

SECTION VIII

LETTERS AND PAPERS: 1792

COMPLAINT AGAINST INDIAN SLAVE

A John Askin Ecuyer, un des Juge de paix de Sa Majesté pour le District de Hesse.

Le plintif Michel houde demeurant dans la Côte du Nord'est de la paroisse de S<sup>te</sup> Anne disant qui lui a Eté volé plusieurs articles che'lui, et qu'un Sauvage l'a averti, qu'un panis Nommé francois, appartenant ci devant à hipolite Campaux, avoit les articles qui lui manques, deux Couvertes deux chemises, et d'autre Butin, apres quoit le dit Michel houde a Eté dans une Loge Sauvage derrière che' B<sup>te</sup> Meloche, ou il Etoit, et a reConnu, une parti du dit Butin, En présence de charles l'Espérance, et qu'il N'a osé le prandre Crainte, que le dit panis, Ne Serait En défances, Comme il Etoit armé d'un Couteau; C'est ce qui oblige le dit plintif de demander Justice.

Détroit le 3<sup>e</sup> Janvier 1792

présence de  
F. D<sup>x</sup> Bellcour

Sa  
Michel X houde  
marque

Personnalment a Comparu devant moi John Askin Ecuyer un des Juges à Paix pour Sa Majesté dans Le Distric de Hesse Micheal Houde qui fait Serment que ce qu'il à représenté per sa requete L'autre Coté est Juste et Veritable Au Detroit Le 3 de Janvier 1792.

John Askin  
J. P. D. H.

Sa  
Micheal X Houde  
marque

*Endorsed:* Au Detroit Le 3 Janvier 1792 Information et Plainte de Micheal Houde Contre un Panis Nommé Francois de lui avoir volé  
Arrangé

*Translation*

To John Askin, Esquire, one of His Majesty's justices of the peace for the District of Hesse.

Came the plaintiff, Michael Houde,<sup>1</sup> a resident of the North-East Coast of Ste. Anne's parish, saying that his house was robbed of several articles, and that an Indian told him that a panis named François formerly belonging to Hypolyte Campau,<sup>2</sup> had the said articles, namely, two bed covers, two shirts, and some other things. On hearing this, the said Michael Houde went to the Indian's hut in the rear of the house of Baptiste Meloche<sup>3</sup> and there identified some of the said goods in the presence of Charles Lespérance,<sup>4</sup> but that he did not dare take them as he had no weapons and the panis was armed with a knife. Therefore the said plaintiff demands redress according to law.

<sup>1</sup> Noël Houde and Ann Lefebvre lived in the parish of Manou, in Perche, France. Their son, Louis Houde, born in 1617, came to Canada and married at Quebec on Jan. 12, 1655, Magdelene Boucher, a native of that place. Their great-grandson, Michael Houde, married at Lotbinière, Sept. 9, 1765, Mary Magdelene Le May, daughter of Francis Le May *dit* Poudrier and Mary Louisa Perreault. They came to Detroit, where Michael was buried, Aug. 20, 1793. He had a son, Michael, who married on Feb. 4, 1788, Mary Meny, widow of Jean Baptiste Billiau *dit* Lespérance. Michael died before 1804. We have been unable to determine whether the father or the son was the complainant here noted. Information adapted from Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Hypolyte Campau was the son of Jean Baptiste Campau and Catherine Perthuis, and the grandson of Jacques Campau and Cecilia Catin. He was born at Detroit, May 13, 1741, and married here on April 11, 1768, Mary Ann Louisa Pepin *dit* Descardonetts, widow of Pierre Boyer. Hypolyte's name appears in the census rolls of Detroit of 1779 and 1782. Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The Detroit Meloches were descended from Francis Meloche, who married Mary Blouin and lived in the city of Cogne, France. Their son, Francis, born in Cogne, married at Montreal, Oct. 25, 1700, Mary Mouflet, a native of Lachine. They had two sons, Pierre, born Sept. 1, 1701, and Anthony, born in 1725. Pierre married at Lachine, Aug. 16, 1724, Jane Caron, daughter of Vital Caron and Mary Perthuis. The young couple came to Detroit shortly after their marriage and settled on a farm east of the fort now known as Private Claim 7. Jean Baptiste Meloche, a son of Pierre and Jane Caron, was born here Feb. 19, 1741. On Nov. 11, 1760, he married Mary Louisa Robert, daughter of Anthony Robert and Mary Louisa Becquemont. Jean Baptiste obtained title to the farm from his father, and here he spent his entire life. He operated a gristmill on Parent Creek, better known by the name of Bloody Run, where the British troops under Captain Dalzell were defeated on the night of July 31, 1763. Of this affair Mrs. Meloche in old age dictated an account which is published in *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, VIII, 340-44. To Jean Baptiste Meloche and his wife nine children were born. He was buried Sept. 16, 1820. His wife was living as late as 1824. Information adapted from Denissen, *op. cit.*, and *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, VIII, 340.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Lespérance was the son of Charles Moran *dit* Grimard and Mary Meny, the wife of Jean Baptiste Billiau *dit* Lespérance. The union of his parents was an adulterous one, and Charles, born, Dec. 25, 1775, assumed the name of his mother's lawful husband, Billiau *dit* Lespérance. He married at Sandwich, Feb. 24, 1800, Mary Pitre, daughter of Jean Baptiste Pitre and Mary Frances St. Cosme. They left nine children. Denissen, *op. cit.*

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

Detroit, January 3, 1792.  
F. D<sup>x</sup> Bellecour<sup>5</sup> witness

his  
Michael X Houde  
mark

Before me, John Askin Esquire, one of His Majesty's justices of the peace for the District of Hesse, personally appeared Michael Houde who certifies on oath that his complaint for redress as set forth on the other side is true and just.

John Askin J. P. D. H.

his  
Michael X Houde  
mark

*Endorsed:* Detroit, January 3, 1792. Information and complaint of Michael Houde against a panis named François of having stolen from him.  
Arranged.

COMPLAINT AGAINST SAMUEL WESTON

Edward Buttler of the New Settlement says that he made an Agreem<sup>t</sup> with Samuel Weston of said Place About the begining of the year 1791 that he Buttler was to Crop for s<sup>d</sup> year with s<sup>d</sup> Weston on shares thats' to say too have half the Produce of the Land Cleared by s<sup>d</sup> Buttler & a third of that Cleared before he Joined s<sup>d</sup> Weston. That in July he thinks Mess<sup>rs</sup> Meldrom & Park had a boat cast away at the New Settlement on her return from S<sup>t</sup>Duskey they men of which got on the Island called the Westerward Sisters. That s<sup>d</sup> Samuel Weston stole things out of s<sup>d</sup> Boat which was discovered by a man named Hale & that a man named John

<sup>5</sup> Francis Xavier Trotier *dit* Bellecour was born at Batiscan, Feb. 5, 1743. He was descended from Antoine Trotier, Sieur Des Ruisseaux, who was born in the city of Ige, France, and coming to Canada, married at Three Rivers, Sept. 2, 1663, Catherine Lefebvre, daughter of Pierre Lefebvre and Jane Aunois. Francis D<sup>x</sup> Bellecour (as he habitually signed his name) came to Detroit, where he had numerous family connections, about the year 1770. A few years later he located at the pinery at the mouth of Pine River (modern St. Clair, Mich.), where he traded with the Indians, and where prior to the year 1780 he was in charge of the interests of Governor Patrick Sinclair. In 1792 he was again living at Detroit, where he held the office of notary. Before coming to Detroit he had married at Quebec, June 18, 1764, Mary Magdelene de Lusignan, a native of that place. They had two children, a son, born at Detroit in 1771, who died in infancy, and a daughter, Mary Magdelene Bellecour, born at the mouth of Pine River, March 18, 1774. She was twice married, her first husband being Francis Xavier Moreau *dit* Duplessy and her second, Louis Theophile Barthe, son of Charles Andrew Barthe and Mary Therese Campau. Denissen, *op. cit.*

M<sup>c</sup>Leane<sup>6</sup> Advised & asisted s<sup>d</sup> Weston to make his Escape to the Colonies & since took Possession of his Lands & Even did not divide the Crop with s<sup>d</sup> Buttler as was agreed on between him & Weston Detroit Jan<sup>y</sup> the 14<sup>th</sup> 1792.

*Endorsed:* Detroit Jan<sup>y</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 1792 Complaint of Edward Buttler Agns<sup>t</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Leane relative to Westons going Away.

INDEBTEDNESS OF JOHN ASKIN

Montreal 24 January 1792

Dear Sir The House has wrote you this day handing acc<sup>ts</sup> Current from which it appears that the Balance will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April next £20217 exclusive of any Rum you may have taken to account. Sensible that the Interest of so large a Balance must for ever keep you back & whatever the sum may be which you shall finaly fall short being to revert against the late firm of Todd & McGill I wish much to put matters on such footing after the 10<sup>th</sup> of April as may give you a fair chance of unburthening yourself, more especially as our present House is to be somewhat altered by the introduction of my Brother Andrew<sup>7</sup> as a Partner; and as the House are to benefit by the transactions they are to have with you it is but just they should run the risk of any eventual loss or disappointment, without the guarantee of Todd & McGill as has hitherto been the Case.

In order to Effect these purposes I propose that you shall pay off so much of your account next Season as will leave the balance £15000 net and this Sum I shall withdraw from the Books of the present concern altogether giving you five years without Interest reserving only to go towards payment of it annualy so much as you may remitt more

<sup>6</sup> John McLean was a loyalist, who received a grant of land on the north side of Lake Erie below Amherstburg in 1787. See Essex Hist. Soc., *Papers and Addresses*, III, 72.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew McGill, younger brother of James, was actively engaged in the Northwest trade. Prior to this reorganization he had been operating in partnership with John McGill. He died, August 1, 1805, aged forty-nine years. See *Can. Archives Report*, 1889, xvii.

than your future account may come to with our new House. And as it may be necessary to obtain the assistance of a Friend to make up the £5217 the Season ensuing, I am willing that such Friend shall have a claim on your fixed property for so much as he may lend you equal to us, I do not mean in proportion to our respective Sums but that if £500 or £1000 is lent you, that we shall draw for no more when the fixed property is realized than the Person who may have lent you that or any other Sum sufficient to bring the present balance to £15000.

As this appears to me as liberal as can be expected and that I think there will be no great risk to the Friend who may assist you I should hope you will find no great difficulty in entering into & making good such an agreement as certainly you ought not to want more than £1000 and probably less if your Trade proves any thing tolerable.

It does not yet appear that the Seat of your new Government is fixed nor do I think it will be done until Governor Simcoe<sup>8</sup> has visited the different Settlements but I confess to you that I do not expect he will make choice of Detroit, nor would I advise your building any hopes on such foundation; he says Mr Robertson who is of the Executive Council will be out in the Spring but Mr Robertson himself does not say any thing of it to us.

I most sincerley wish & hope our Government may be able to mediate between the Indians & Americans, if the later are disposed for Peace they must relinquish the idea of getting the Posts and this I am afraid they will not do;

<sup>8</sup> John Graves Simcoe was commissioned adjutant in the Thirty-fifth Regiment, March 27, 1772. He served in the American Revolution, being appointed in Oct., 1777, commander of the Queen's Rangers, which command he held until the close of the war, subsequently publishing at Exeter, in 1787, a history of its operations. In 1791 he became the first lieutenant-governor of the province of Upper Canada, and in this capacity played the leading rôle in the organization of the government of the province. As an administrator Governor Simcoe aroused lively opposition. He was zealous in upholding the interests of his country, and pursued a belligerent policy toward the United States which, according to one authority, was responsible for his recall from the governorship. He returned to England in 1794, served from 1794 to 1797 as commandant of St. Domingo, and in 1806 was appointed commander-in-chief of India, but died before entering upon this station. See Ontario Bureau of Archives *Thirteenth Report*, 172, and references there cited.

be that as it may a representation signed by our House & by Frobishers & Forsyths was delivered Governor Simcoe & sent to M<sup>r</sup> Hammond,<sup>9</sup> Minister at Congress from Great Britain pointing out some incongruities in the Treaty of Peace which if properly used at this juncture may have some Effect towards obtaining anew line.

I beg my sincerest respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin & your family in which I am joined by M<sup>rs</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Gill & believe me ever Dear Askin Your affectionate Friend

James M<sup>c</sup>Gill

*Endorsed:* Montreal Jan<sup>y</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> 1792 M<sup>r</sup> James M<sup>c</sup>Gill to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> the 22<sup>d</sup> April 1792

[At bottom of first page] John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Rec<sup>d</sup> March 18<sup>th</sup> Private

FROM DAVID MEREDITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Woolwich March 20<sup>h</sup> 1792

My dear Sir, M<sup>rs</sup> Meredith intending writing fully to Yourself, and her Mother; I can have little to say only the pleasure of acknowledging Your letter which enclosed a Bill from M<sup>r</sup> Fraser, the which I thank you having noticed; but as the House of Leith and Shepherd furnished me my Wine and regulary charged me with it, I could not conceive there was any account left; nor can I possibly recollect; assisted with my Servants Memory, the having at any time had more than One Gallon of M<sup>r</sup> Fraser's Wine, the which is accounted for in my Expence Book, paid to Leith & Shepherd in their own Statement: it appears odd therefore

<sup>9</sup> George Hammond was born in 1763 and at the age of twenty, while still an undergraduate at college, entered the diplomatic service in the capacity of secretary to David Hartley, who was representing the British government in the peace negotiations at Paris with France and the American colonies. Hammond was sent to Philadelphia in 1791 as the first minister from Great Britain to the United States. He remained here until 1795, and although his service was marked by much dissension, he retained the confidence of his superiors and returned to England to assume the office of under secretary for foreign affairs. Until his retirement from public life in 1828 he continued to play a prominent rôle in British diplomacy and politics. While in America he married, in 1793, Margaret Allen of Philadelphia. He died in London, April 23, 1853. Much of his correspondence while minister to the United States is printed in *Amer. State Papers, Foreign Affairs*. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

that any debt should start up after my leaving the place, when I was so minute, and accurate in the discharge of all ere I left Detroit; I nevertheless thank You and shall thro' Mr Robinson reimburse the Sum. We are here so buisied in Military concerns preparing for a Grand Artillery Review which takes place in July before the King, Duchess of York, &c that I have scrace [scarce] time to sit down during the Day—and am too tired at Night to begin writing, however I would not allow the Vessells to Sail for Quebec without scrawling you a few lines. We have begun An entire New System of Discipline, Suggested to the British army by Col. Dundas<sup>10</sup> which is approved of by His Majesty to be carried into Effect. We are to have the honor of shewing it first to the King with all its Thunder of Artillery, and a most tremendous conflict is to take place. As I knew you are fond of *les concerns Militaires*, At a future period you shall have a detail of the whole Proceedings, All our old Bucks from the Top to the bottom are now under Strict Drill Three times a day, and Many Wry faces are made at the obligation of undergoing the Discipline *comme un Jeune Recruit*; Our Uniform is to undergo Some alteration the Collar is to be a perfect Dress one, So high as to touch the Ears, Our Regimental Hat to be the Prussian one in Compliment to the Duchess of York—viz a Round one with high Crown, Rich Gold Band and Plume of Red Feathers—the Sword Knot a very Rich one—in Short we are to be turned quite Topsy turvy, I wish His Grace would not be so fickle, as such alterations are attended with heavy Expences, therefore by no means Acceptable,

My dear Archange will tell you that our little Anne is growing a fine Child, She now takes great Notice. You will have heard the Death of the Emperour of Germany who is Suspected to have been poisoned by some National

<sup>10</sup> General Sir David Dundas, born 1735, died 1820. He entered the army at the age of fifteen years and on March 18, 1809, succeeded the Duke of York as commander-in-chief. His system of drill, modeled after the Prussian system and published in 1792, was quickly adopted for the entire army. Prior to this time there had been no uniformity in the British army and no two regiments moved in unison. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*



of France, everthing in that Unhappy Country is in the utmost Confusion, and the Emigrants under Conduct of the ExPrinces are gaining ground daily—their Army is become numerous and it is Supposed will enter France in about Two Months. The Empress of Prussia and King of Sweden have declared their intentions of giving Strong Support of Troops and Money to the Prince's Cause. England remains a peacefull Spectator, replete with Comfort overflowing with the Commerce of the World, And Rich most infernally rich, for independant of Newspaper puffing, the sage politicians declare and pronounce, that the Publick Credit of this Country was never at such a height. Our Worthy Minister has repealed certain Taxes, Viz—that respecting Female Servants. Also a part of the Window lights and the additional Tax upon Candles—and has it in contemplation to bring others before the House for reduction—Shewing at one View that the flourishing State of Publick finance will at present admit of such ease to the Burthens of the People.

I heard some little time Since from Cap<sup>t</sup> Mercer he is gone to join his Regm<sup>t</sup> now stationed in Ireland Am told that after the Review we the 1<sup>st</sup> Batt<sup>n</sup> are to be broke up into Detachment[s]. but to what Part our destination is to lead us. there is at present no Saying. Our Gracious Duke<sup>11</sup> is not very communicative nor are his Orders long known ere he expects them executed, therefore with Such a Man it is best to be always ready for the Move, when the Battalion dashes off again, Abroad, We will have the pleasure to see you in Canada, for I assurdly give it the preference, but I hope to have done with [torn] Fag of a Subaltern line ere that Period. [torn] [l]adder of Seniority is so long to creep

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Augustus, Duke of York and second son of George III and Queen Charlotte, born Aug. 16, 1763, died Jan. 5, 1827. He was destined for the army from his earliest years, and from April 3, 1798, to Jan. 27, 1809, served as commander-in-chief. His military talents were quite ordinary, but the influence he wielded for the reformation of abuses in the military establishment was of great value to the nation.

He married on Sept. 29, 1791, Princess Frederica Charlotte Ulrica Catherine, eldest daughter of Frederick William II of Prussia. They soon separated, and she lived thereafter in retirement until her death, Aug. 6, 1820. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

up [torn] it takes much time to ascend the Su [torn] When I write again shall have more time and I hope More Interesting Subject to Comment upon but this continual drilling and Exercise drives for the present all other Matters out of my head. I shall only further request my Esteem to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin & Family—with Remembrance to the Commodore M<sup>rs</sup> Grant &c &, and likewise to Friends in General. I have wrote M<sup>r</sup> D Smith<sup>12</sup> by this opportunity. be assur'd that I am at all times and in every Situation

My dear Sir, Your very Ob<sup>d</sup> H Servant  
with affection

D Merideth

*Addressed:* John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit  
To the care of Mess Todd & McGill  
Merchants Montreal Upper Canada

*Endorsed:* Woolwich March 20<sup>th</sup> L<sup>t</sup> Meradith to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> July & answ<sup>d</sup> Early in the same fall I cant recollect the month

FROM WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO JOHN ASKIN

London 26<sup>th</sup> March 1792

Dear Sir, Your letter of 6<sup>th</sup> of October is now before me,

<sup>12</sup> David William Smith was born Sept. 4, 1764. His father, John Smith, was major and (subsequently) lieutenant colonel of the Fifth Regiment of Foot, and the son grew up in the regiment. On Sept. 5, 1780, he was commissioned ensign, and subsequently attained the rank of captain. From 1790 to 1792 Major Smith was commandant of Detroit, and from the latter date until his death in 1795 he commanded Fort Niagara. The son was with his regiment at both stations. While still holding his commission he was appointed surveyor general of the province of Upper Canada, was elected to the provincial parliament, and held, in succession, a number of offices, including that of speaker of the House. Beginning in 1799 he alternated between Canada and England, finally remaining permanently in the mother country. He died there, May 9, 1837. In his later years he served as manager of the estates of the Duke of Northumberland; probably through the Duke's influence, he was knighted in 1821. He seems to have been a man of fair ability, with much capacity for cultivating powerful friendships. In 1799 he published at London a *Short Topographical Description of His Majesty's Province of Upper Canada*. At a later time he prepared a caustic criticism of *The Travels in Canada of the Duc La Rochefoucault-Liancourt*, which with editorial annotation was published at Toronto in 1917 as the *Thirteenth Report of the Ontario Bureau of Archives*. A collection of his personal manuscripts is preserved in the Toronto Reference Library. See Ontario Bureau of Archives, *Thirteenth Report*, 5-6, and *Simcoe Papers*, I, 195. On Smith's election to Parliament from the Detroit district in 1792, see *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, V, 17-31.

and as the spring vessels are going in two or three days, I take the opportunity of replying. We have long ago been made acquainted with the complete defeat, & as it would seem, dreadful slaughter of the American army<sup>13</sup> (of whom you spoke) by way of New York—and since by way of Canada. For the sake of our interest, but still more for that of humanity, it is to be earnestly wished that this barbarous & destructive war might have an end. Something will probably be done, but what, conjecture has not yet even rumoured. It is said the Americans will *insist* upon the posts as the means of enabling them to chastise with effect the Indians; while on the other hand, there appears no disposition *here* to comply with such a requisition—at the same time a new line has been suggested for a frontier between the Indians & Americans—it is to run from lake Ontario up the Genesee river to its source—thence into the obscure stream from whence the Alleghenny takes its rise, & following the windings of that river till it joins, or more properly acquires the name of the Ohio, is then to follow the course of that noble stream to the Mississippi: this you will perceive to be the old boundary line of Canada<sup>14</sup> somewhat enlarged. M<sup>r</sup> Todd & I have had some conversation with M<sup>r</sup> Dundas's secretary on this subject, but what will be done, men in office you know are too cautious to say. We were also been with M<sup>r</sup> Pitt, together with some other Canada gentlemen, on the subject of making Montreal a port; which probably will be done, in order more effectually to facilitate the communication between the two provinces—the interests of which (particularly the Upper) seem to engross a good deal of ministers care, *at last*. From what has been done in establishing a free government for *Upper Canada*, from the character & interest of our respectable governour, as well as from the executive servants of government now going out, who are *all*, as far as my knowledge extends, men of character, & most of them independent of their appointments—I cannot

<sup>13</sup> The allusion is to the defeat of General St. Clair's army, Nov. 4, 1791.

<sup>14</sup> That is, the boundary line of French Canada, as distinguished from Louisiana prior to the British conquest of that country in the Seven Years' War.

help congratulating the country, & anticipating its prosperity under *such* a government, & in the hands of *such* men. The magazines &c you mention will be sent with some for my brother: to them I shall refer you for news, only observing that the death of the Emperour of Germany, which was sudden, has had an effect favourable to the affairs of France, which are still however much deranged. I have often opportunities of seeing M<sup>rs</sup> Meredith—she has a fine little daughter, & they seem very happy: she is a great favourite at Woolwich—that indeed she always was, & will be, wherever she is known. I am much concerned to hear that Miss Theresa's health was not re-established in consequence of her journey—I hope the winter may have produced a change. I bought you a Lottery ticket, which four days after came up a blank, as did one I was concerned in. The Bark, Knives &c are put up with our goods as my brother will shew you when he gets his invoice. I shall request leave to decline entering upon the discussion of that part of your letter respecting boats &c having [illegible] my brother: I am always ready to settle my own affairs [but] to keep other people regular, or to account for their mistakes, is a task that I cannot think ought to be expected from me. As to furs, business, &c you will no doubt hear from M<sup>r</sup> Todd. It is not improbable but I may see you in Canada before the winter—at the same time I am not yet determined as to that object myself. In the meantime I beg leave to offer my most respectful compliments to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin & your family, to Com<sup>r</sup> Grant & his, & to all enquiring friends—with assurances of regard, I am, Dear Sir,

Your very Hb<sup>le</sup> Ser<sup>t</sup>

William Robertson

N. B. Your Lottery Ticket inclosed

J. Askin Esq<sup>r</sup>

[Written along center fold]: Capt. Mercer & family are gone to Ireland

[Written (inverted) across upper end]: N.B. I have not sent you an *office* seal, because I do not know well what you

meant—was it in your *official* capacity of Justice of Peace you meant, or for your *counting house*?

*Addressed:* Per the Indian Trader Ship To John Askin, Esq<sup>r</sup> Merchant, Detroit. Care of Mess<sup>rs</sup> Todd, McGill & C<sup>o</sup> Montreal

*Endorsed:* London March 26<sup>h</sup> 1792 M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Robertson to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Rec<sup>d</sup> the 7<sup>th</sup> July & Answ<sup>d</sup> the 28<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup>

### SALE OF JOSEPH COTTON

I do hereby Acknowledge to have received of M<sup>r</sup> John Askin the Sum of Fifty Pounds New York [Currency] as a full Consideration for all my right title & Interest to a negro man Named Joseph Cotton<sup>15</sup> now in Prison for Felony as also to a Note of hand due by Pierre Chene<sup>16</sup> & his Brothers payable some years hence for the Sum of one hundred Pounds New York Cur. being all the remainder due me on the House farms &<sup>ca</sup> he now Possesses, which Negro man

<sup>15</sup> Cotton (Cuttan, Cutan) was tried at Sandwich, Sept. 7, 1792, convicted of burglary, and hung, this being the first legal execution in the province of Upper Canada. His offense consisted in the taking of certain articles from the shop of Joseph Campau in October, 1791. In sentencing him, Judge Powell said: "This crime [burglary] is so much more atrocious and alarming to society as it is committed by night when the world is at repose and that it cannot be guarded against without the same precautions which are used against the wild beasts of the forest, who, like you, go prowling about by night for their prey. A member so hurtful to the peace of society, no good laws will permit to continue in it." See William R. Riddell, *Michigan Under British Rule. Law and Law Courts, 1760-1796* (Lansing, 1926), 347 ff., for report of the trial.

<sup>16</sup> The founder of the Chêne family in America was Pierre St. Onge *dit* Chêne, born in the city of Barbayeux, France, in 1654. He was a tailor, and migrating to Canada, he opened a shop at Longueuil. He married at Montreal, Nov. 29, 1676, Louisa Jane Bailly, a native of that city. She died prior to 1700 and he married (second) at Montreal, Oct. 9, 1700, Mary Moitie, widow of Jean Magnan. The offspring of the first union were Mary, Charles, and Pierre Chêne *dit* Labutte, all of whom became residents of Detroit. Charles, the elder brother, born at Montreal, March 11, 1694, married at Detroit on Jan. 18, 1722, Catherine Sauvage, daughter of Jacques Sauvage and Catherine Jean *dit* Vien. Charles Chêne obtained a grant of land on July 14, 1734, which is now known as Private Claim 16, lying between Field and Baldwin avenues. Here he lived until his death, some time prior to 1755. His widow was buried Oct. 21, 1778. Their eldest son, Pierre, was born at Detroit, Sept. 22, 1724. On May 7, 1747, he married Mary Clemence Chapoton, widow of Jacques Marsac and daughter of Jean Chapoton and Mary Magdélène Estève. She was buried at Detroit, Nov. 20, 1753; Pierre was buried at Sandwich, Sept. 27, 1804. All of his four children died in childhood, two of them being burned to death in their father's house in December, 1752. The brothers here alluded to were Charles Chêne *dit* Caoussa, born Nov. 5, 1732, and Isidore Chêne, born Jan. 6, 1737. Information adapted from Denissen, *op. cit.*

should he Suffer Death or the Afors<sup>d</sup> Sum due by said  
Chene & his Brothers never be paid I am not Answerable for  
Detroit May the 16<sup>th</sup> 1792 Arthur M<sup>c</sup>Cormick

Witness Robert Stevens

*Endorsed* [in pencil]: Receipt Arthur M<sup>c</sup>Cormick to  
Jno Askin half intr in Slave in prison for Stealing no  
respond. if he suffers death.

Detroit 1792

FROM JOHN STEVENS TO ROBERT STEVENS

Nassau New providence 7<sup>th</sup> June 1792

D<sup>r</sup> Brother, It is a circumstance upon which I have often  
reflected with peculiar regret, that during four years and  
upwards I have been in this country, we have never so much  
as exchanged a single sentence. It is true, your leaving  
home while I was very young, deprived us of every oppor-  
tunity of being more intimately acquainted, yet I hope we  
will never lose sight of that near relation which subsists  
between us, nor wound by a longer reserve that sincere  
friendship which ought ever to accompany such a connexion,  
actuated by these considerations, I now take the liberty of  
commencing a correspondence, from a continuation of which  
I flatter myself to derive the greatest pleasure and advan-  
tage.

I stay here with our Brother James who is connected with  
a M<sup>r</sup> Forbes, and carry on the retail business chiefly in  
provisions under the firm of Forbes & Stevens. James has  
been gone this some time past to London for the benefit of  
his health, which he has recovered, and is expected back  
soon. Sandie has been in Maryland these six years past,  
but appears not to like his situation, he lately paid us a  
visit but staid only about ten days and returned to Phila-  
delphia. I dare say you have heard from him ere this as it  
was him informed me of the direction by which I now write  
to you.

I heard from my Father about six months ago when he  
and my only sister were both in health, the death of my  
Mother I suppose you are already acquainted with.

BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

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I shall deffer saying any thing more untill I have the happiness of hearing from you. Your letters directed to the care of our correspondents Mess<sup>rs</sup> Jeremiah Warder Parker & C<sup>o</sup> Merchants Philadelphia will be punctually forwarded as we have constant intercourse with that place.

In the mean time I remain with the greatest regard.

D<sup>r</sup> Sir Your Affectionate Brother

John Stevens

*Addressed:* Mr. Robert Stevens Care of J. Askin Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Detroit

*Endorsed:* Recv<sup>ed</sup> Detroit 4th June 1793

Nassau Newprovidence 7<sup>th</sup> June 1792 from M<sup>r</sup> John  
Stevens to Rob<sup>t</sup> Stevens Recv<sup>d</sup> 4<sup>h</sup> June 93 Ans<sup>d</sup> 30<sup>h</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup>

FROM DAVID MEREDITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Woolwich Guard room July 6<sup>th</sup> 92

My dear Sir, An almost instantanious offer presents itself of sending a letter to Quebec by a vessell falling Down the Thames for that place and myself being upon Guard I seize the oppertunity of scribbling to you a few lines, well convinced it will afford you pleasure to know that we continue in excellent Health. I have made my Dear Archange acquainted with the same oppertunity and I suppose she is at present very busy in writing to her good Mother, who with Yourself and Family I trust enjoy the best of health, had not mine been originally good indeed I think the fatigue for these Five Months past of constant fagging, and Drilling twice, nay sometimes three times a day; would [have] in some degree impaired it. We are now perfectly adroit in the New System of Dundas, and the Movements of Cannon with it was put into effect some Ten Days past, before the King on Sydnam Common, w[h]ere we had a grand Review in conjunction with the Guards. but M<sup>rs</sup> Meredith has informed me she should write her Mother the appearance which such presented to her as a Spectator; for As I Comanded a Division in the Battle [I] could observe no farther than the Smoke of Cannon would at times allow me. We

were the defending party, and Commanded by the Duke of Richmond. the Duke of York commanded the Attack and had Ten Six Pounders. His Majesty was highly pleased, and tho it rained hard very often during the affair, Yet he never quitted the Movements, but at one time dismounted and stalk'd oer the Furz bushes in his Boots, which obliged the old Lords, Dukes, Generals &c &c who attended *en suite* to do the Same, in order to shew a willingness to follow the Royal Example. Many wry faces were occasioned by it, which afforded much Secret Mirth to the John Bulls who persued the Manouvres. We had a very fatiguing day, of it The Duke of York had a Magnificent Tent pitched sufficiently large to contain 250 People in a circular form with Tables and benches curiously constructed going round it, on which was Spread every thing that was good. the Royal Family made but very little Havock and soon afterwards quitted the Ground under a discharge of 21 Cannon, after which the Duke of York askd us all to refresh in the Tent, and we came off well with plenty of Champagne Bergunday &c. that enabled us to March home the Quick Step. had I sufficient time would have given you the Detail of the buisness and Manouvre, upon a fuller scalee, but that not being the case, I shall say to you that the War is over in India and My Lord Cornwallis [h]as totally humbled Tippo Sa[h]ib, who sought for peace but not untill he was fairly beat. The Terms are (that he has given his two sons as hostages for the performance of) First to pay the Company Three Million Sterling for the Expences of the War, and Secondly to give up to the contending powers and the Company one half of his Extensive Dominions reserving to himself only Serrinapatam as his Capital, and the Mysore Country. the Nation are highly Satisfied with My Lord Cornwallis terms as being honorable for the East India Company. it is therefore lookd upon as a glorious peace. France [is] in a worse state than ever a few days since the Mob entered the Palace and broke open the Kings and Queens apartment to whom the[y] offerd personal insults it was with difficulty they were saved from being Massacred. in short they are in a most perilous situation. the dis-



affected French have endeavoured to establish a party in this Country which has been instantly quash'd by a Strong Proclamation from the King, and an Encampment of Five Thousand Men takes place the 18<sup>th</sup> of this Month on Bagshot Heath. We are all busy preparing. the Contracts are made for Sixteen days only, but t'is thought we shall be out much longer. Dissaffected Clubs and improper and dangerous Phamplets were got to such a height that it was high time for the interference of Government, who had received the most pointed information of a bad tendency. What will be the Event of this Camp is not known. We March from Woolwich more than a thousand Strong with Thirty four pi[e]ces of Cannon. it is a Political matter and meant to awe the Dissaffected, for Government are determined to quell every thing of Riot imm[e]diatly in its bud. A Very grand Tent is providing for the King who means to be with us each day. Should Woolwich be attackd in our absence, the Women must defend it, for there will be only them and the Invalids with Cadets. My dear little woman with our little Anne who by the bye, grows charmingly, I leave at her own Snug *Maison* where she will be unexposed to the distress and Miserry of a Camp, for we are told it is to be a flying one therefore shall never be certain of our situation. the Duke of Richmond Commands in Chief. Sir W<sup>m</sup> Howe Second in Command, and Lord Harrington, (both of the line) Colonel Fox, and Col Drummond of ours, Commands Brigades Each. there is to be two Regiments of Horse. Should another occasion soon present itself I will write you fully and in such a manner as will make me certain you can read my letter, for I am sure you will have difficulty in reading this scrawl which am obliged to hurry. I shall therefore Conclude with my best respects and Esteem to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin and Family, to the Commodore M<sup>rs</sup> Grant &c, and believe me with great truth how sincerely I subscribe myself my d<sup>r</sup> Sir

Yours ever with regard

D Meredith

Com<sup>t</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Leith & all Friends

COMPLAINT AGAINST JOHN STOCKWELL

Henry Ramsey<sup>17</sup> Maketh Oath that on or about the 9<sup>th</sup> Ins<sup>t</sup> Being at the house of M<sup>r</sup> Daniel M<sup>c</sup>Kellop that while he was there M<sup>r</sup> John Stockwell<sup>18</sup> came there and After giving Verry Abusive Language Challenged him out to Fight him after being being informd by sundry Persons then Present that he was unwell and had been for some time. Notwithstanding This the said Stockwell struck him so as to bring him to the Ground and Stamped on him with his feet.

Henry Ramsey

Sworn before me at Detroit this 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1792

John Askin J. P. D. H

This Agreed on to be made up the Parties has submitted it to Doc<sup>r</sup> Harffy & myself.

The Parties Agree it should be left to Doc<sup>r</sup> Harffy & Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin, what Damages the latter should pay.

*Endorsed:* Detroit July the 20<sup>th</sup> 1792 Henry Ramsey his Complaint on Oath Agns<sup>t</sup> John Stockwell

<sup>17</sup> Henry Ramsey was a private in Butler's Rangers during the Revolution, and along with other disbanded troops and loyalists was given an allotment of land in New Settlement. Probably he is the "Mr. Ramsey" who, in 1793, built a bridge over the River Canard. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XII, 48. Prior to this, in 1784, Capt. Henry Bird leased a house and adjoining land in Amherstburg to Agnes Hazel and Judith Hicks, sisters. Agnes was the wife of Edward Hazel, an Indian interpreter, and Judith was to become the wife of Ramsey. In 1796 Ramsey was living in Amherstburg, where his wife died on May 14 of that year. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*, especially XXIV, 14-17 and XXV, 131.

<sup>18</sup> John Stockwell was a loyalist who came to Detroit prior to the summer of 1780, when he served in Capt. Henry Bird's expedition against Kentucky. He subsequently received an allotment of land in New Settlement on the north side of Lake Erie. He seems to have been a man of vindictive temper. About the year 1788 he obtained from the Indians possession of Mary Moore, who had been carried into captivity from western Virginia, and subjected her to a life of brutality and drudgery. In 1794, when the settlers were being called out for service against General Wayne on the Maumee, Stockwell was a militia officer and some of his neighbors refused to serve under him. In 1814 he was reported by a British authority as "thirsting" to distinguish himself against the Americans, and eager to lead the Indians against some of his neighbors who were charged with friendliness toward the American cause. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*; Macomb, Edgar, and Macomb ledgers (mss. in Burton Hist. Coll.); and *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, V, No. 5.

## LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara. 26. July, 92

My dear Sir! The Governors proclamations are arrived dividing the upper Country. The 18<sup>h</sup> County is called Essex, & is bounded on the East by the Carrying place from point au pins, to the River la tranche<sup>19</sup>—bounded on the South by Lake Erie, & on the west by the River Detroit to Maisonvilles Mill; from thence by a line running parralel to the River Detroit & Lake S<sup>t</sup> Clair, at the distance of 4 miles, until it meets the River la tranche—thence up the said River to where the Carrying place from point au pins strikes that River. This said County of Essex, with the adjoining County of Suffolk (in which there are no Inhabitants) sends one Member. those who have certificates, only, I understand can vote. this tract comprehends the new settlers on Lake Erie who have generally certificates. Monfortons Company, who have none except they have rec<sup>d</sup> them since my departure—& Maisonvilles Company to the Mill; in this last Space there are Inhabitants on 12 acres front just above the Church, who can vote by reason of their having french deeds, “En Roture” & those settled on the South side of R. la tranche, a few of whom have certificates, & where *I* myself am a *freeholder!* This damned Election business seems to bind me to the County, for You know I am not fond of deserting any Cause I undertake, & that of the public is most dear to me.

Should I be returned without an undue Election, or the appearance of party or bribery, I shall be most happy, & in that Case I beg an Ox may be roasted *whole* on the common & a barrel of Rum, be given to the Mob, to wash down the Beef. You will draw on me for the Amount. I should have great pleasure in helping to frame Laws, for Lands which I have had so much pleasure in laying out. M<sup>r</sup> Pollard who is appointed Sheriff, is returning officer. The writs are issued this day & returnable the 12 Sep<sup>r</sup>

<sup>19</sup> That is, the River Thames. For a general account of this election, see *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, V, No. 2.

I depend a good deal on your goodness, favor & affection in this business, & hope I need not make many apologies on that Score. as I have begun the canvas, I am determined to go through with it, & should I succeed, I hope to support my Character afterwards; we shall not certainly leave the province these 4 Years, so that wherever the seat of Government may be, or whatever may be the destination of the Reg<sup>t</sup> I make no doubt but I shall be able to attend the Council & assembly Yearly. My having done the settlers business without emoluments from any Quarter should be some inducement to them, on the score of Gratitude to return me!

I rather think it is intended that the people who have french Grants on the Garrison Side should vote; as the Description of the County of *Kent* comprehends a great deal & sends 2 Members. it is said to contain all the Country (not being territories of the Indians) & not already included in Essex & the several other Counties described, Extending norward to the boundary line of Hudsons bay, including all the territory to the Westward & southward of the said line to the utmost Extent of the Country commonly called or known by the name of Canada.

Should Candidates to represent this County go a begging & you find I have no chance for Essex, I shall be proud to be returned for this County, but as the french people know little of me, I have not any hopes on that score. I am *very ill* at present myself, or I would certainly go up to Detroit, but if the people are sincere, that is unnecessary; & this will give it a fair tryal. You will do me a Service by delivering to M<sup>r</sup> Pollard, the Names of those capable to vote,<sup>20</sup> which you can get from a small Register in the Land Office marked or rather endorsed "Certificates Granted," and another endorsed, "French Grants "en Roture."

Madelene has been with us several days past, she desires me to say, she is well & happy.

<sup>20</sup> The writs for the election of members to the first parliament of Upper Canada prescribed that electors must be either freeholders or leaseholders, to the annual clear value, in counties, of forty shillings, in towns, of five pounds.

If any of Monfortons or Maisonvilles Companys have received Certificates since my departure, I will be thankful to you to use y<sup>r</sup> influence with them. Col M<sup>e</sup>Kee has promised me his Interest, so has the Commodore, & I think I may depend on Cap Elliot, George Leith, & a few others.

When I wrote you last it was Expected that Grossile, Rivers Raisin & Rouge would have voted with the New Settlers, but that is not the Case.

Jacque Parent,<sup>21</sup> Laurent Parent,<sup>22</sup> Claude Rheaum,<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Michael Parent, born in Paris in 1643, came to Canada and at Three Rivers, on June 30, 1692, married Mary Ann Benoit, daughter of Gabriel Benoit *dit* La Forest and Ann Mary Guedon. They had two children, Pierre, born at Montreal, Nov. 23, 1700, and Laurence, born at Montreal, Feb. 28, 1703. Pierre married, in 1724, Catherine James, whose father, an Englishman, had been taken captive by the French in 1697 and had spent the remainder of his life in Canada. Pierre Parent and Catherine James had one son, Pierre Michael, born at Longue Pointe in 1725, who married at Boucherville in 1751, and subsequently came to Detroit, where he followed the carpenter's trade and lived at the Southwest Coast. He was buried, Oct. 1, 1773.

Laurence Parent, the second son of Michael Parent and Mary Ann Benoit, was the progenitor of the later Detroit line of Parents. He came to Detroit prior to 1731, and on May 24 of this year married Mary Joseph Daugat, daughter of Pierre Daugat and Margaret Guignard. She was buried July 27, 1734, and Laurence married (second) Jane Cardinal, who was born at Montreal, Aug. 12, 1717, daughter of Jacques Cardinal and Jane Duguay. Laurence Parent followed the trade of carpenter and joiner. To him and Jane Cardinal eleven children were born in the period 1737-59. One of them was Jacques and another Laurence, both of whom are mentioned in the present document. Jacques Parent was born, Oct. 24, 1742, and married on Nov. 18, 1771, Mary Catherine Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien, the daughter of Jean Baptiste Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien and Mary Ann Lootman *dit* Barrois. To them seven children were born.

There was another, and distinct Parent family at Detroit in the French period, descended from Andrew Parent and Mary Coudray, who lived in the parish of Mortagne, in La Perche, France. Their son, Pierre, born there in 1610, married at Quebec, Feb. 9, 1654, Jane Badeau, daughter of Jacques Badeau and Ann Ardouin. About the year 1672 they removed to Beauport, where Pierre died in 1698 and Jane in 1706. Their grandson, Gilbert Parent, who was born at Montreal, Dec. 3, 1703, married in 1733 Mary Susanne Richard. In 1742 he removed to Detroit, and traded with the Miami Indians. He was shot at the Maumee River, and buried at Raisin River, Sept. 9, 1750. Later his body was reinterred at Detroit. His widow, Mary Susanne, was buried at Raisin River settlement, Jan. 13, 1800. They had four children, only one of whom, Magdelene Parent, lived to maturity. Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Laurence Parent, son of Laurence Parent and Jane Cardinal, was born at Detroit, Sept. 13, 1740, and married at Sandwich, Nov. 28, 1771, Mary Magdelene Janis, daughter of Nicholas Francis Janis and Teresa Meloche. The couple had fourteen children, born in the years 1772-99. Laurence Parent was buried at Sandwich, Nov. 4, 1818. His widow died of cholera and was buried there Sept. 23, 1834. Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Claude Thomas Réaume was the son of Pierre Réaume and Susanne Hubert *dit* Lacroix, and a cousin of Jean Baptiste and Charles Réaume who are noted *ante*, 170 and 249. Claude was born at Detroit on Aug. 7, 1743, and on Jan. 7, 1766, he married at the Church of the Huron (Sandwich) Geneveva Janis, daughter of Nicholas Francis Janis and Teresa Meloche. Both bride and groom lived at the South Coast of

Bap<sup>to</sup> le Duc,<sup>24</sup> & John Bap Hoilette,<sup>25</sup> just above the Huron Church, may probably ask for an Explanation to my Letters to them, they hold Lands "en roture" formerly granted to Mon<sup>r</sup> Longueil, & they of course have indisputably votes; I have therefore addressed them separately. these are the only french deeds acknowledged by the "Tableau des terres "En Roture". on that Side of the water.

I am sure you will forgive me for Encl[os]ing so large a paquet to you, The most of them are for the freeholders on Lake Erie, all whose Names, I could recollect, the others, You will have great goodness by putting in train for their destinations. My father mends, Anne but slowly. My Mother pretty well. Love & affection to y<sup>r</sup> Good family. The Gov<sup>r</sup> arrived this day. I send an Express with this to overtake the Saguina.

God bless you, prays.

D W Smith.

Detroit. Permission was obtained from the priest of Ste. Anne's for them to be wedded by the missionary of the Huron "by reason of the ice and the difficulty of crossing the river." Claude Réaume's family connections were numerous and influential. An older sister, Susanne, married Jacques Duperon Baby; another, Charlotte, married Pierre Charles Daneau de Muy, son of the commandant of Detroit; and a younger sister, Veronica, became the wife of Gabriel Legrand. To Claude Réaume and Geneveva Janis eleven children were born in the years from 1766 to 1790. The eldest, Teresa Geneveva, became the wife of Jacques Parent, son of the Jacques Parent who is mentioned in the present document. During the Revolution, Claude Réaume held the rank of lieutenant in the Detroit militia. Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Baptiste Le Duc was the fourth child of Jean Le Duc and Catherine Descary, for whom see *ante*, 41. He was born at Montreal, Oct. 15, 1727, and while still a young child was brought by his parents to Detroit. On Oct. 12, 1773, he married at Detroit Catherine Bourassa, who was born at Mackinac, March 12, 1747, the daughter of René Bourassa and Ann Charlotte Veronica Chevalier. They had four children, all but one of whom died in childhood. Apparently Le Duc was a wagonmaker by trade; he volunteered for Capt. Henry Bird's Kentucky expedition of 1780, and a letter of Bird to Major De Peyster, written at the junction of the Miami River with the Ohio, June 11, 1780, speaks appreciatively of Le Duc's behavior and of his service to the expedition "in making shafts and repairing carriages." See Macomb, Edgar, and Macomb ledgers (mss. in Burton Hist. Coll.) and *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XIX, 533-34. Genealogical information adapted from Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Jean Baptiste Ouellet. He was descended from René Ouellet, a native of the parish of St. Jacques, of Hautpas, diocese of Paris, who married at Quebec on March 8, 1666, Ann Rivet, also a native of France. She died in April, 1675, and René was buried, Jan. 15, 1722. For several generations the family lived in Lower Canada, the first member to come west to Detroit being Jean Baptiste, here noted. He was born at Kamouraska, Nov. 3, 1737, and settled at Detroit River in 1762. On Jan. 7, 1765, he married at the Church of the Huron, Sandwich, Jane Susanne Putelle, who

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara, 6 August 1792

My dear Sir: Your Letter, which you honored me with gave me great satisfaction. I hope I may not be too much buoyed up with the hopes you give me of succeeding to the election. Your doubts about the right of voting on your side of the water will be removed before this. If therefore there is any difficulty in bringing me in for Essex, & one of the Kent seats goes abegging I should be flattered to be returned for that County. M<sup>r</sup> Baby tells me, he wrote to his Brother François to set up for Essex, this may perhaps Cause some Confusion, as the french people no doubt will vote for him; & Cap<sup>t</sup> Caldwell's Interest may perhaps gain him the Settlers on Lake Erie. Their Sentiments will I hope be sufficiently know[n] before hand, that I may not be set up without chance. M<sup>r</sup> Baby told me however that he rather thought François would decline setting up; in which Case I should have his Interest; & at all Events, if François had made a party previous to his Arrival in Essex, & was likely to succeed; he would then give me his Interest in Kent.

I leave the weight of the transaction on your shoulders, & whatever you do for me therein, I shall be perfectly satisfied, & I believe I know You well Enough to think you do not require many apologies from me, for so much trouble. I will endeavour to repay You in the house of Assembly; if I succeed!

I wrote you in my last, in Case of Success to have an ox Roasted on the Common & to give the Mob a barrel of Rum. M<sup>r</sup> Pollard tells me the hustings will probably be held for Essex somewhere about the Rivers Mouth. this therefore may perhaps be a better scite for the Beef & Rum. I am excessively unwell for a long time. I hope however to weather through the winter, & should I be elected, I shall

was born at Detroit, April 13, 1750, daughter of Jean Baptiste Putelle and Magdelene Bouron. They had seven children, the eldest, born May 20, 1766, being also named Jean Baptiste. Jane Putelle was buried at Sandwich, Sept. 13, 1784; Jean Baptiste Ouellet was buried there, Feb. 1, 1809. Denissen, *op. cit.*

pay You a visit in the Spring, to be chained! The Judge I think while here did not wish to give me any hopes of the french people, for very plain & substantial Reasons, & for this Candid behaviour I am obliged to him; as it has prepared me for the worst. I forgot to tell you that before the Governor arrived he wrote to my father, that he adopted all that he had recommended on the score of the Land business, which was nearly a Counterpart of the Boards Report, so that I hope Everything will go as smoothly with you there.

We are all excessively happy at the idea of Seeing You here. if you make any house at Niagara your hotel, other than the Majors, You are not the same John Askin you used to be.

Leith will give me credit for any little Sums you may find it necessary to require, such as putting up the Hustings, Boards &c, Cake & wine, Returning officer's fee &c &c &c.

Love to the Good family.

Yours truly,

D W Smith

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire. Detroit.

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara. 6. Aug<sup>t</sup> 92.

My dear Sir! Please to do away any impressions which may be started on account of the probability of the Reg<sup>ts</sup> leaving Niagara & my non attendance at the Capital, after the first Year. Be assured I shall pay my annual visit to the house of Representatives; with due attention, as there is little Chance of the Regiment going to Europe before the Expiration of the first Assembly.

Yours Affectiontly

D W Smith

*Addressed:* John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit.



## FROM WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO JOHN ASKIN

London 8<sup>th</sup> August 1792

Dear Sir, By the spring ships I had the pleasure of addressing you, and as the Nancy Paterson sails hence tomorrow, altho' I have had no letter from you, I cannot let her depart without a few lines. Indeed I have been very unlucky in that respect, for I have not had a line from any body in your quarter, not even my brother, since last autumn! I however hope you are all well, & had once some thoughts of coming out this fall to be convinced of it, but that will not take place till next spring, if even then; for I do not like to be locked up in a fort after breathing the air of freedom so long. I send my brother the papers by this opportunity, & by them you will see we are likely to have a general war in Europe, and that for the *good* of one another mankind are to cut one anothers throats! Russia has attacked Poland because they have with one consent established a better government than they had before: & the *honest* King of Prussia does not find it convenient to keep his *royal & sacred* word by supporting them, according to treaty; because he is going to help Austria to knock all the French on the head, as they have now *too much* liberty, & will not be made *happy* but in their own way. To aid in this *pious & royal* work, these two worthies, having only about two hundred & fifty thousand men, & fearing that would be too few for such honourable work, Sardinia adds fifty thousand more, & *good* old Catherine, affords a reinforcement of eighteen thousand for her share. This mighty host, under the command of his *serene* highness the duke of Brunswick, now on the Rhine, enter France this month. To this they object, & have on their frontier from Baril to Laydon in camps & garrisons about two hundred thousand troops of the line. they have about three hundred thousand national guards. the conflict must be dreadful: the Austrians & Prussians are said to be well disciplined, & there can be no doubt of the French troops zeal, or rather enthusiasm in the cause of liberty; but in subordination they are wanting. The consequence of this struggle to future gener-

ations may be of vast importance. to a mind possessed by humanity the prospect of carnage & destruction is truly afflicting! To our trade this is ruin, and there can be no doubt of a very serious diminution in the price of furs in consequence of this general war, into which, pacific as we are at present, we may be actors before it is over. The people here all execrate the Empress's attack on the liberties of Poland, and very large sums are subscribed to support them: they are not well pleased at Mr Pitt for not assisting them. With regard to France the people are more divided, every body wishes them free, but think they have gone too far. One thing you may rely on, that a spirit of reformation, some call it innovation, is secretly making its way in every country in Europe. The liberty of the press is diffusing knowledge among the mass of the people, even in Spain, Portugal, & Italy, where the press indeed can hardly be said to be free, & the great abuse of religion in those countries has opened the eyes of those who were *superstitiously blind!* We hear nothing particular about the posts. An ambassador is just arrived from America, but not for any *special* purpose that yet appears. Mr & Mrs Mercer were well by a letter I had lately from him at Dublin barracks. Mr & Mrs Meredith spent the day with me not long ago. they were well a few days ago when I had a letter from him. There is no domestic occurrence worth notice. Lord North<sup>26</sup> (or rather Earl of Guilford, but he is better known by the former title) is dead, & at the same time Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne<sup>27</sup> made his final exit from this stage. Peace is restored in India & Lord Cornwallis is coming home.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick North, second Earl of Guilford (1732-92). His entire career was devoted to politics, in which he achieved a high degree of eminence. He is best known, perhaps, for the policies which made the American Revolution inevitable and resulted in the loss by England of the American colonies. He died Aug. 5, 1792. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

<sup>27</sup> John Burgoyne (1722-92) entered the army as a cornet in 1740, although not until 1758 did he engage in actual military service. In 1768 he entered Parliament, where he achieved some political prominence. Late in 1774 he was sent to America to reinforce General Gage, returning to England in the autumn of 1775. The following spring he was sent to Canada as second in command to Sir Guy Carleton, there to participate in an attack on the colonies from the north. This campaign proved abortive, and Burgoyne returned to England, disgusted at Carleton's inaction. He

William<sup>28</sup> is learning very well, he has already got thro' compound multiplication, writes tolerably, & is making good progress in Latin: as for John,<sup>28</sup> I understand he also advances, but the particular stage of his progress I am not informed of. I hope your new government will make you a happy people. I am sure it ought. With best wishes for your family & compliments to all friends, I am, Dear Sir, sincerely,

Yours very humble servant  
William Robertson

J. Askin, Esq<sup>r</sup>

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara. 8 August 1792

My dear Sir: Since I wrote to you last I have received a Letter from M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Niff<sup>29</sup> giving me but faint hopes of Success, when at the same time I receive other Letters from my fri[en]ds, giving me hopes.

Every thing now must be left to fate, & Providence will

now concerted a plan for a new campaign from Canada and in 1777 was again sent out, this time to have command of the expedition. It ended in complete failure and the surrender of the entire army at Saratoga on Oct. 17, 1777. A long dispute over the responsibility for the failure followed, as a consequence of which Burgoyne was retired from the army. His later years were devoted to politics and literature, and in the latter field, especially, he achieved considerable success. He died June 4, 1792, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

<sup>28</sup> These two youths were Askin's grandsons and Robertson's nephews, William and John Robertson, sons of Catherine Askin Hamilton by her first husband, Capt. Samuel Robertson. By Robert Hamilton, their stepfather, they had been sent to England to be educated.

<sup>29</sup> Patrick McNiff was prominently identified with the affairs of Detroit and vicinity during the later British and early American régimes. He was a man of positive temperament, which caused him to be involved in numerous disputes. He served as surveyor in the British period, and in the American held several offices, including those of sheriff and justice of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1802 his associates on the bench refused longer to serve with him because of his "odious" character. He died soon after this, for in May, 1803, the local Masonic lodge voted relief for his widow, doing so in terms which indicated that he had been expelled from the order. He was twice married, and had several children. A son, Robert, was owner of the only house in Detroit which escaped the conflagration of 1805. A daughter, Margaret, married Lieut. Porter Hanks, who surrendered Mackinac to the British in 1812. Coming to Detroit, he was undergoing court martial for this affair when on Aug. 15 a cannon ball, fired from the British battery on the south side of the river, penetrated the room and killed him. See *Proc. of the Land Board of Detroit, 177-78; Mich. Pio. Colls., passim; Ashlar, II, 132; and Sibley Papers (mss.) in Burton Hist. Coll., passim.*

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

naturally direct for the best; I am so pestered with the fever, Head ach[e], want of appetite & withall so weak; that nothing else prevents me from setting out for Detroit, express. I would kick up such a dust in Essex, as never was there before, & I would scrutinize every vote, nor allow of any but such as were permitted by the act of Parliament; that is, if the people on Lake Erie, & the South Side of River la tranche were unanimous towards my election; for tho the Government don't wish themselves to introduce the Cabal of who has, & who has not a right to vote; yet it is all fair in a Candidate, & the Indians within the Reserves in Essex have just as much right to vote as the people of Maisonville & Monfortons Companys, who have no Certificates or Grants "en roture" of which there are only 5 that I know of. The Governor wishes very much that I should succeed, & in consequence he has prevented some others of his family from setting up for Detroit, that I might have no opposition on the Score of any Interest which might be made for them.

As I said before I hope the Sentiments of the people will be known in time before the poll comes on. I will answer your draft for the necessary Expences. I enclose another blank address, which you may find it necessary to send to some one.

The Governor sends for me constantly, & employs me on many occasions, what with crossing the Water, & half a dozen Masters to Serve exclusive of God & Mammon; ill health & altogether, I am completely fagged.

I have only to say, God bless You & Yours, & to tell You we *long* to see You at Niagara  
Believe me I am dear Sir

Y<sup>r</sup> Most unfeigned & much obliged humble Servant  
D W Smith.

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire. Detroit.

FROM ISAAC TODD TO JOHN ASKIN

London 10<sup>th</sup> Augs<sup>t</sup> 1792.

Dear Askin I wrote you by the Spring Ships since which

I am favord with yours of the 20<sup>th</sup> May M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Gill has been so employd in forwarding Goods &<sup>ca</sup> that hitherto he has communicated Little to me on Business. I am extremely sorry to hear your Indian Trade has been generally bad and that you are among the unsuccesfull. I agree with you that pushing that trade answers no good purpose. I have strongly recommended to the House to curtale & Lessen our connections in that Trade, for when I consider the un-[c]ertainty of our retaining the Posts the Warr between the Indians & Americans, and the evident fall on furr I am convinced it is an unsafe & unprofitable business, and will continue so for two or 3 years I am certain there will be a fall on Furrs at this Market this year of 15 to 20 p<sup>r</sup>C<sup>t</sup> and every apperance they will continue falling for 2 or 3 Years which has ever been the case, therefore untill matters comes back to the old standard those who do Least will do best. I am certain there is this year double the quantity of Goods intended for that trade that it can pay for, I trust your New Govern<sup>t</sup> may open some advantagious Trade that may answer your purpose better. I am happy in hearing you and family enjoy good health Long may it continue, I enclose a Letter for Miss Therese to which I reffer you for family news Robertson is now here he talks of paying you a Visit in the Spring, which I have my doubts of unless his business at Detroit goes wrong. he is Surprised at not hearing from any of his friends this Spring. Please remember me kindly to the Commod<sup>r</sup> as I suppose the Naval business will be immediatly under Gov<sup>r</sup> Simcoe it will make it more pleasant and easey for him and put more in his power to serve his friends. I hope to hear often from You, and with Kind Respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin & family beli[e]ve me ever yours Sincerely

Isaac Todd

M<sup>r</sup> John Askin

*Addressed:* John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit

*Endorsed:* London Aug<sup>t</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1792 M<sup>r</sup> Isaac Todd to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>h</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> April 7<sup>h</sup> 93

## ENTERTAINMENT FOR DETROIT ELECTORS

Niagara, 14, August 92.

My dear Sir: All the Letters I get from Detroit give me favourable hopes, except those I receive from M<sup>o</sup>Niff. they assure me of the Interest and Influence of Mess<sup>rs</sup> McKee, Macomb, Park, Leith, Sharp, M<sup>o</sup>Intosh, Elliot, Lamothe, M<sup>o</sup>Donnel & several others for Essex. There is I understand however powerful Influences against me; however if I have fair play I dont fear, as I am assured that the Settlers, on Lake Erie and River la tranche will vote for me "neminé contradicenté," at least those are the words in which their assurances are represented to me. Perhaps I should have done better to have set up for one of the Seats in Detroit, as I hear only of M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>o</sup>Comb who is to be proposed; but I did not then know they would be entitled to vote; besides were I thrown out on the 20<sup>th</sup> I might have had a chance on the 28<sup>th</sup> The french people can easily walk to the Hustings, but my gentry will require some conveyance; if boats are necessary you can hire them, & they must not want beef or Rum, let them have plenty, and in case of success I leave it to you, which you think will be best to give my friends a public dinner, & the ladies a dance, either now, or when I go up. if you think the moment the best time You will throw open Forsyths Tavern, & call for the best he can supply. I trust you will feel very young on the occasion, in the dance, & I wish that Leith and you should push about the bottle, to the promotion of the Settlements on the Detroit. The more broken heads & bloody noses there is the more election like, and in case of Success (damn that if!) let the White Ribbon favors be plentifully distributed, to the old, the Young, the Gay, the lame, the cripple & the blind—half a score cord of wood piled hollow, with a tar barrel in the middle, on the Common, some powder, pour tiner, & plenty of Rum. I am sure that you will preside over & do ev[er]ything that is needful, as far as my circumstances will admit. there must be no want & I am sure you will have ev[er]y thing handsome & plentiful.

Elliot I am sure will give you a large red flag to be hoisted

on a pole near the Bon fire, and some blue colored tape may be sewn on in large letters E S S E X. Thus talked the woman to herself, when she carried her Eggs on her head to market, she sat them, she hatched them, she sold them for a Crown apiece, & then down she fell, Eggs and all, & the anticipations of a warm and fruitful imagination, were annihilated in a moment; thus, this is the situation of a disappointed Candidate, who is fed up with hopes from those who wish him well. As I am a little better, nothing prevents my setting off for Detroit immediat[el]y, but the coming of the Prince<sup>30</sup> he is to be here about the 20<sup>h</sup>, my fate is to be determined the 28<sup>h</sup>.

Leith tells me you have written to me but the opposite party have got hold of the Letter because they guessed its Contents. Have proper booths erected for my friends at the Hustings, employ Forsyth to make large plumb Cake, with plenty of fruit &<sup>ca</sup> & be sure let the Wine be good & plenty. Let the peasants have a fiddle, some beverage & Beef.

If my absence merely should be mentioned as a Bar to my election, You may assure the World that if there is time between the Returns bei[n]g made & the meeting of the assembly, I will come up to take the Sentiments of the County, & I will annually pay Detroit a visit, before I go [to] the Metropolis to meet the Assembly.

forgive me, I worry you out. I have quite an election fever; however it will soon be coold, & let the determination be as it will I shall be perfectly satisfied, & equally obliged to all my good friends.

God bless you & yours, & believe me unfeignedly, faithfully & Affectionately Yours whilst

D. W. Smith

<sup>30</sup> Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent and father of Queen Victoria, came to Canada in the spring of 1791 as commander of the Seventh Regiment. He became a warm friend of Governor Simcoe and on August 21, 1792, arrived at Niagara to pay him a visit, remaining until the twenty-sixth.

## JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

### LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Mouth of Detroit River Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1792.

Dear Sir When I left Niagara, I was requested by M<sup>r</sup> Smith to wait on you the moment of my arrival at Detroit, to assure you, how sensible he is, of the great obligation he owes to you and his other worthy friends, who have so strenuously supported his interest in the present contest for a representative in the house of Assembly: Be assured Sir, that I should have been extremely happy had circumstances permitted me to have made you a personal report of his sentiments on this occasion, but my late sickness rendered it necessary for me to get ashore as soon as possible.

M<sup>r</sup> Smith (from the experienced goodness and partiality of his friends) flatters himself with the hopes of Success & he purposes, in that event, to make his acknowledgements in person, as soon as his present hurry of indispensable business is a little subsided: And Lest he should have omitted to make application to any of the Electors, he gave me half a dozen addresses with blank superscriptions, which I now beg leave to enclose to you for that purpose

With every sentiment of regard I have the honor to be

D<sup>r</sup> Sir Your Most Obedient humble Servant

John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit.

P. Selby.<sup>31</sup>

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire Detroit

### LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 92.

Dear Sir When I did myself the honor of writing to you yesterday I forgot to mention, that in case M<sup>r</sup> Smith is likely to be hard run, I have some Votes to bring forward at a short notice, but, I would rather avoid their appearing, unless it was absolutely necessary; of this you will be able to judge, in sufficient time, to send me information.

<sup>31</sup> Prideaux Selby was a lieutenant in the Fifth Infantry and for a time assistant secretary of Indian Affairs at Detroit. He seems to have been transferred from Amherstburg to Queenston in the autumn of 1799. From 1809 until his death, May 9, 1813, he was a member of the Executive Council of Upper Canada. See *Simcoe Papers*, I, 150; and mss. in Burton Hist. Coll.



With my best Compliments to all your good family I  
am Dear Sir

Very faithfully Your's &c  
P. Selby

John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire Detroit by M<sup>r</sup> Heward  
at ½ after 2, oClo Saturday afternoon

INQUIRY CONCERNING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Easton Eastern Shore Maryland Aug<sup>t</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1792

M<sup>r</sup> Erskine

D<sup>r</sup> Sir You will no doubt think it strange to find yourself addressed by a person who has not the honor of your acquaintance. I have only to offer as appology, that I am at least your namesake. I am the Son of a Henry Erskine a Clergyman who lived in New townlimavaddy in the North of Ireland, & who was born in a Town called Muff [?] four Miles from Londonderry. I came to this Country very Young, & before I had in my power well to know of what familys I belonged to (or rather to whom I was related) I was home lately, & was also in England. I was there made acquainted with a Widow Campbell of Liverpool whose Maiden name was Sarah Erskine. She told me she was nearly related to me, & also that She had a near relation living in Montreal, at the same time requesting I would endeavour to open a correspondence, & inform her the result. Her wish Sir is nothing more than that of mine, Viz to know who & how her relations are, & would feel happy in that communication.

I avail myself of this opportunity by a M<sup>r</sup> Noel who I got acquainted with this Night at 9 OClock P.M. & who sets out at 4 in the Morning. he says he lives in Montreal, Knows you & that you live not farr from him, this I offer by way of appology, for writing so irregular a scrawl & so abrupt, but if I am Honord with your a[n]swer, hope for more propriety. I am Sir with every sentiment of esteem & respect your most Obed<sup>t</sup> & very Hble Ser<sup>t</sup>

John Erskine.

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> Erskine Merchant Detroit favoured by M<sup>r</sup> Noel

*Endorsed:* Easton Eastern Shore Maryland Aug<sup>t</sup> 18<sup>h</sup> 1792 M<sup>r</sup> John Erskine to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>h</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> July 1793 which Letter delivered to a Quaker.

## FROM DAVID MEREDITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Woolwich, Aug<sup>st</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1792

Dear Sir by a Vessel that goes direct for New York, I do myself the pleasure to again write you from this side the Atlantic, and the particular satisfaction to inform you, of my dear Archang's health, as also that of her Daughters, who grows apace, She mentions having wrote a long letter to her Mother during my absence at Camp, which M<sup>r</sup> Todd was good enough to promise her a conveyance for, and which I hope may be received Previous to this, as She says having wrote the particulars of the Campaign, which by the different Newspapers sent out to Canada during the Summer, I have no doubt by them, your having been apprized the reason, for which Government adopted so politic a measure, as the forming and collecting such a body of Men. I believe to have mentioned to you in my last, the Fears which Ministry appeared to have, for the Safety of our Constitution; which most undoubtedly was in some danger of being broke in upon, by Seditious, and ill minded men, (*perhaps* from *Sinister Motives*) enrolling themselves into Clubs, and Parties, with a view to enflame the peaceable Subject, and render him ripe for a revolt: however I have the pleasure to add, that the Ambition of such Men, has been kept under by a spirited, and timely interference of government. We passed an unmolested Campaign of about Three Weeks, and the desired effect has been produced by the Kings Proclamation, namely an end to disorderly meetings, and Party Clubs. &c. So much for recent Politicks. I shall now proceed to inform you—that the Encamp'd Army, consisted in all of about *Three Thousand Four hundred Men*, which took the Field near Whickham Bushes on Bagshot heath the

23<sup>rd</sup> of last Month, and as the distance from London was only Thirty Miles, (had occasion required), a regular Force could easily have been called upon to act, with every immediate essential. Of our own Regiment, we were near a Thousand Strong, and with Thirty Two pieces of Artillery, and all the necessary Train of Camp Waggons Forges's &c &c. Upon our rout to Camp, we formed a line of March of near Two Miles in Extent. We pitched our Tents on the third day from leaving Woolwich and as the Camp was meant a flying one, (in case of Necessity) the Officers and Soldiers were ord[e]red to take with them but very little baggage; Consequently the *Ladies of the Regiment (tho' the most esteemed part of its baggage)* were under the necessity of remaining at Woolwich to defend the Garrison, untill the Corps returned from the Wars: Our Encampment extended in length a Mile and Quarter, the officers Street most regular[l]ly and beautifully laid out; and formed upon the *Memorable Spot* called *Cesars Camp*, from his having broke ground there, and with his Army occupied the *same*, when He invaded this Country, several of his Works yet remain, and are very fresh. \* \* \* \* \* <sup>32</sup> So much for a hasty Sketch of our Proceedings during the buisness, which I must also say was attended with much fatigue, and as the weather was hot most of us returnd home some Pounds lighter than when we marched from Woolwich. I had the happiness of hearing frequently from my dear Archange, and that her situation was comfortable and contented, and her little Anne occupying her concern, and as letters from me to her, would I was conscious prove a consolation, I generally contrived to write her every other day, however fatigued I might be with the days work. I dined twice with his Grace of Richmond—for so many officers were ask'd each day to his and Sir W<sup>m</sup> Hows Tents. the last day I dined there, who should sit next to me but old Lord Dorchester and his son Guy. His Lordship conversed with me a

<sup>32</sup> The portion of the letter not reprinted here consists of a long, detailed account of the army maneuvers in which Captain Meredith participated.

good deal about Canada and young Guy was glad to meet  
 an old Canada Acquaintance \* \* \* \* \* 33

COMMAND OF DETROIT MILITIA

Detroit Sept<sup>r</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 1792

My Dear Sir The Nancy is Arrived but not the Other  
 Vessells with the Letters. as M<sup>r</sup> Ford sails to morrow morn<sup>e</sup>  
 with our great Men I take a Moment whilst Therese<sup>34</sup> is  
 pouring Out the Tea to write you a line, for I'm now Even  
 as Bussy being one of the Commissioners of the Court of  
 Oyer & Terminer<sup>35</sup> as I was when the Ellection was going  
 On. I havenot had three days to do my own Bussiness  
 these three Weeks. My first Wish as well as that of my  
 Family is that you are all in perfect Health & may long  
 Continue so. I must now commit to your Vigilant Friend-  
 ship a Matter which would affect my feelings if it does not  
 my Interest. I learn that M<sup>r</sup> Jacque Baby was Endeavour-  
 ing to get himself Appointed Lieu<sup>t</sup> Coll of the Detroit  
 Militia was he to Succeed I will not hesitate to say to you  
 that I belief many People would give up their Commissions  
 & that it would Cause some Uneasiness in the Country  
 As to myself I Assure you I would mine I have Endeavoured  
 in as Impartial a Manner as a Man can where he is Interested  
 to Examine his pretentions & my Own on the Score of  
 preferment in the Militia I cannot discover he has any  
 better founded than mine. I'm as good a Subject as he is  
 and I believe in the day of Necessity would have as Many  
 followers as him & those who Government could as Well  
 depend on, as to property I have been possessed of more  
 than Ever he was & tho there is Some difference now on  
 that head perhaps before he reaches My time of life there

<sup>33</sup> The remainder of the letter, which is very long, is devoted to army maneuvers and to the progress of the Revolution in France.

<sup>34</sup> Therese Askin, later the wife of Thomas McKee, for whom see *ante*, 376.

<sup>35</sup> On the Court of Oyer and Terminer in this period, see Riddell, *Michigan Under British Rule*, *passim*. The record of this particular session of the court is given in chap. viii.

may be little or none. I know this Information is Needless to you my meaning for troubling you with it is that it may in case of Necessity Serve as Reasons to be Advanced by you & my Other Fri[e]nds to the Governor why he should not be put Over me In the Militia in Case any Such thing was Intended. I have no Wish nor desire to be Advanced Over Any deserving man whoes right is better than mine. nor will I Ever Suffer any person whoes pretentions are not greater to be put Over me without Showing that Resentm<sup>t</sup> Every man of Spirit in my Oppinion Shouled. you know I Serve my King & Country chearfully in the Small Matters Committed to my Charge without Asking or Seeking for other reward than being treated by Govern<sup>t</sup> with that Attention I hope my Character Merits. I Neither dislike M<sup>rs</sup> B nor Any of her Family, I Only mean to Oppose the Ambition of her Sons where their Intentions are to Rule over me, & to your kindness & that of my Other Friends Round his Excellency I give the Charge of preventing them & beg you will make my Sentiments on this Head known to such of you[r] & my Acquaintances as may be Necessary, time not permitting me to write M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton & Others on this Subject

[John Askin]<sup>36</sup>

FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara. 24 Sep<sup>r</sup> 92.

My dear friend, Altho I have little news to send you yet I cannot let the Chippeway return without writing you a few lines. Your Petition from the Merchants has been handed to the Governor; M<sup>r</sup> Macomb<sup>37</sup> & I cannot yet answer the Merchants Letter formally; when we are certain as to the result ye shall hear; I fear however from the Silence observed on the occasion of the Memorial, that

<sup>36</sup> Unsigned and unaddressed, but evidently the rough draft of a letter written by John Askin to D. W. Smith.

<sup>37</sup> William Macomb, member of the first Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, for whom see *ante*, 108.

it does not auger well. I am working day & night to effect a police bill for you in such manner as to prevent & obviate all your difficulties, & my struggles shall not be wanting to bring it to maturity.

I hope to get my accounts from you before Winter, that I may liquidate it, in Case it exceeds the bill already sent, & a few pounds perhaps in my good f[r]iend George Leiths hands, to whom give my ever warmest regards as well as to the worthy Doctor,<sup>38</sup> God for ever bless you & yours prays all this family, particularly

D W Smith

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire. Detroit

*Endorsed:* Niagara Sept<sup>r</sup> 24<sup>h</sup> 1792 Lieu<sup>t</sup> D. W. Smith to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup>

#### LEGISLATIVE VIEWS OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara. 28. Sep<sup>r</sup> 1792

My worthy friend! I received your Letter of the 20<sup>h</sup> In<sup>s</sup>. My Mother returns thanks for the apples, which you advise to be on their way. by the last Ship I transmitted you a Bill for £200 Ny. which with what I have in M<sup>r</sup> Leiths hands may perhaps pay the Costs; if Not I beg for the accounts by Leith & they shall be liquidated, with a thousand thanks. We have done little as Yet, One Grand bill for the General Settlement of the Law of the Land will I expect pass; & we have passed a Jury bill in general terms thro' our house with some difficulty—a bill to enable 2 Justices to try for 40 [shillings] without appeal, is in great forwardness. Ways & means seem the great difficulty. one or two Committees for that purpose have proved nearly abortive. I proposed that [every] Landholder should pay one farthing P[er] acre P[er] annum for all Lands above 200 Acres, which I conceived would not burden the Settler, but the Court party & the popular party were both against me & I stood alone in the House. however

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Harffy, for whom see *ante*, 304.

I am still of opinion that a Land tax, whether it goes by that Name or not, Must eventually take place. I act from principle. Altho I value the worlds opinion somewhat, I cannot conceive that one farthing raised by the House of Assembly can be deemed onerous, when the Magistrates in Quarter Sessions will probably have power to raise much greater Sums. M<sup>r</sup> Powell<sup>39</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> Baby have set off this Evening for New York.

God bless You my ever valued f[r]iend  
believe me Yours

D W Smith

*Addressed:* John Askin Esquire. Detroit.

*Endorsed:* Niagara Sep<sup>r</sup> 28<sup>h</sup> 1792 L<sup>t</sup> D. W. Smith to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>h</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1792.

FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara. 2<sup>d</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1792

My dear Sir! Nothing very particular occurs, but I cannot omit scribbling you a few lines. I am unfortunate in my endeavours to do what I conceive would serve ye[?] in general. I proposed a bill to enable the Magistrates in Quarter Sessions to levy County Rates, but it has been thrown out. I have been of opinion also that the Magistrates in Q<sup>r</sup> Sessions should choose the different County, Town, & Parish officers, but that it seems wont succeed either, Most of the Members being for a Town Meeting & that these offices should be elective. however as I conceive these Meetings to have been the Cause of [the] late unhappy Rebellion, & must always be attended with Riot & Confusion, it does not meet my ideas. I think the Majesty of the people should never be called together but to choose their Representative for the House of Assembly; & perhaps to

<sup>39</sup> William Dummer Powell, who came to Detroit from Canada in 1789 with the appointment of judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He remained here until 1794, when, on the reorganization of the judicial system of Upper Canada, he was made judge of the Court of King's Bench, thereby necessitating his removal to the capital of the province. For his career see William Renwick Riddell, *Life of William Dummer Powell* . . . (Lansing, 1924).

assemble them without an instrument from the Governor may be illegal, & to force that Instrument from him by Law, May be an Infringement of His prerogative. I have been working a hundred ways to get your fire bill passed, & this day I have brought something into the House, which I think will succeed & answer the purpose. it is that whenever there shall be found in any space of half a mile Square, 40 Houses therein, it shall be lawful for the Magistrates in Q<sup>r</sup> Sessions to make regulations for the prevention of fire in that place. The Great delicasy & difficulty started is mentioning the Name of the Town of Detroit. however as the Proclamation unquestionably in my opinion puts you in the County of Kent; I trust you will find no difficulty, as the bill is framed merely to serve Detroit. No answer to the Merchants Memorial, which on all hands seems as difficult as it is desirable to execute. The Etiquette of Courts is too often but Silence, when they cannot comply with the Petition; I fear by no answer being given to this, that nothing can be done therein, from the Knowledge I have of the L<sup>d</sup> Dep<sup>t</sup>. Th[e] Gov<sup>r</sup> has thrust another troublesome task on my Shoulders, for which I have neither salary or fees, altho he has given me a Commission to act as Surveyor General til the King's pleasure is known. The Democratical party seem to think will lead me to think as the Government wishes, but I hope I am above bias, & I do not feel it at all incompatible to discharge my duty to my Constituents; & at the same time have regard to the general Interests of the Unity of the Empire. Our House of Assembly for the most part have violent levelling principles, which are totally different from the ideas I have been educated with. The Neighboring States are to[o] often brought in as patterns & models, which I neither approve or Countenance. I think Modesty should be the Characteristic of our first Assembly. I conceive it political, prudent & grateful & I am confident the contrary behaviour wont succeed to do the Country any good. Whatever may be the future prospects of designing Men; we can not at present exist without the Assistance of Great Britain; she has ever shewn herself a foster Mother to



Her Colonies, & any procedure which I conceive tends to divide the Interests of the Parent Kingdom, & all her Colonies, I will oppose with all my weight. on this principle I have voted against an add<sup>l</sup> duty on Rum, first because I conceive it a Regulation of Commerce, & that the Parliament has reserved the right of imposing such dutys to themselves, because as Guardians of all the Colonies, she would not suffer one to infringe too much on the produce of another. Secondly, because West Indian Rum in that Case would pay 2<sup>o</sup> the duty of Rum distilled in lower Canada, or at least nearly twice.

& thirdly I conceive that an add<sup>l</sup> Duty on W I. Rum, tends to a partial Prohibition, & that we are only losing our time, & flattering ourselves with vain supplys, because I conceive the Governor has no power; or the parliament inclination, to ratify such an Act. I am thus particular, that if you think proper you m[a]y explain my reasons to my friends & constituents, altho not to give up my Letter; for altho I wish you to consider it confidential; there is Nothing in it I am convinced that is not worthy the Sentiment<sup>t</sup> of an Assembly Man.

The family most heartily say! God bless you

P.S. I have been conversing in the Cabinet, the Leveé & the Office, respecting the Militia which I believe will not be organized this Year. I do not find any promise has been made to the Young frenchman<sup>40</sup> to be Colonel, but I rather think he will be appointed Sub Lieutenant of one of the Countys, in which case I suppose he wont take a Commission himself, but will probably have the appointment of the Justices & Militia Officers. I think it wont be for Kent, but cannot speak positively.

*Endorsed:* Niagara Oct<sup>r</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> 1792 Lieu<sup>t</sup> D. W. Smith to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>h</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The allusion is to Jacques Baby. See *ante*, 433-34.

## FROM MADELAINE ASKIN TO JOHN ASKIN

Landing 15 octobre 1792

Mon Cher Papa J'ai recue votre Lettre avec bien de la Joië Je suis flatté que toute la famille soit en parfaite sante. J'espere que le bon dieu nous fera Cette grâce. J'entend tous Les Jours que theresse Se porte de mieux en mieux Cest une grande Consolation pour nous qui sommes Eloigné d'avoir des nouvelles si avantageusse au sujet d'hiverner vous me ditte dans votre affectionné Lettre que Ce que Je fairai sera bien faitte quil Est rare de trouver des parents telle que le ciel moi destiné vous me marquer que si Je desire de retourner que Maman et vous me recevront avec tendresse. Je le scai que trop bien. Cest la raison pourquoi Je penche tant de Ce Coté. Je Craint que Je ne soit point digne de tant de bonté de votre part ainsi que Ma chere maman à qui J'ai milles obligations J'ai montre ma Lettre à Kity mais comme elle trouve comme vous que Cest une chose délicatte elle me laisse faire à ma volonté. Cest une affaire bien serieusse pour moi de decider mon choix, mais bien souvent il faut faire des petits cent sacrifice Car mon cher papa Je me flatte que vous pensé que Cest un pour moi mais quoique Je nai jamais fait voir mes sentiments à Ce sujet ma soeur Cest toujours flatté que Je hiverneroit avec elle. Ce seroit un désappointement, si Je montoit. mais J'espere de bon printemp de retourner au Detroit. Je scai que vous vous interessé a mon heurusseté, ainsi Je vous dirai que Cette endroit est plus gaië à présent, quelle netoit au Commencement. Je ne croit point que nous auront des partis en Cariolle Comme Ceux que j'ai en L'hiver passé à la fontaine Car il ny a point à peine de nêge ici mais J'auroit le plaisir d'en parler avec les dames du 5em. Car Je vous assure quil regrette le Detroit tous les Jours la famille de Major Smyth vous assure de leurs souvenirs ils ont été bien Désappointé apres Ce que vous aviê prômis il me demandoit quelque fois hé bien Madelaine pensé vous que votre papa dessendera. Je leur disoit que Je n'osoit point me flatté. Car Je Connoit Maman Linquiétude que Ca lui auroit Causé, mes tendres souvenirs

à maman, ainsi que tous les Enfants que Jembrasse de tous mon Coeur. Jespere que le bon dieu vous favorisera d'une bonne hiver et bonne santé. Ceson Les Souhairs de vôtre affectionné

filie Madelaine Askin

Kity vous assure de ses tendre Souvenirs ainsi que maman. Mr. Grant se porte bien il y a quelques Jours que Je ne lai vue mais Mr Hamilton lui a parlé Ce matin il se retire chez Major Smyth.

M<sup>r</sup> Askin

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Detroit favor Mr park

### *Translation*

Landing,<sup>41</sup> October 15, 1792

Dear Papa: I received your letter with great joy and I am glad that all the family are in perfect health. I hope that the good God will show us the same kindness. I understand that Therese gets better and better every day. It is a great comfort to us who are far away to have such good news. About the winter, you tell me in your affectionate letter that whatever I shall do will be right. How rarely does one find parents such as heaven has destined for me! You say that if I wish to return, Mama and you will receive me tenderly. I know that only too well. It is why I rely so much on that relationship. I fear I am in no way worthy of all your kindness, and that of my dear Mama to whom I owe a thousand favors. I showed my letter to Kitty<sup>42</sup> but she thinks as you do that it is a delicate matter and she leaves the choice to my own free will. It is very hard for me to decide, but often indeed one must make a hundred little sacrifices and I am glad, dear Papa, that you think it is one for me, but though I have never showed any feeling in the matter, my sister is always congratulating herself

<sup>41</sup> This letter was written at Queenston, where the writer was staying in the home of her brother-in-law, Robert Hamilton.

<sup>42</sup> Catherine Hamilton, eldest daughter of John Askin, for whom see *ante*, p. 68.

that I shall spend the winter with her. It would be a disappointment to her if I went up but I hope to return to Detroit early in the spring. I know that you are interested in my happiness so I shall tell you that this place is much gayer now than it was. I have no expectation of having cariole parties like those I had last winter at Springwells, for there is scarcely any snow here, but I may have the pleasure of talking about them with the ladies of the 5th. I assure you they regret leaving Detroit. The family of Major Smith<sup>43</sup> assures you constantly of their remembrance. They were much disappointed after what you promised. He asks me sometimes: "Well, Madelaine, do you think your father will come down?" I tell him I dare not give myself that pleasure, for I understand Mama, and the anxiety that would cause her.

My affectionate remembrance to Mama and to all the children whom I kiss from my very heart. I hope that the good God will favor you with a pleasant winter and good health, the wishes of

Your loving daughter  
Madelaine<sup>44</sup>

Kitty assures you of her love as also Mama. Mr. Grant is well. I have not seen him for some days but Mr. Hamilton spoke to him this morning. He has gone to Major Smith's.

<sup>43</sup> Major John Smith, father of David W. Smith, for whom see *ante*, 407. He entered the British army in 1755, was commissioned lieutenant in 1768, and served in America during the Revolutionary War. In March, 1783, he was commissioned major, and in 1787 was attached to the Fifth Regiment. From 1790 to 1792 he was stationed at Detroit as commandant, and from 1792 until his death in 1795 he commanded Fort Niagara. Before his death he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel of the regiment. See *Simcoe Papers, passim*; British army registers; and *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XXIV, *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Madelaine Askin, second daughter of John Askin and his Indian consort. At the home of Robert Hamilton, Madelaine became acquainted with Dr. Robert Richardson, a surgeon in the Queen's Rangers, and the couple was married there, Jan. 24, 1793. Dr. Richardson was a native of Scotland, who had come to Upper Canada in 1792 as assistant surgeon in the Rangers. Until 1802 he was stationed with his regiment at Queenston, Toronto, and St. Joseph Island. Because of the impracticability of accompanying her husband to the two latter stations mentioned, Mrs. Richardson made her home, first at Queenston and subsequently with her parents at Detroit. In 1802 the Rangers were disbanded, and such as desired were sent back to England. Dr. Richardson, however, secured the post of surgeon to the garrison at Amherstburg, and remained in Canada. In 1802 he was appointed judge of the District Court for the Western District, which office he held until his death in 1832.

## FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara 19 Oct<sup>r</sup> 92

My dear Sir: I have received your Letters & your account, with which I am perfectly satisfied, I shall not fail to improve on the ideas you have given me in your Letter, & introduce them into the House of Assembly at our next meeting—indeed I shall wish to be guided in a great measure, by y<sup>r</sup> advices—if there is any thing I can serve the people of the New Settlement in, I beg I may be informed. I am afraid this Country may hold me longer to it than I am aware, particularly if I succeed in another Election, but that I can hardly expect unless I have interest enough to get the votes of the french & the English divided. The Council have been sitting on Land business a long time; & troops of our Neighbours are coming in to occupy Townships bodily. In order to give me some weight in the Counties, I have petitioned for 1200 Acres therein, & a minute of the Council goes to the board for that purpose. Essex is chiefly located, so dont forget me in Suffolk, I shall send you my petition for the Exact Spots. The Gov<sup>r</sup> is much better, & I hope to attend him to Detroit before the Houses meet, if he is not drawn away, in search of his Capital.

My little Boy has been very ill, taken suddenly, I called in 4 of the faculty, & by the violent application of a blister he is somewhat better, & we have hopes of him. this is the 2<sup>d</sup> time he has been tortured with the Cantharides. As I am uncertain Whether M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Niff belongs to my départment, & of course whether he is under my controul; so I have forebore to write to him, but that will soon be discovered. I have had several private Confabs with the Chief about the Continuation of the Court of Common

Madeline Askin died at Amherstburg, Jan. 10, 1811. She was the mother of eight children, one of whom, William, married Jane Cameron Grant, youngest daughter of Commodore Grant. A son, John, born in 1796, became noted as a Canadian journalist and author; two others, James and Alexander, were drowned in Lake Erie in 1828.

Dr. Richardson married (second), Aug. 8, 1811, Ann McGregor, daughter of Gregor McGregor, and a native of Detroit. Seven children were born of this union. See editorial introduction to Richardson's *War of 1812* (Toronto, 1902), by Alexander C. Castleman.

pleas, but I find the law will admit of it for reasons hereafter to be explained to you. The 40 Bill which I brought into the house will I hope obviate the difficultys You mention of Debtors under £10, not being subject to imprisonment. Send me word the particulars of what you wish relative to the Navigation, & I have little doubts of carrying thro'. The Proofs relative to the Delivery of goods are hard & require mature deliberation as to amendment. I communicated the purport of your Letter to the Commodore, & shall to M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton. M<sup>r</sup> Macomb is gone!!!

That God may bless you & Yours prays

All the Smiths

*Endorsed:* Niagara Oct<sup>r</sup> 19<sup>h</sup> 1792 L<sup>t</sup> D. W. Smith to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> the 2<sup>d</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT NIAGARA

Niagara 20 Oct 1792.

My dear Sir: Since I wrote to you yesterday I have rec<sup>d</sup> your Letter of 13 In<sup>s</sup> P[er] our good friend George Leith.

I shall certainly be acquitted for having proposed a land Tax, having at the very time a petition before the Governor & Council in the Name of my father & myself, for 6400 Acres, which is since secured or rather ordered in Council. this circumstance will be the strongest that I have acted from Principle, & should Malicious reports be spread, I beg you will promulgate my sentiments, situation & concern relative to the said Land business. Every one, myself included, are willing for a Rum tax, but in my opinion there is a difficulty or rather delicacy in imposing it. And I think the first principles of our Legislation Should be guided by modesty, & what will most likely class with the opinions of those, whose concurrence in sentiment the Law has rendered necessary.

The Young french Gentleman has been so strongly recommended at Quebec, & his interest is considered so valueable, that perhaps it would be reckoned indecent to attempt the thwarting of what seems settled; however I have doubts,

that the Lord Lieut<sup>e</sup> will take place; & I believe the General Cry is against it.

My interest shall be exerted to get you the Command of a troop. His Excellency approves of Horse in all the Districts, & circular Letters are gone to the Militia Commandants on the Subject, Col Englands recommendation would certain[ly] have weight, & should be sent as soon as possible, & the like recommendation from Col M<sup>e</sup>Kee, who would surely give it, will I conceive seal your wishes, & confirm the Appointment.

My Appointment of Surveyor General, is merely temporary.

The family say God bless you, & send you & yours long life, believe nobody wishes it More than

D W Smith

*Endorsed:* Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>

FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara 28 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1792.

Dear Sir: I have had a good deal of Conversation about your light troop; I think the Governor wishes it much; but I would by no means have You neglect to procure the recommendation of Col<sup>a</sup> England<sup>45</sup> & M<sup>e</sup>Kee. I fear there is no power in this Country to put the Cap<sup>n</sup> of Militia on pay, or Even to pay for their Arms at present. Your Rifle is very good I think; but not altogether calculated for light Horse; it is rather too heavy, & want Rings &c<sup>s</sup> as on all light horse Carbines.

I beg You will improve on the idea among my Constituents of My having a Grant of 1400 Acres within the Counties, & that I shall build thereon, & make some kind of

<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Richard England of the Twenty-fourth Regiment was the last British commandant of Detroit, serving here in 1791 and again from 1793 until the end of the British régime in 1796. Colonel England subsequently attained the rank of lieutenant general in the British army. A son, also named Richard, born at Detroit in 1793, served with distinction in the Crimean War and attained the rank of general. He died in 1883. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

Establishment When I am rich enough. this will surely satisfy them a good deal, & I know you will take every advantage of it.

My little Boy continues poorly. Leith is quite impatient. The rest of the family in midling health, that you & yours may be long healthy, wealthy & happy prays fervently

D W Smith.

*Addressed:* John Askin Esq<sup>r</sup> Detroit

*Endorsed:* Lieu<sup>t</sup> D. W. Smith to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>h</sup>  
Nov<sup>r</sup>

FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara. 7. Nov<sup>r</sup> 1792

My good friend! As this will probably be the last Opportunity I shall have of writing You before the Winter Express, I take up the pen, to scrawl a few lines; & to assure you how much I value & prize your Friendship. The Leutenants of Counties seem to be a settled thing, & Commission goes up by this opportunity for Colonel M<sup>o</sup>Kee, appointing him for Essex, & I understand one of the same Nature for Kent is filled up for M<sup>r</sup> Baby. these Commissions authorize the recommendation for Magistrates & Militia Officers. I argued much on this subject & made use of all the information You gave me, but to no purpose. as I suppose therefore You will prefer being in the list of Magistrates & Militia on the Essex Side, & as you have landed property there; You will of course be able to make any arrangements You wish under the Auspices of Colonel M<sup>o</sup>Kee; to whom I have written to be appointed a Magistrate, & not to be forgotten in the Militia.

As to News here, We have none, not even a scandalous story.

I expect you will be well prepared with Memorandums for me in the Spring, relative to what amendments you want in the present Laws.

Give my best wishes to the Commodore, tell him I have again been speaking about M<sup>r</sup> Hay, & that I have



yet hopes the Governor will try to do something for him. His Excellcy is well disposed to serve the Son<sup>46</sup> of the late L<sup>t</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup> Hay. I think [a] Naval or preventive officer at Oswego, may be the first Effort[?] of Service to him.

The family as usual add their prayers for your health & long life & of those belonging to you, & I most heartily say, Amen!

Your H Serv<sup>t</sup>

D W Smith

I am likely to get some of my Land board Money

*Endorsed:* Recv<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>h</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>

FROM DAVID W. SMITH TO JOHN ASKIN

Niagara. 13 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1792.

My very good friend. I have received your letter of 2<sup>d</sup> November, which gave me its usual satisfaction. I do assure you upon my honor, I have done every thing in my feeble power to get your wishes gratified; I am bound to it not only from Inclination & Gratitude but from Honesty, for I consider my self much in your debt, but I am sorry to say my interest seems very feeble to the accomplishment of your desires. I am afraid you have conceived I am a favorite with the Governor; so far as a discharge of the trusts committed to my care, entitles me to it; I believe I am, but beyond that, I know nothing of the Cabinet. however I have not failed to oppose the measures which seem odious to you, nor feared to say so. the Interest which brought the Young French Gentleman into the Councils, has prevailed in having him appointed Lord Lieutenant for the County of Kent, & that interest was not only planted previous to the Governments taking place, but seems to have taken exuberant Root in Quebec; where his

<sup>46</sup> Probably Pierre Henry Hay, who was born at Detroit, Sept. 11, 1765, the son of Jehu Hay and Marie Julie Réaume, for whom see *ante*, 67. The Ste. Anne's Church records do not list any other son of Jehu Hay who lived to grow up, but in Henry Hay's Journal of 1789-90 mention is made of his brother "Johnny," and the latter was later a prominent resident of Cahokia. See Wis. Hist. Soc., *Proceedings*, 1914, p. 225; Thwaites and Kellogg (eds.) *Revolution on the Upper Ohio* (Madison, 1908), 130; and power of attorney of John Hay to Jean B. Askin, ms. in Wm. Robertson Papers, in Burton Hist. Col.

Consequence, his Interest, his Property, & his Loyalty, seem to have been blazoned in lively tropes. I shall however Yet endeavour to fall on some Scheme of getting this independant troop of horse established for you. Should ever my interest be courted, I can ask too; & *I pledge* myself to you never to sell it, but to accomplish your wishes. I am happy to find you entertain thoughts of being returned at the next Election, as it will be highly flattering to me to resign to my worthy Patron. Having struggled to put the Constitution on a good & permanent basis, I shall bow to my Constituents, thank them, & put my hand to the Plow.

The Road for the New Settlement shall be asked, & if I cant get troops, I will try to get it cut by a formidable Surveying party.

The Dutch Minister shall have my support for his Provisions, but the Governor can do little out of his Council, & I am fearful has no power to bestow a single Ration. The approved Provision List was sent to Quebec, before my time. We will have a confab in the Spring about the Number of members to be sent, & how the District ought to be divided. The assembly will I believe meet at Niagara the first 4 Years, The Seat of Government is yet undetermined. I have nothing more to say at present, than that if ever I have a Stiver of Interest or Influence with the Government it shall be exerted to the adoption of your Services, to which I am ever bound, being your debtor from Gratitude & Justice—I wish you by no means to neglect your applications to the Commodore & M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton. their Age & Situations in the Province make their recommendations of weight.

May God bless you, say the Major, My Mother, Anne & your ever faithful & much obliged humble servant

D W Smith.

Please God I shall see you early in May for 2 or 3 days. tell my Constituents I have a proper sense of their goodness, & my duty to them.

*Endorsed:* recv<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>h</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>

ENGAGEMENT OF JOHN HARDOCK, SAILOR

Detroit  
 District of Hesse

Before François Desruisseaux Bellecour Notary residing at Detroit and the Witnesses under Written Was present John Hardock Sailor Who by thise presents Engages himself as Such to M<sup>r</sup> John Drake<sup>47</sup> residing at River Rouge in the parish of S<sup>te</sup> anne, from the first day of the Currant Month of November to the end of the Navigation next year, in the Winter Season he is to do all Kind of work that he is Capable of, as directed by the Said John Drake Such as Cutting Squaring Sawing and Carting Timbers &° he is to be duly attentive on Board the Vessel he Shall Serve and during the Winter is to take proper Care of all Merchandises peltries Utensils and all other things Committed to his charges, to serve obey and Execute faithfully and diligently all that the Said John Drake or his representatives Shall lawfully order him to do, to beheve himself as an honest and faithful Servant ought, Nor his [is] he to quit the Said John Drake's Service, nor absant himself, under the penalty of the ordinance of the province and of losing his Wages,

In consideration whereof the Said John Drake obliges himself by this presents to pay unto the Said John Hardock the Sum of five pounds N. york Currency for each Month after the Expiration of his time agreeable to each party's Consent promissing &° Obliging &° Done at the Said Detroit in the Said Notary's office the Twinty eighth day of November in the year one thousand Seven hundred and ninety two, Signed Sealed and delivered. Signed in the presance of John Askwith<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> John Drake lived at the River Rouge and commanded a vessel which plied between Detroit and Mackinac, engaged in the Northwest trade. Jacob Lindley of the Quaker peace delegation which visited Detroit in 1793, reports that Drake had formerly been engaged in the Guinea slave trade, and describes him as "remarkable for using no kind of drink but water." See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, 598, 642-43. In 1798 Drake was living at the River Thames.

<sup>48</sup> John Askwith was an Englishman who came to Detroit from Montreal in the summer of 1792 under an engagement as clerk, apparently to John Askin. He was a man of some education, and although he early formed a highly unfavorable opinion

John Haydck  
John Drake

F D Bellecour N P (L. S.)

*Endorsed:* Engagement of John Hardock to M<sup>r</sup> John Drake of the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1792 Expedition

PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD A WINDMILL AND SHIP

Articles of Agreement Made and Concluded upon By & between John Askin of Detroit Merchant of the One Part & George Meldrum & William Park also of Detroit Merchants & Copartners of the Other Witnessit—

That the said John Askin & the said Meldrum & Park hereby Jointly Agrees to build and Erect a Wind Mill to be Situated as will be hereafter Mention'd and Also to Build & Compleatly Rig & finish a Vessell Ready for Navigating as Early as may be Convenient Next Spring Both Enterprises to be Conducted & Carried on as is Stipulated in the following Articles Vis—

Article 1<sup>st</sup> That for & in Consideration of the Sum of Thirty Pounds New York Currency paid to the Said John Askin One Half thereof by the said Meldrum & Park the Receipt thereof he hereby acknowledges Sells, Grants & Conveys Unto the Joint Concern of John Askin & Meldrum & Park a Parcell or Lot of Ground Situated on the West of the Spring Well and Part of that Land presently known by the Name of the Race Ground.<sup>49</sup> Containing Four Acres in front———& Acres in Depth which

of Detroit and expressed a determination to leave as soon as his contract should permit, he remained until his death, which occurred in the Indian country, in the summer or autumn of 1795. He received an appointment as notary and as clerk to the district court, and these things aside, engaged actively in extensive land speculations. Before coming to Detroit he had a daughter by Margaret Jarvis of Montreal. Although the union was not sanctioned by marriage, Askwith seems to have acknowledged his responsibility for the support of the child. See documents printed *post* in this volume, *Askin Papers* (mss.) *passim*, and *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XXIII, 399.

<sup>49</sup> This tract later became known as Private Claim 39 or the John Harvey farm. For the notable legal contest waged over it see *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, IV, No. 1, and mss. in *Burton Hist. Coll.*

brings it to the borders of the Meadows or Marshe In the Rear, the said parcel or Lot of Land being purchased for & to be Appropriated Solelly for the purpose of Erecting thereon a Wind Mill to Appertain to the Same.

Article 2<sup>nd</sup> That John Askin undertakes & Obliges himself to undertake the Sole direction ordering and Conducting Carrying on building & Compleating the said Wind Mill according to the plan Mutually agreed upon and from him only shall the Master Workmen & the men Employed therein Receive their Orders & directions respecting the Same Notwithstanding which no New Matter, Modle, Alteration or Expençe which may hereafter require to be Added Alter'd or incer'd can be done but by and with the Consent of said Meldrum & Park prior to such Matter taking place.

Article 3<sup>rd</sup> That all Workmen Necessary for the said Building to be engaged by Written Agreements and with the Approbation of all the Concerned That the said Workmen are to be Acquaijnted at the time of Engaging that they are to Receive from John Askin One half of their Wages and from Meldrum & Park the Other half.

Article 4<sup>th</sup> That whatever Art[i]cles or Materials which are or may hereafter be wanted & Necessary to Carry on Continue & Compleat Said Wind Mill the said Parties are Each to furnish Equally one half and to be deliv<sup>d</sup> when demanded in Order the Work may not be Retarded. Should John Askin furnish more of any article than his One half by Meldrum & Park not furnishing Theirs when required then & in that Case Meldrum & Park is to Account to John Askin for the Same. As shall be mutually agreed upon at the time of Requisition.

Article 5<sup>th</sup> That John Askin promisses & Obliges himself to fu[r]nish all the proVissions Necessary for the people So Employed in that Work Meldrum & Park oblidging themselves to Render unto the said John Askin once in Two Months their One half of Such proVissions as he may Expend if he Requires it. And that the said John Askin from the Signing of these presents promisses & Obliges himself to Superintend all the Business of said Building &

Erecting said Mill So that no time may be lost and to Keep all the Accounts of Expences Mens Wages &ca. in pace with the Work.

Article 6 The saids John Askin & Meldrum & Park have agreed to Make Offer to the NW C<sup>o</sup> of One Third Share in the said Vessell which if not Accepted of The said John Askin is only to hold the same Share of this Vessel as he now holds in the Sloop Saguinaw, Promissing to receive back in Same Speciest [Species] of Materials &ca. which may be required & furnished in Building said Vessel and which he may furnish Over the Quantity which would be only required in his holding only the Same Share as in the Sloop Saguinaw

Article 7 That Meldrum & Park promisses & Obliges themselves to Undertake the Sole direction ordering & Conducting the Building of said Vessel according to the plan Mutually agreed upon & to be restri[c]ted in Same manner & in like Cases as John Askin is in the proceeding Article 2, respecting the Mill.

Article 8 That Meldrum & Park engage such Workmen as is Necessary for the Building Compleating said Vessel and to be Guided and restricted in the same & like Manner as John Askin in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Article respecting the Mill.

Article 9 That Meldrum & Park shall on Any Materials being required for the New Vessel Make requisition of John Askin for his Own half and the same to be furnished as is Specified in the 4<sup>th</sup> Article respecting the Mill.

Article 10<sup>th</sup> That Meldrum & Park promisses & Obliges themselves to furnish & provide proVissions for the people Employed in the said service & to be regulated as Specified for the proVissions for those Employed at the Mill in Article the 5. And that the saids Meldrum, & Park promises & Obliges themselves from the Signing of These presents to Superintend all the Business of the Building of Said Vessell So that no time may be lost and to Keep all the accounts of Expences Mens Wages &ca, in pace with the Work.

In Testimony Thereof the saids John Askin & Meldrum & Park have Severally Sign<sup>d</sup> this Agreement at Detroit

Western District & County of Kent in the Year of Our Lord 1792, & on the 30 Day of November 1792.

George Meldrum  
William Park

FROM WILLIAM ROBERTSON TO JOHN ASKIN

London 5<sup>th</sup> December 1792.

Dear Sir: Your obliging letter of 20<sup>th</sup> August reached me here 22<sup>d</sup> ult. It gave me much pleasure to find you all enjoy your health so well: the interest I take in whatever concerns you will always make such information agreeable, & will afford a peculiar satisfaction to me in every opportunity of demonstrating my inclination to render any of the family service wherever they are.

I thank you for your political information: your new government I think must give you general satisfaction: it is that system I have ardently wished as the greatest good that could befall Canada: temper & moderation in the new legislators will do as much good as more shining abilities, which can not always be found in a country so new. I think you [were] right on your own account in declining a [seat in] the assembly. for the public interest, perhaps I could have wished it otherwise. I shall not fail to put you in fortune's way by purchasing you a ticket in the lottery. if she had not been blind, I think she would not have passed you by so often. I hope she will reward your constancy & patience; for my part I have no opinion of her. I shall also send you a seal, now I know of what kind you want it. Goods of every kind are very high, & likely to be higher. Of the astonishing successes of the French, & other political matters you will hear from M<sup>r</sup> Meredith who no doubt writes you. We are preparing for war, & in order to support Holland against France. I fear the worst. Our prospect as to furs is very gloomy indeed.

With respectful compliments & best wishes to all the family, I am, Dear Sir, Your very Humble servant,  
William Robertson

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

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*Addressed:* John Askin, Esq<sup>r</sup> Merchant, Detroit. Care of  
Mess<sup>rs</sup> Todd M<sup>c</sup>Gill, & C<sup>o</sup> Merchants Montreal  
[In another hand] Private to M<sup>r</sup> Askin

*Endorsed:* London Dec<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>h</sup> 1792 M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Robertson to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> June