This file may have been lodged in the 'Register' office in Edinburgh from where nearly a century later MacDonald rescued it from oblivion.

*Editorial Method*

Original spelling, capitalisation, and punctuation have been retained throughout.

**Mr. McLaurin's Journall of what passed relating to the defense of Edinburgh from Monday, September 2nd till Monday September 16th.<sup>1</sup>**

September 2nd. The accounts from the North becoming more and more unfavorable, above Twenty gentlemen of known good affection to his Majesty and the Government met at Mrs. Clark's<sup>2</sup> who agreed to apply to the Lord Provost that he would give the order for putting the town in as good a state of defense as possible with all expedition. It was complained of in this meeting that the application which had been made a week before to his Lordship had not met with due encouragement but that the persons who waited on his Lordship and their zeal had been ridiculed and made the subject of insipid jokes. The company resolved that whatever discouragement they might meet with from those whose duty was to have animated them they should meet frequently and promote to the utmost of their power whatever might tend to the defense of the town. In the meantime they appointed two of their number B\_\_e S\_\_t and Mr. M\_L\_\_n<sup>3</sup> to wait on the Provost next morning with a general instruction to beg he would see to the defense of the town and to offer their assistance and three particular instructions: 1) That he would order the making of molds for bullets, it having been found on Friday that all in the shops had been bought up of late by cadies who had been sent for them. 2) That the fluence of the north loch by which the water issues from it should be shut and secured, that it might fill up. 3) That they should propose this to his Lordship the making a Distinction between the Inhabitants of known good affection and such as were suspected when he came to entrust them with the Town's arms and take proper measures that the City should not be in danger from within as in 1715.<sup>4</sup> Lord Provost

<sup>1</sup> For background about the defence of Edinburgh see I.G. Brown & H. Cheape, *Witness to Rebellion: John Maclean's Journal of the 'Forty-Five and the Penicuik Drawings* (East Linton, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Possibly in Gray's Close. Cf. J. Gilhooley, *A Directory of Edinburgh in 1752* (Edinburgh, 1988), 12, 68.

<sup>3</sup> The second of these names is clearly Maclaurin himself. The first can be tentatively identified as Walter Scot, resident bailie of Leith. The first part of the name, 'B\_\_e', appears to be a title like Maclaurin's 'Mr', the most likely title being 'Baillie'. If so, Scot is the only bailie whose name fits. The current Edinburgh magistrates are listed in the *Scots Magazine*, Sept. 1744, p. 443.

<sup>4</sup> In 1715 some Edinburghers with Jacobite sympathies broke through the sallyport of the Castle's western defenses, but were beaten back by the garrison. This prompted the construction in the 1720s and 1730s of the zig-zag artillery fortifications along the north and west sides of the Castle. Cf. C. Tabraham, *Edinburgh Castle* (Musselburgh, 1997),

gave a satisfactory answer to the first two of these, but as to the third he did not give the satisfaction desired, but after a good deal of reasoning he said that if the town came to be attacked he would so far make a distinction as to entrust the Town's arms with the most substantial burghers, and this was all that could be obtained from him. He said that if 1,000 men had a mind to get into this Town he could not see how they could hinder them. In answer to this the number of Trades lads in Edinburgh, of the Gentlemen who would associate to save the town, the unskillfulness the Highlanders had always shown in attacking stone walls, their want of artillery and being ill armed, with the assistance that would be got from the Dragoons in all probability were urged. It was insisted that our doing something was requisite to save the reputation of the town to thwart the enemy from coming this way and to raise a spirit in the country. To this he answered that to pretend to do when we could do little was to expose us to ridicule, other discouraging expressions were used but at the end he said he would be glad of advice from sensible burghers and have regard to it.

Little material passed till September 5 when the same company with some addition of other gentlemen met at the same place. And now the danger appearing more imminent they entered into an Association as Volunteers to serve for the defense of the place at the hazard of their lives and fortunes under the direction of the Lord Provost. This was signed by all present and by 100 before twelve the next day. They appointed some of their number to present this to the Lord Provost to desire that they might be allowed to choose their officers and that he would apply to General Guest for arms to them. They were likewise ordered to entreat that the parapet of the wall might be cleared which in many places had been stopped up with stone and lime to prevent smuggling, that stairs should be made for getting up to it at proper distances, that cannon should be got from the ships to be placed on the flanks and gates.

September 6. The Lord Provost declared now and always afterwards that he would insist on the privileges of his office and did not leave the nomination of the officers to the Volunteers but allowed them to make a list of 30 or 40 or more from which he would choose them. He walked with some of the Magistrates and Volunteers about a part of the wall, he said he could not see but if 2,000 had a mind to get into the town they must succeed. After looking at a part of the wall he desired Mr. M\_L\_n, one of the volunteers, to take the trouble to make a Plan of

it which he promised to do.

It was thought proper to draw up an Article of News concerning the Association to encourage others to join and rouse the lethargic spirit of the country. After it was written it was thought decent and dutiful to show it to the Provost the words that 'this proposal was accepted by the Lord Provost' were altered by him. He would have it that the Lord Provost 'acquiesced in this proposal.' This alteration was much regretted by those who were sincerely zealous in this cause being sensible that in so critical a time more than acquiescence was requisite in the magistrates to animate the burghers and foreseeing as it happened that the Trades would not be warm when the magistrates were so cool. The Volunteers however soon rose to 400. The expenses of the work proposed were much talked about and complained of at this time and afterwards.

September 7. The Plan of the wall was made ready and presented to the Council at 6 o'clock, the weak places were pointed out and what was most necessary to be done proposed. The Lord Provost desired that an estimate might be made of the expense. But it was answered that could not easily be done and would require time. It was proposed the flanks should be first taken care of as the time which the rebels would take to come to Edinburgh was uncertain. That the doing as much as we could did not hinder capitulating. That there was a double chance of relief either from Sir John Cope or the Dutch so that holding out one day or two might save the town. But that dispatch was necessary above all things and all the workmen that could be got ought to be employed.

September 8. The workmen cleared a part of the parapet, but the number was very small for this day and indeed for the whole week till Sept 15. Of this complaints were made every night but to little or no purpose. Sometimes there were only two dozen when there ought to have been as many hundreds, for now the rebels were at Perth. It was found that the parapet when cleared was too narrow in several places and that it was necessary to add to it by scaffolding. This was done in some places but so few men were employed that in others it was not executed.

Sept 9. The work went on but slowly some of the embrasures on the flanks, for the cannon and in the curtains for the musketeers were opened.

Sept 10. A scheme of what was most necessary to be done was drawn up by a Volunteer abovementioned and shown to General Guest and at his

desire to an old officer of the Dragoons being approved by him. It was presented to the Lord Provost. It was insisted that a high house which rakes a part of the wall near the Potteraw should be possessed by a party and communication made from the wall to the house to relieve or bring off the men as occasion might require. But this though much insisted on was not yielded till Sept 16th when Captain Murray<sup>1</sup> approved of it and then though it was begun there was no time to finish it.

Unhappily at this time the Election of the deacons so much employed the trades that few came to work on the wall and it never appeared that after repeated complaints proper authority was employed to oblige them to work in this time of greatest danger.

Sept 11. Some cannon were got from ships and it having been earnestly recommended to Lord Provost that some hand grenades should be got and the City Guard and Volunteers taught to use them a message was sent to the General and by him to the Castle but it was answered that they had not above 200 and could not spare them. Afterwards however one of the Volunteers surprised that there should be so few in such a garrison so well provided with stores made a visit to the castle and was told by the storekeeper that he had 5 times that number and was desired to tell the Provost that he had 200 at his service if he had a mind for them. The message was delivered but the grenades never appeared. We found 23 that had lain in a chest since 1715 in the Town's Armory, but they were never examined.

A ditch that had been ordered at Wallace's Tower had been carried on right for some time but was afterwards by some mistake or bad advice cast on the wrong side of the dike. This day this was stopped and a remedy proposed but not executed for want of time.

Sept 12. The work went on slowly.

Sept 13. The day of the election of the deacons there was very little done on the wall, the deacons could not be got. Some houses in St. Mary's Wynd that had large windows into the town were shown to some Magistrates and afterwards to the Provost but no orders were given about them. This day the carriages of the cannon were examined, and any

<sup>1</sup> Captain James Murray, presumably of the Edinburgh Regiment, is also mentioned in another manuscript among NLS, Jacobite Papers, MS 3142, entitled 'Mr. Grossett's Account of some Particulars which happened upon the Advance of the Rebels towards Edinburgh in September 1745', fos. 5, 6

necessary reparations ordered.

Sept 14th. Little work on the walls and scaffolding. The cannon were all proved and the shot got ready.

Sept 15. The Lord Provost brought Captain Murray to town to give his advice, and not till this day he ordered some works within the gates which were begun immediately. There was more men employed this day than ever before and everybody seemed to exert themselves. But the Lord Provost having never named the Field Officers to the Volunteers they were now nine Independent Companies and upon a motion to go out with Collonell Gardiner they unhappily divided in opinion which produced some heat among them. A most unlucky signal was pitched on to call them to their arms, the ringing of the Fire bell which never fails to raise a panic in Edinburgh. This happened in time of divine service, the churches dismissed in confusion and terror and this was the first appearance of fear in the place and this signal ought not to have been proposed or allowed by the magistrates in such a time of the Rebels not being far from us.

This day most of the cannon were carried to the Flanks and in this as much regard as possible was had to the weakest places so that there were three on St. Mary's Wynd which raked it. About six one of the Volunteers with the chief of the Bombadiers came to the Provost to have an order to load them, he kept them waiting until eight, and then desired another to sign the order for him. They began, though in the night. But after they came to the Bristol port they were obliged to wait from half an hour after ten till near one for want of a Centinelle to place on the loaded gun though they sent messages for Centinells to the Guard and Council. This put a stop on their progress that night. The guns were all loaded with small shot and as they flanked the curtains and gates it was the more dangerous to leave them without Centinells. During all that time while the rest of the wall was guarded and All Is Well was heard go round regularly there were no centinells on the Bristol port to the west port but one or two below.

Sept 16. The work went on cheerfully till four or five at night. A work was thrown up to defend the pass to Moutresay.<sup>1</sup> Some gates were built up. Some more cannon were got and carried to the Bastrons and Gates, we were told that only five gunners were got at one o'clock but were promised that pains should be taken to get more.

<sup>1</sup> Moultries Hill, the site of the present General Register House.

Betwixt two and three o'clock some burghers were said to be carrying about a petition to the Magistrates for subscriptions praying the Town should capitulate. The Alarm being great at the westport, the guns there were loaded and the other works pressed on so that they were almost finished when an account came that a meeting in the New Church had agreed to capitulate, One of the Volunteers called on the Provost to know what was to be done to the cannon, but was told that his Lordship had not time to speak to him. The call of All Is Well did not go round the wall this night as the former and the Town seemed to be quit of its defense. The volunteers delivered their arms into the Castle.