Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: Letters and Immigrants 1

I Immigrant Epistolarity

Introduction 31

1 Traditions of Inquiry 33

2 Forming Selves in Letters 57

3 Writing with a Purpose: Immigrant Epistolarity and the Culture of Emigration 92

4 Using Postal Systems: Transnational Networks on the Edge of Modernity 140

5 Establishing Voice, Theme, and Rhythm 162

6 When Correspondence Wanes 201

II Four Lives in Letters

Introduction 227

7 Thomas Spencer Niblock: A Dialogue of Respectability and Failure 230

8 Catherine Grayston Bond: Letter-Writing as the Practice of Existential Accounting 257

9 Mary Ann Wodrow Archbald: Longing for Her “Little Isle” from a Farm in Central New York 281

10 Dr. Thomas Steel: The Difficulties of Achieving the Reunited Family 309
Abbreviations for Archives and Repositories Consulted 337
Notes 339
Collections of Letters Consulted 399
Index 403
About the Author 422

All illustrations appear as a group following p. 166.