

## SECTION IV

LETTERS AND PAPERS: 1786

FROM JOHN HECKENWELDER TO JOHN ASKIN

River Huron Jan<sup>ry</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, I find myself yet in want of Bags for Your Corn having filled all what I have. I cannot just now exactly tell the Number I have, untill I shall have removed them, but all the Debts are collected, and have upwards of 700 Bush. sewed up. But I am to recieve some more Corn from M<sup>r</sup> Zeisberger<sup>1</sup> and others, for which Money is expected. Indeed I have recieved of an Indian to the Value of £5 in Corn which is not paid yet. The Money is to pay a Debt which was owing to Justice Williams; perhaps You know a way to settle that. I judge there will be about 70 or 80 Bush. of Corn for which hard Money is wanted. I am no ways forward in assisting any body in demanding Money, but on the contrary try all means to put it off[f], yet some have no ocasion for any thing else, and repeat the Bargain which was made, of which I cannot deny. I therfore hope evry one will be served to his Sattisfaction. If You please to send me by Nathan Lewis<sup>2</sup> the bearer of this one piece of Scotch Sheeting more I think that will serve me, and if I should find that I should not want it all, I would not cut it up, but return the remainder in the Spring. I have about 3 Bush. of Sweet Corn for You to[o], which I purchased at the price You told me. Lewis will fetch me the Sheeting up to my House in his Carryall, but perhaps You would want the Sweet Corn immediately, and would chuse to send a

<sup>1</sup> David Zeisberger was born in Moravia, April 11, 1721. In 1736 his parents came to America, locating in the then new colony of Georgia, whither David (who had been left behind in school) presently followed. In 1740 he arrived at Bethlehem, the chief center of Moravian influence in America. His missionary activities, to which he was to devote the major portion of his life, began in 1744 with a journey to Onondaga, the capital of the Iroquois confederacy. A large part of his labor was devoted to the Delaware tribe, much of the time in Ohio, and four years (1782-86) in Michigan. The later years of his life were spent at Goshen, a settlement founded by him in the Tuscarawas Valley. He died, Nov. 17, 1808. Information adapted from the historical introduction to his *Diary* (Eugene F. Bliss, ed., Cincinnati, 1885).

<sup>2</sup> Nathaniel Lewis was a private in Butler's Rangers who located at Detroit at the close of the Revolution. In 1788 his name was included by Major R. Mathews in the list of allotments of land on the north side of Lake Erie to disbanded troops.

## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

Man for it Yourself. I must likewise desire You to excuse me that I sent for 3 Barrels of Pork, and 2 had been sufficient. But it was not my fault. I was much disappointed by a person neglecting what had been his duty, and therefore have one Barrel yet on hands which I do not see that I can sell for Corn without loss. I believe I could sell it pretty well for Sugar in the Spring, but will do nothing without Your consent. I therefore request of You to let me know, what would be most agreeable to You, to take it down to You again in the Spring or to sell it for Sugar. It is shut just as it was, never opened.

My best Wishes I beg leave to Compliment You with, in the New Year, and am

Dear Sir Your most Obedient Humble Servant

John Heckenwalder<sup>3</sup>

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* River Huron Jan<sup>ry</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1786

M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwalder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>h</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> same day N<sup>o</sup> 1

## SALE OF MORAVIAN VILLAGE

River Huron Feb<sup>ry</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> 1786

Sir It may not be unknown to You, that we the Missionaries, now Living on the River Huron<sup>4</sup> were towards the end of the last War taken and carried with the Christian Indians belonging to Us to Sandusky. We were from thence

<sup>3</sup> John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckenwelder, the noted missionary, was born at Bedford, England, March 12, 1745, the son of a German exile. In 1754 the family migrated to America, locating at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In the spring of 1762 young Heckenwelder accompanied Christian Frederick Post on a journey to the Muskingum, and a few years later he was acting as Zeisberger's assistant in the Susquehanna Valley. After almost a quarter of a century of missionary labors among the western Indians, he retired to Bethlehem in the autumn of 1786, but engaged at various times thereafter in missionary work until his seventieth year, when he retired permanently to his home at Bethlehem. He died Jan. 31, 1823. He is the author of several valuable works pertaining to his labors and to the Indian tribes. Information adapted from Zeisberger's *Diary*, I, xxv-xxvi, and Heckenwelder's *Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians* . . . (Wm. E. Connelley, ed., Cleveland, 1907).

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the work of the Moravian missionaries, here alluded to, an extensive literature has developed. A convenient resumé of the Huron River Moravian settle-

called into Detroit, where in a Council, the Warriors present, our cause was tried, and We honourably acquitted, after which Major, now Col<sup>l</sup> De Peyster furnished us with Necessary's and a Pass to return and Live with our Indians in Peace, but finding soon after that our Life was in Danger, he in the Spring following, sent for Us to come into Detroit. We lived formerly on the River Muskingum, where we had for Years together enjoyed Peace on all sides. We had Three large Villages and thro Industry our Indians were so far advanced, that they hardly knew or remembered of anything they wanted. Large and compleat dwelling Houses, with furniture; a great Number of Horses; upwards of 200 Cattle; besides some hundreds of Hogg's, with the Corn on the Ground ripe for Harvest amounting at a moderate Computation to 5000 Bushel, were either Destroyed there, or afterwards lost. A few Days after our arival at Detroit, Col<sup>l</sup> De Peyster consulted our welfare, and wished with Us, to see Us settled with our Indians again, that they might further be instructed in the Gospel way. He first proposed to Us, to return over the Lake to where our Indians was, and promised evry assistance in his Power, but we being too sensible, that the same People who were the cause of our Destruction were still residing among the Indians, and of whom we had good reason to believe, wished rather the Indians might remain as they was, than to be converted or civilized, would always be ready to do Us any Mischieff which lay in their Power. The Col<sup>o</sup> believing the Aprehen-tion we were under not to be groundless, proposed next: That We and our Indians should settle down the River, either on an Island, or any other place, which might suit Us best, but as objections were made, the Island being to heavy Timbered, and the War path passing by the other places, he at length consulted the Chibbuway Chieffs, and it was agreed upon between them, that We might Live on their Land on this River<sup>s</sup> until Peace should be made, then

ment is published in *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XXX, 63, written by John E. Day and Clarence M. Burton. For further information concerning the Moravians see the *Diary* of David Zeisberger and John Heckenwelder's *Narrative*.

5 The modern Clinton River, known a century ago as the Huron. The site chosen



to return again wherever We chose. He then sent Speeches to our Indians, at and about the Shawnee Towns to invite them in, and after the arrival of the first, informed them of the whole matter. We then accordingly went with those Indians in search of a place, and pitched upon the spot We now live on, which was an entire Wilderness. We begun to Work on our Improvement the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1782, and have continued so untill the present Day, in which time we with our Indians, have built a small Villiage consisting of 27 log Houses, besides some Stables, out Cellars, and smaller Buildings. We have cleared Lands in different places about the Village, made fences ect: so that it appears to Us to be a Valuable Improvement at which, if it suited our Destination, we could now live contentedly and more at ease. But we, being sent by the Bishops of our Church to reside near the Dellaware Nation, to continue to Instruct them in the Gospel, as We had done this Thirty Years past, finding this not to be the proper place, that Nation being so far distant, and they not inclined to change a good hunting ground for a worse, neither, that the one half of the Indians belonging to Us have yet on this present Day joined Us on this very account. And moreover, We having found, that the Chibbuways become more and more Uneasy that We stay here so long on their Land after the peace. And that our Indians, whom they call expert Hunters, destroy all their Game. We therefore, have at length resolved to go to our former place, and for that purpose acquaint You of it. But at the same time We beg leave to ask a favour of You, which is: to sell our Improvement. We do not speak of selling the Land. The Chibbuways have frequently told Us that it belonged to them, and to nobody else. We only mention the Improvement, in which a vast [amount] of Labour is sunk. We understand, that a number of French intend to take posession of our Houses and Labour, without giving Us the least satisfaction, but We believe it to be far from the approbation of a Commanding Officer to see Us

for the settlement was an abandoned Indian village site above the mouth of the river about two miles west of the modern city of Mount Clemens.

served in such a manner. We rather believe that You will direct matters so that Justice may be done Us in that respect. And we are persuaded, could You but take a view of this our Improvement,<sup>6</sup> You would readily acknowledge, that we justly deserve something for it.

We therefore most humbly present this Petition to You, confident of receiving from You a favourable Answer.

We beg yet to mention, that Necessity presses us greatly to such a request, for it is hard to begin again with empty hand.

Written and Signed by

Sir Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> and Humb<sup>e</sup> Servants

Dav. Zeisberger

John Heckenwelder

William Edwards<sup>7</sup>

and in behalf of { George Youngman<sup>8</sup>  
Gottlob Senseman<sup>9</sup>  
Michael Young<sup>10</sup> absent

and in the Name of the Christian Indians with Us

<sup>6</sup> This Major Ancrum did on March 4, when he and Askin visited the settlement. The result of their inspection was a determination to purchase the improvements. Ancrum and Askin each had a land warrant from the government for 2000 acres of land, and by exercising these they gained control of the land adjoining the settlement. See Zeisberger's *Diary*, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> William Edwards was born in Wiltshire, England, April 24, 1724. At the age of twenty-five he became a convert to the Moravian faith and soon afterward migrated to America. He became associated with Zeisberger in 1776 and continued with him for many years. In 1798 he assisted in leading a portion of the converts at Fairfield, Ontario, back to Ohio, where the settlement of Goshen was founded and where Edwards passed his remaining years. He died Oct. 8, 1801. See Zeisberger, *op. cit.*, I, xxv.

<sup>8</sup> John George Youngman was born in Europe in 1720 and came with his parents to Pennsylvania in 1731. Here he early became a convert to the Moravian faith, and served the church in various ways until 1770, when he became Zeisberger's assistant. His missionary labors among the Indians continued with certain intermissions until the abandonment of Huron River settlement in 1786. Youngman then returned to Bethlehem, where he lived in retirement from active church work until his death, July 17, 1808. Zeisberger, *op. cit.*, I, xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Gottlob Senseman was born in Bethlehem, Penn., Oct. 9, 1745. His father was a missionary to the Indians, and his mother was massacred in November, 1755. Senseman, early began the life of a missionary and was long associated with Zeisberger. He was an eloquent speaker and an able teacher. He died at Fairfield, the Moravian mission established in 1792 on the Thames River, and his neglected grave may still be seen in the cemetery near Bothwell. Zeisberger, *op. cit.*, I, xxiii.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Young (Jung) was born in Europe, Jan. 5, 1743, and came with his

*Addressed:* William Ancrum Major<sup>11</sup> Commandant ect:  
at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Recorded in the Land office at Detroit in  
Liber E, folio 12 &<sup>c</sup>

By me  
N<sup>o</sup> 4 B

Geo Hoffman Register

### SALE OF MORAVIAN VILLAGE

River Huron Feb<sup>ry</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, I would fain have mentioned to You sooner, that I had recieved the 30 lb Coffee by M<sup>r</sup> Dolson,<sup>12</sup> but had no proper Opportunity. Now I am to ask Liberty of You in proposing a way, which We think perhaps easiest and best concerning our Improvement, but it is rather to ask Your advice in the matter. We are told, that there are both French and English People watching for Us to leave the place, who immediately intend to go in Our Houses, and make themselves masters of our Labour, without the smalest reward. We therefore, considering our circumstances, (and that We have but a short time to stay, if we,

parents to Maine in 1751. There he became a Moravian and in 1767 he removed to Bethlehem. He spent many years in missionary service. After the removal from Michigan he followed the converts to Fairfield, Ontario, where he remained until the settlement was overrun by General Harrison's army in 1813. Young then retired to Litiz, where he died in 1826. Zeisberger, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> William Ancrum was commissioned captain in the Thirty-fourth Regiment, May 25, 1772, and attained the rank of major, Nov. 11, 1789. He succeeded Colonel De Peyster in the command of Detroit in the spring of 1784, remaining here until the spring of 1786. In the spring of 1801 he was in London, from which place he wrote to Askin about the Moravian land claim near Mount Clemens. In the British army lists his name is spelled "Ancram," although he himself wrote it "Ancrum." In the list for 1804 "William Ancrum" reappears as paymaster of an infantry regiment in the King's German Legion—whether he is identical with the former Detroit commandant we have been unable to determine.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Dolsen was a member, during the Revolution, of Butler's Rangers, and it is probable that he first came to Detroit in this connection. In 1781 he purchased from Gregor McGregor a lot within the fort, and in the deed he is described as a resident of Detroit. In 1789 he is described in another indenture as a tavern keeper at Detroit. The delegation of Quakers who visited Detroit in 1793 in the capacity of peace commissioners lodged with Dolsen, and seem to have conceived a real friendship for him. In like manner he cultivated friendly relations with the Moravians and enjoyed their confidence over a period of years. It seems probable that Dolsen later removed to the Thames River region, where he obtained a grant of land from the local Land Board in the spring of 1792. Dolsen's descendants were



as we intend, to set off as soon as the Lake is clear of Ice) know of no better method, than to lay the matter before the Major of Detroit cet. of whom we are fully persuaded to believe, that he will act impartial, and do Us justice. We therefore being acquainted with You, beg of You, to lay the case before him, and inform him; that We have lived here three Years and an half, that, when we settled first here, we found ourselves in a Wilderness, but by the Industry of about Sixty dilligent hands, have built a small Villige, consisting of 24 log Houses, besides Stables and other small Buildings. That we have cleared Lands, made fences, Gardens, cet. that We therefore cannot think otherwise, than that We ought to have liberty to sell our Labour (We do not mean to sell the Lands but the Labour done on them) and that we therefore beg of the Major to permit Us to do so, as we shall want what little we shall get, to help Us where We shall settle again. Perhaps the next thing then would be, to put up an Advertisement that People might see that not only the Improvement is for sale, but that likewise it is by permission of the Comandant which would be a great encouragement to the buyer. M<sup>r</sup> Dolson who is here at present, and the bearer of this Letter, has a notion of buying it, but he says also, he could not do it without the Majors permission. I am convinced You will, Sir, act in our behalf as much as lies in Your power, and if You have any proposals to make to Us, concerning the matter, such shall be readily accepted, in the mean time I am

Dear Sir Your most Obedient Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>  
John Heckenwelder

P. S. If You have an answer to send to me, M<sup>r</sup> Dolson thinks he will have an Opportunity of forwarding it to me in the corse of a few Days, and as I know of no Indian going to Detroit for the present, You will greatly oblige me in sending the Letter to him.

J. H.

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long prominent in Detroit. Information adapted from *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*; Zeisberger's *Diary*, *passim*; and mss. in William Robertson Papers, in the Burton Hist. Coll.



*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* River Huron Feb<sup>r</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder  
To Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Answ<sup>d</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 1

MAJOR ANCRUM'S RESPONSE TO APPEAL OF MORAVIANS

Detroit March the 1<sup>st</sup> 1786

Gentlemen Your Letter of the 26<sup>h</sup> of last Month to Major Ancrum Commandant of this Post I delivered and to which he desired me to give you the following Answer.

That he looks Upon your Letter as a fair Honnest Narrative of the Manner in which you came to and settled at this Place and as it Appears to him that from a wilderness by your Industry you have made a good Settlement for so Short a time, he thinks it very Just that your labour should not be in Vain, & in Order to Defeat the Ungenirous & mean Intentions of those who you say wait the moment of your Departure to take Possession of your Place without rewarding you for the Improvements you have made—he will himself make you a reasonable recompence for what you have done & represent the Matter to the Commander in Chief; Added to which you will have his Pass and Protection to return to your former Place of Aboad with some Assistance to your People. There will be a person Appointed to take charge of Your Place when you remove

I am Gentlemen Your Most obed<sup>t</sup> Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>  
Mess<sup>rs</sup> Zeisberger, Hickenwelder, Edwards & their Bretheren

*Endorsed:* Detroit March 1<sup>st</sup> 1786 Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin to Mess<sup>rs</sup>  
Zeisburger Heckenwelder, Edwards &<sup>ca</sup>

(Copy)

SURVEY OF MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT<sup>13</sup>

Moravian Town 13<sup>th</sup> March 1786

Sir I have agreeable to your directions begun at (or rather

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<sup>13</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

Above) the Uppermost Corn fields, and surveyed as far down as the War pole & Cabbins, where I left off. You will see by the plan of the River enclosed herein, that I have not yet a Straight line of two miles and an half, observing that it is plotted by a Scale of Ten Chains to half an inch, it nevertheless comprehends all the best land on the River. M<sup>r</sup> Edwards informs me that all the land on the N. E side of the River is high-up-Land and M<sup>r</sup> Heckewelder who has explored the side where the Town is, says that better cannot be found, but is apprehensive that if the Back lines only run Twenty Acres, that much of it will be left out, I have therefore not done Any part of them untill I hear farther from you. I must again refer you to the Chart of the River, which I am positive is exactly laid down—The Corn fields are marked thus [figure]. Should you be at a loss to know which War pole & cabbins I mean it is where M<sup>r</sup> Arden<sup>14</sup> asked whether trophies were attached to it.

Two of the Men, Miller and a soldier were here Yesterday to grind an Ax. they say they have not yet made above Seven Miles of the Road. All the Indians are gone to work upon the Road<sup>15</sup> this morning & will continue working at untill they Meet your Men, which will be as they say in two days, they have made an excellent Bridge next the Town. The Indians on the road request you will send them Some Tobacco for smoaking. M<sup>r</sup> Chevalier Du Quindre has left 47<sup>lb</sup> Bread with M<sup>r</sup> Heckewelder to trade for Racoons. There Are no Racoons, and The Bread is getting mouldy! we have therefore taken Upon our Selves to give it to the Pathmakers and leave you to settle it with M<sup>r</sup> Du Quindre. The Houses twenty-seven in Number are all marked, in a fair draught. hereafter I shall Number the Corn fields. The ice in the River is almost decayed. The Bearers are

<sup>14</sup> Humphrey Arden was commissioned ensign in the Thirty-fourth Regiment, March 1, 1776, lieutenant, Aug. 2, 1780, and adjutant of the regiment, June 23, 1783. Since Major Ancrum of the Thirty-fourth Regiment commanded at Detroit from the spring of 1784 to the spring of 1786, it is probable that Arden's stay here coincided with this period.

<sup>15</sup> The road whose opening is here recorded ran from Detroit to the Moravian settlement. Its construction marks the beginning of modern Gratiot Avenue.

desired to be back early in the Morning. By whom I must beg you will signify your intentions sending me back the plan, with them. please Sir to send word to M<sup>rs</sup> Fry that I am very well. I am Sir with my Respects to your family

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> Servant

Phil. R. Fry<sup>16</sup>

Mr. Askin.

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO FRANCIS VIGO

Detroit march 15<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir Your Obliging Letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> last came to hand two days ago and it affords me much Satisfaction to know that you are well & that we will have the pleasure of Seeing you next spring here. you will before this time have Rec<sup>d</sup> a Letter from the C<sup>o</sup><sup>17</sup> with whom I'm now connected in the Indian Trade also one from myself to both which I Refer you for matters of Trade. Racoons & Beaver bore the best prices last year as to Skins If they do not Rise in Value we will be all Ruined. I have a very favourable Oppinion of Moris Bazadoning[?] therefore hope payment from him this year & that the [he] will take his new Supplies from our C<sup>o</sup> at the miamis. I'm under many great Obbligations to you for the paines you take in Collecting whats due me & I beg a Continuance of your Friendship. M<sup>r</sup> Barthes death<sup>18</sup> which happened yesterday morning after a Sickness of about a month has thrown the Family into Grief and in part prevents my writing more for the present. Please give my Compliments to M<sup>r</sup> Crofton & lett him know that his mother is very well. I have nothing

<sup>16</sup> Phillip R. Fry, ensign in the Eighth Regiment, who was stationed at Detroit for several years. In Sept., 1782, he was appointed naval storekeeper. In 1785 he surveyed the lands allotted to loyalists and officials of the British Indian Department at New Settlement on Lake Erie. His survey of the Moravian settlement on Huron River, here described, is noted in Zeisberger's *Diary*, I, 261-62. Fry was a son of Colonel Hendrick Frey of the Mohawk Valley, who had fought in the Seven Years' War and who remained a loyalist in the Revolution. Information adapted from *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*, and *Buffalo Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, V, 86.

<sup>17</sup> The Miamis Company, for which see *post*, 274.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Andrew Barthe, Askin's father-in-law, for whom see *ante*, 34.





JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

more to add Except the Compliments of the Family & Remain

Dear Sir Yours

M<sup>r</sup> Vigoe<sup>19</sup>

Endorsed: Detroit March 15<sup>th</sup> 86 From John Askin to M<sup>r</sup> Vigoe

(Copy)

OWNERSHIP OF MORAVIAN LANDS<sup>20</sup>

Relative to what is marked N<sup>o</sup> on M<sup>r</sup> Greeleys<sup>21</sup> Map of the Upper River aux Hurons that falls into lake Sinclair

<sup>19</sup> Francis Vigo was a native of Mondovi, Sardinia, where he was born in 1747. He entered the Spanish army and served at Havana and New Orleans. Leaving the service, still a young man, he engaged in trade at St. Louis, then in Spanish Louisiana. Here Vigo prospered, and on the advent of George Rogers Clark in the Illinois country used his wealth freely to promote the enterprises of the American leader in his warfare against the British. Not until 1876 were these advances repaid to his heirs, and largely in consequence of this defalcation by the American government, Vigo's later career was beset with financial embarrassment. He died in poverty, March 22, 1836, having passed his later career at Vincennes, Indiana. He was engaged in the Indian trade for many years, and became heavily indebted to Askin, the discharge of which the latter sought vainly to procure. For an account of Vigo's service to Clark and claim against the government for compensation, see "A Centennial Lawsuit," by C. C. Baldwin in Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Hist. Soc., *Tracts*, No. 35 (Cleveland, 1876).

<sup>20</sup> This document, undated, is substantially the same as one printed in *Am. State Papers, Pub. Lands*, I, 550, under date of Nov. 30, 1810. It was prepared by Askin as representative of James McGill and Isaac Todd, in support of their effort to secure validation of their claim to ownership of the Moravian lands at the hands of the Board of Land Commissioners of Michigan Territory.

<sup>21</sup> Aaron Greeley was born in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, April 25, 1773. In early manhood he went to Canada, whither certain of his mother's relatives, who were Tories in the Revolution, had preceded him, and here for about a dozen years he engaged in surveying and in colonizing a township of land, in the latter connection building sawmills and gristmills, laying out roads, and bringing in settlers. In 1803 he married Margaret Rogers, a niece of Robert Rogers, the famous ranger, and about the year 1806 removed from Canada to Detroit, where he resumed his calling of surveyor. He surveyed the private claims awarded by the Board of Land Commissioners in the period 1806-10, making in the latter year the map of them here alluded to. In 1811 he went to Washington on business connected with his surveys, and remained until the early summer of 1812; while there, in response to his representations, Congress passed an act validating his surveys of the private claims at Detroit, regardless of their conformity with the awards of the Commission. Greeley returned to Detroit in time to be taken prisoner by General Brock, and soon thereafter he conveyed his wife and children to Hopkinton, New Hampshire, where they found asylum during the war. After its conclusion, Greeley returned to Detroit and resumed his surveying operations, dying, while thus engaged, in the Raisin River region in April, 1820. His wife and children, at the close of the war, returned to their former Canadian home in Haldimand Township; here they remained permanently,

Personally came before me A B one of the Magistraits for the Michigan Territory residing at Detroit John Askin Senior Esquire who being duely sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God, deposeth & saith That on the 28<sup>h</sup> of April 1786 he purchased for Major Ancrum & himself of the Moravian Ministers their Improvements at the Afores<sup>d</sup> Place for the Sum of Two Hundred Dollars & likewise on same day from the Moravian or Christian Indians 16 In Number their Improvements on said Tract for a further Sum of Two hundred Dollars as will more fully Appear by the Deed of Sales recorded by the Late Geo. Hoffman Esq<sup>r</sup> at Detroit in Liber E folio 3 also for a further Improvement at same place made by a Jn<sup>o</sup> Bull for fifty Dollars which last deed of Sale seems to be missing but can be proven & That as a further consideration the Deponent for himself and Major Ancrum furnished two Vessells without any charge for the same to transport said Moravian Ministers & their people to the South shore of Lake Erie to Enable them to return to Mus[k]jingu their former Place of residence, and As a further consideration in order to Enable them to go home purchased their Canoes &<sup>ca</sup> as will more fully Appear by their Deed of Sale & more Than 10 Letters of Thanks wrote the Deponant by the Reverend John Heckenwelder their principal in their behalf. That at the time of Purchasing & went [when] the Moravian Ministers & Indians went away there were 27 small dwelling Houses in the Village Exclusive of Out Houses & that of the whole of these Only One was claimed or Occupied by the late Richard Connor<sup>22</sup> & no other. That at that time he [the] s<sup>d</sup> Connor to the best of Deponants recollection had Im-

never rejoining Greeley at Detroit. Mrs. Greeley died in 1866, and a daughter, Susan, was living as recently as 1901. Information condensed from biographical sketch of Aaron Greeley in *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, V, No. 4.

22. Richard Connor is said to have been a native of Maryland who engaged in the Indian trade and having ransomed a white captive from the Shawnee, Mary Myers, married her. They continued to live among the natives for a time, but about the year 1774 settled at Pittsburgh, having left a child with the Indians in pursuance, it is said, of one of the terms of the agreement whereby Mary Myers was ransomed. About the year 1775 they returned to Ohio for this child and, coming into contact with the Moravians, settled at their town of Schönbrunn on the Tuscarawas River. They subsequently accompanied the missionaries to Michigan. When the latter abandoned the Huron River settlement in 1786, Connor remained behind, not know-

proved Only One corn field with a Garden and some small Lot in the rear of his House. That the deponant for himself & Major Ancrum purchased the Soil of the afores<sup>d</sup> Improvements with other Lands adjoining of the Chippaway Indians (Eleven of the Principals having signed the Deed of Sale) for a Valuable Consideration as will more fully Appear by the Deed of Sale recorded by Peter Audrain Esq<sup>r</sup> at Detroit in Book N<sup>o</sup> 1 Page 95 & by the late Geo. Hoffman Esq<sup>r</sup> in the Land Office at Detroit in Liber E Folio 6. That the Deponant went to considerable Expence for himself & s<sup>d</sup> Major Ancrum in laying out & making a road of 21 miles in length through the Woods from part of the Detroit settlem<sup>t</sup> to said place called Moravian Town or Village as can be proven by the Deponants Books of Account. That Immediately After the departure of said Moravian Ministers & their Indians s<sup>d</sup> Deponant made an Agreement<sup>t</sup> with John Cornwall<sup>23</sup> to go there & take charge of the place whoes Oath as well as that of a man called Robert Dowler<sup>24</sup> will best prove how long they remained, what persons were on the place as tenants holding of the Deponant & Major Ancrum, how long they remained & what small part of that tract the late Richard Connor & no Other laid claim to. The Deponant further saith, That after s<sup>d</sup> Cornwall, Dowler & several Others who were On these Lands went away the principal Chief of the Nation

ing, records Zeisberger, "whither to go nor what to do." Thereby he became the first permanent white settler of St. Clair County. He obtained a grant of land, and died here in 1808. His sons were well-known scouts and interpreters in the War of 1812. Information adapted from Zeisberger's *Diary*, *passim*; *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*; sketch compiled by C. M. Burton in Denissen, *op. cit.*; and data in *Am. State Papers*, *Pub. Lands*, I, *passim*, especially 549.

<sup>23</sup> John Cornwall came to Detroit as a private in Butler's Rangers. He was here as early as July, 1779, when he made a deposition impugning the loyalty of James Casety. *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, X, 344-45. In 1790 Cornwall occupied a lot on the Canadian side of Detroit River in the vicinity of Amherstburg. *Ibid.*, XXIV, 58. Prior to this (in 1786) he had entered into an agreement with John Askin for farming the land near Mount Clemens which Askin (together with Major Ancrum) had purchased from the Moravians. See *post*, 234. In October, 1793, Zeisberger records, Cornwall came to Fairfield on the River Thames, where the Moravians had established themselves, and was about to settle near them. *Diary*, II, 327. In 1795 he seems to have been established at Amherstburg. *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XII, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Dowler was a loyalist who came to Detroit probably at the close of the Revolution. His name is included in Major Mathews' list of those who in 1787, were to be assigned grants of land on the north side of Lake Erie.



from whom the Soil [was purchased] named Witanness requested to have the Use of the Houses & cultivated Lands for himself & his Nation Untill the Deponant sent Others there and that he said he would Endeavour to prevent Incrochments from the deceased Richard Connor of whom he complained frequently, That the Deponant consented & that s<sup>d</sup> Chief & his people went on & cultivated s<sup>d</sup> lands during the remainder of his Life as the Deponant Understood, he not having been on the spot himself. That said Chief went on these Lands in behalf of the Deponant in [blank] and died in [blank]. That the Deponant paid said Chief £10 per Annum on Account of Land, the receipts for which payments he can produce & witnesses who saw the payments made. That in 1786 P. Fry Acting Surveyor for the King, surveyed said Tract as will more fully Appear by his Letter when on that service recorded in the Land office at Detroit in Liber E folio 8 by the late Geo. Hoffman Esquire and That he paid said Surveyor £24 for his labour and furnished men, a receipt for which he can produce. Then in Addition to the Expences of frequently recording & Entering this Land he paid Territorial Taxes for the same. That having in 1796 sold his share in said Tract to Isaac Todd & James M<sup>c</sup>Gill then Merchants at Montreal, he is not interested directly nor Indirectly in the Event of this, the Claim he made at different times & now prosecutes in behalf of Major Ancrum whoes Agent he is

#### CLAIMANTS OF MORAVIAN LANDS

River Huron March y<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>d</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, I have acording to Your direction shewn M<sup>r</sup> Bart[he] and the other Young Man the Land and Corn-fields over the River, as likewise the Houses in the Vilage. They like the place exceeding well, but imediately pitch'd on my House, and the one in which Your Corn is, which I endeavoured to persuade them, they would hardly obtain, mentioning to them that You had told me at Detroit, and now repeated to me again, that You would reserve these 2 Houses to Yourself. They have walked about on the Land



and Cornfields on this side of the River, and by what I understand they mean to do their best, and try for the 2 above mentioned Houses, with the large Cornfield in the bent, namely the field We planted, and which is in a good fence. I desired them not to decieve themselves, but rather to look at some of the other Houses, to which they at last informed me: that in case they could by no means obtain the 2 Houses and Cornfield they pitched upon, they would then satisfy themselves with the 2 opposite Houses, N<sup>o</sup> 14 and N<sup>o</sup> 15 which are the Houses M<sup>r</sup> Zeisberger and Edwards lives in, and likewise with Land over the River, oposite the Vilage.

Two Rangers, Lewis and Hamilton<sup>25</sup> have begun to clear Lands back of the Vilage, between 2 and 3 Miles. I am not certain that it is within Your Line, but by the description I have of the Indians of the distance of the spot, I can hardly think otherwise. I have heard, that they have try'd the course by the Compass, and say it will not fall in Your Line, and if it did, they will maintain their right as the Improvers, (tho this I have not heard them say). But be the matter as it will, I think they act very wrong, and besides, they can never be called the Improvers, since some of our Indians has built Sugar Cabbins there, and one had Deadened a Number of Trees, 3 Years ago on the Spot in order to plant Corn there. I have further heard that they shall have said: That they do not look upon a course mentioned acording to the Compass, which is caled a Line, to be a line at all; neither do they see any Body warnd from settling on any Lands hereabouts within such or such a distance. Wheither they actually have said all this, and intend to do what I have mentioned I do not know, but it is what I am told they shall have said and intend to stand to.

What assistance I gave to M<sup>r</sup> Fry was a pleasure to me, and I shall always be ready to asist and serve You, when it is in my Power, and had the Indians have had a better

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Hamilton, a corporal in Butler's Rangers, who located at Detroit at the close of the Revolution. In 1788 he was recommended by Major Mathews for an allotment of land on the north side of Lake Erie. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XI, 451 and *Essex Hist. Soc., Papers and Addresses*, III, 70 B.

## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

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Season of the Year to have worked on the Road, they would most probably have made a very good Road, but it happend ju[s]t to be at the breaking up of the Weather, and now it will hardly be possible to do much more to it till June or July, however they have done pretty well for the short time they was at it, and I thank You for Using and sattisfying them so well. I hope the Lake will soon be clear of Ice, and We should be very glad if the Corn could be fetchd as soon as possible, so that We might make room to those who are to Live and plant here, for the sooner the[y] can go to Work, the better it is for them, and We want, if possible to put a Crop in the Ground over the Lake this Spring. I am convinced You will do for Us in that respect what You can.

I am Dear sir Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humble Servant

John Heckenwelder

Rec<sup>d</sup> March 22<sup>d</sup>

*Addressed:* [M]<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Huron River March the 22<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> the 23<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> No 2

### SURVEY OF LAND FOR JOHN LAUGHTON

Detroit 7<sup>th</sup> April 1786

Quebec I do hereby certify that At the request of M<sup>r</sup> John Laughton, Naval Storekeeper at this post, I have surveyed for him a lott of Land, purchased from Thomas Williams late Notary publick, situated on the West Side of the Fort on the Main River, bounded on the east north east by a lott of Ground belonging to Baptist Reaume, Containing four hundred and Eighty Acres, that is to say, four Acres in front by One hundred and Twenty acres in depth, the Course of the Partition lines is North thirty degrees Westerly.

Phil R Fry  
D Surveyor

*Appended:* Recorded in the Land Office at Detroit  
Liber E folio 109.

teste  
Geo. Hoffman

*Endorsed:* Land at the River Rouge Certificate of  
Survey say Race Ground<sup>26</sup> Detroit April 7<sup>th</sup> 1786 N<sup>o</sup> 4  
Harvey<sup>27</sup>

SALE OF MORAVIAN LANDS

River Huron Apr. 9<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, I have wrote a Letter, or rather a kind of petition to the Major concerning our Improvements agreeable to what we was speaking of. You will be so kind and look over it, and if it answers the purpose keep or present it, but if any thing should be wanting, or I had not wrote it properly, I beg of You to correct it and send it to me back again, that I might copy it off. I did for that reason not seal it, but if it answers the purpose as it is, You will Seal it or not according to Your Judgement. I suppose I must give You a Bill of Sale, but must ask You the favour of writing it and it shall be signed when we come down. Last Week a Dunker with his Son was here looking at the place, likes it very well, and thinks to find more of his profession that will join and get Farms of You. Two Men, the bearers of this were looking at the fields over the River, they tell me likewise they will rent them for a Year,

<sup>26</sup> The race course was on land which John Askin had transferred to Isaac Todd and James McGill and which subsequently (in 1802), acting as their agent, he sold to John Harvey. Still later it was known as the Edwin Reeder farm. For the long legal controversy over its ownership see *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, IV, No. 1. It lay just east of Fort Wayne, between modern Cavalry and Junction streets.

<sup>27</sup> John Harvey was an Englishman who came to America about the year 1796, leaving his family behind. After a considerable sojourn in New York he came to Detroit about the beginning of the nineteenth century. Here he followed the trade of baker, and also conducted an inn, and acquired considerable property. The fire which burned Detroit in 1805, originated in his shop. In 1816 Harvey left Detroit, intending to return to England, but instead he turned up at the falls of the Ohio (lured there by the prospect of the canal which was subsequently built around the falls) and passed the remainder of his life at Jeffersonville, Indiana, dying Dec. 5, 1825. In 1801 Harvey had purchased from Isaac Todd and James McGill a tract of land west of the town now known as Private Claim 39. With the growth of the city this land became very valuable, and was the subject of an extended litigation, which was not finally settled until half a century after Harvey's death. For a fuller sketch of Harvey's career see *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, IV, No. 1.



and afterwards buy Farms. I hear by them that Your Vessel has been 3 Days on the Way for this place, but lays at Anchor opposite the Wind Mill, perhaps the Wind will soon change. I forgot to mention above, that in the Letter to the Major I chose to take a late date since at that time we were wishing to lay our circumstances in this manner before him.

I am Dear sir Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Heckenwelder

[Askin's writing] Recv the 10<sup>th</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> 11<sup>th</sup>

*Addressed:* Mr John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* River Huron Apr<sup>l</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1786 Mr Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> the 10<sup>h</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 5

#### CONTRACT BETWEEN JOHN ASKIN AND JOHN CORNWALL

Agreed on between John Cornwell on the one part & John Askin on the other That the latter is to find the former with two men to work Constantly at Raissing of & Gathering of Indian Corn during this Ensueing Spring & Summer when Necessary to work at it as also to furnish said Cornwell with the use of a Horse & Cow & Plow Irons Untill the fall for the purpose of working at said Corn—and he [the] said Cornwell on his Part with the men John Askin is to furnish him & on[e] of his own Engagé to Raise all the Indian Corn he can at the Mauravian Town & give his attention to that Business when Necessary untill the Crop is got of the Ground at which time a Dividend is to be made of the Grain in which said John Askin is to share two thirds & said Cornwell on[e] third. Each of the Parties to mention [maintain] themselves or their People. Said Askin having Purchased the Houses & Improvements at Mauravian Town has agreed to lett Mr Cornwell have the use of one of them with a Garden this Summer without making any Charge for it in this House the man who works at the Corn are to stay.

As Witness of our Consent to this agreement we have



Signed our names at Detroit this 11 of April 1786.

John Askin  
John Cornwall

*Endorsed:* Detroit April the 11<sup>th</sup> 1786 Agreem<sup>t</sup> with  
M<sup>r</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup> Cornwall N<sup>o</sup> 11

NEWS OF THE FUR TRADE

Montreal 12 April 1786

Dear Askin I must not let the first opportunity of the Spring slip over without my personal Respects & I hope they will find you well in your health & a fair prospect of plentiful Returns from the Indian Country.

The House having wrote you on business, leaves me nothing further to say on that head than to conjure you by every tie of friendship to leave no stone unturned in order to make remittances, for on this Summer depends our own existence as men of Character & Credit. The very scanty payments we made last year, has left us indebted with our friends in England so largely that Todd writes me he was under the necessity of relinquishing every Scheme of business except the shipping a few dry Goods & some Rum, being afraid to run further in debt & perhaps even meet with a refusal of further Credit. This situation I need not tell you the cause, least it should have an appearance of reproach, your own feelings will dictate what must be mine. I have no occasion to say more than that I depend confidently on your acting in consequence. Do not suppose that, because I have been complaining for years past, the necessity is not greater than it was the case is much altered—a bad trade here, a scarcity of money & near double the sum owing us from above, but why should I detain you with this exposition of affairs, knowing that you will leave nothing undone that may be in your power to accomplish. I foresee & know that very few goods will be sent to Detroit this Season & it might have been a good year to push, but it is out of our power, therefore I advise you to husband well your dry Goods & if you order any that you may be as sparing as possible. Michilimakinac will be greatly over-

stocked, insomuch that it would not surprise me were goods sent from that Post to Detroit.

I cannot yet say anything certain to you about the prices of Furrs, but I am persuaded deer Skins have sold badly & I fear Beavers & Otters have had a tumble. I advise you strongly to change all your late fall & winter deer Skins for Raccoon & Pichoux,<sup>28</sup> but Foxes are really worth no more than 4/ York—a good Raccoon large size is better & two Raccoons or one Pichoux as they run of more value than a deer Skin, except it be a good red, very short [illegible], or parchment Buck.

Your friends of the Northwest are making a larger outfitt this year than they did the last & are going to build a small vessell at the Portage—their great success last year enables them to undertake any thing & I make no doubt they will continue successful, which on some of their accounts I most sincerely wish.

It is generally thought that Sir Guy Carleton who is expected early to be our Governor will permitt small vessells of private property on the Lakes, should that be the Case, you will no doubt wish to have one, but it will be prudent to wait till his determination is known, & so soon as we do know it, you shall hear from us.

I hope you will push Barthe to convert every thing into Returns this Season, he says he intends it as well to pay you as us, the Balance he owes is very near to 70000<sup>rs</sup> Houses & Lands can never produce much benefit to Merchants & it may be the properest time to sell them before final determination of Government is known respecting the Posts; excepting a House for my business I would not wish to have any dead property in a country where for want of Courts of Justice, Tenures must be very insecure.

Your daughter Madeleine is in perfect health & when a proper opportunity offers It is my intention to fulfill M<sup>rs</sup> Askins & your wishes by sending her up & I am pretty certain you will find her *bien entendue dans le menage* insomuch that I fancy you will not keep her many years

<sup>28</sup> This was the French-Canadian name of the red lynx (*lynx rufus*).

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

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Mademoiselle. I expect Todd from England early & as there will be little to do here, he may probably pay you a visit, taking Madeleine with him.

M<sup>rs</sup> McGill requests M<sup>rs</sup> Askin with your good self & Family to accept her best Compliments and believe me that I am,

Dear Askin Your affectionate Friend  
James McGill.

*Endorsed:* Montreal April the 12<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Jm<sup>s</sup> McGill  
to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Rec<sup>d</sup> May 25<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> Privett

FROM JOHN HECKENWELDER TO JOHN ASKIN

River Huron Apr. 13<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, I was favour'd with Your Letter Yesterday afternoon, and am sorry that I knew nothing before of Your wanting the Petiagers so bad. We will endeavour to have some down by tomorrow Night. Amos Western<sup>29</sup> has pitchd upon N<sup>o</sup> 14 and I believe the Corn field below the Villiage. I would be glad to know wheither M<sup>r</sup> Cornwell might have the Hope to live in next to mine, in which Your Corn is N<sup>o</sup> 27. he asked me about it, and I told him that I had understood You intended to keep these 2 Houses to Yourself. I'm sorry the Vessel has such bad luck, and cant come up yet, however it may be soon.

I am Dear Sir

Your Most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humb<sup>e</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Heckenwelder.

[Askin's writing] Recv<sup>d</sup> the 14<sup>h</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> same day.

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit.

*Endorsed:* River Huron Apr<sup>l</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder  
to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>h</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> same day N<sup>o</sup> 6

<sup>29</sup> Amos Weston was a blacksmith, who may have come to Detroit from Niagara. In 1787 the report of Major Mathews on land allotments to discharged rangers and loyalists, lists Weston as a "blacksmith, many years with Stedman." See Essex Hist. Soc., *Papers and Addresses*, III, 72. In 1795 Weston was located at Spring Wells, having a house and shop there. He died shortly prior to Aug. 23, 1797, when a letter of administration was issued to John Askin as administrator of his estate. Numerous accounts relative to this matter are preserved among the Askin Papers in the Burton Hist. Coll.



## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

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FROM JOHN HECKENWELDER TO JOHN ASKIN

River Huron Apr 13<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear sir, I have got William and several others the owners of the seven petiagers<sup>30</sup> to take them down to You, and likewise some of the Women will send Hulling baskets with them. The Indians who have Petiagers to sell, are all in Debt and chiefly their Debts are old; but they are desirous of paying every body they owe before they leave the place, and for that reason have desired me to beg of You to assist them. There is no one remaining in Debt to me for You, except the three in the Account, which You are to take out of the petiagers. Will<sup>m</sup> will enquire of them and inform You who they are in Deb<sup>t</sup> to. We want and ought to be away from this place in the course of next Week, and chiefly on account of those People who are to settle here, and must have houses to go in. I must detain the remaining seven new Petiagers untill the Vessel arrives and is Loaded, and then immediately We intend to push off. I am glad to hear that my Letter answers the purpose, and that You find good People to live on Your Land. I think in a few Years time it will be a fine Settlement, but then You will have to get a Mill built, which will be still a greater encouragement towards settling. M<sup>r</sup> Cornwell assures me he will do the best he can for You, and tells me the Land is to be laid out in Lotts very soon, which I think very needful. I am informed as I believed and told M<sup>r</sup> Tracy: that there is no 13 Mile Tree to be found on the Road. So that the Road is one Mile shorter than We expected. I hope You have got the Seeds I sent You by M<sup>r</sup> Dolson. Mr. Cornwell thinks it will not be amiss if he keeps the Powder and Shott yet remaining here.

I am Dear Sir, Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humb<sup>o</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Heckenwelder.

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

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<sup>30</sup> A petiager (variously spelled) was a boat made from a tree trunk, hollowed out, which was often provided with a plank bottom, the trunk being split in halves, each of which was made to serve as one side of the boat,

*Endorsed:* River Huron Apr 13<sup>h</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> 15 [torn] & Answ<sup>d</sup> same day N<sup>o</sup> 7

FROM JOHN HECKENWELDER TO JOHN ASKIN

Huron River Apr 17<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, At length Capt<sup>n</sup> Understund<sup>31</sup> arrived at the Mouth of the River, and is now at my House. I am not at present positive what quantity of Corn will be taken, but We have agreed to send 400 Bags down, and in case it could not be all loaded to leave the remainder at Tuckers.<sup>32</sup> The Barrel of Pork, Hog and other things belonging to You I will also send likewise Mine and M<sup>r</sup> Zeisbergers Fowles. You will see what is sent by the Account, and what is left with M<sup>r</sup> Cornwell, I will acquaint You of when I come down, which will be I hope in a few Days, as We are getting ready to go off as quick as possible. I am very sorry that You was Disappointed in getting the Number of Petiagers, and had it not been, that the Mouth of the river had been shut up for a few Days with Ice, I would have sent such of our People down who would have behaved better. I think I may venture to assure You now, that there are 7 large and well made Petiagers at this place, which no one is to have but You. I send 2 of my Tables by the Vessel and leave one for the Use of the House. Likewise I believe the two fishing canoes will be stowed in the Boat, which if so, You will please to present to the Major and Adjutant Arden. I can assure You We are very sensible of the manifest

<sup>31</sup> Capt. James Underston. In 1796 he was living at Grosse Ile.

<sup>32</sup> William Tucker was a native of New Jersey who was captured by Indians in boyhood, apparently about the beginning of the French and Indian War, and by them brought into the region of the upper lakes. After some years' captivity he was released, and thereafter lived at or near Detroit until his death, March 7, 1805. He is said, although on doubtful authority, to have conveyed to Major Gladwin the first information of Pontiac's designs in 1763. In the summer of 1773 he journeyed to Virginia and there married, which would seem to indicate that he had retained some connection with former friends and relatives. During the Revolution he served in the British Indian Department at Detroit, being listed in 1783 as interpreter to the Ottawa. In 1780 he received from the Chippewa an extensive grant of land on the Huron River, removing his family thither in 1784. He thus became one of the first permanent settlers of this region. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*, especially VI, 359-61.

favours of the Major towards Us, and think ourselves very happy in finding him (the same as Col<sup>l</sup> De Peyster) a friend and Benefactor to Us, for whom it is our Duty to pray to God to bless abundantly, as it is not in our Power to make any other recompense.

But You, Dear Sir, may be also assured, that you will never be forgotten by Us. We are, and always will be indebted to You for the favours and kindness shown to Us, and our People last Spring, and wish and pray that God may reward You in full degree for it. I am sorry that I have hardly time to write this Letter, for I have at this time much to do, and much to think of, otherwise I should have been more particular. but I trust You will excuse me and Understand what I mean, tho it may be imperfect wrote. Mr Understund will do his best, and take as much of Your Corn and things as possible, and if We are so lucky as we wish, in getting the Vessel loaded, he may we hope have a better and quiker Voyage back than coming Up. Should I forget to mention any thing in this Letter, I shall mention or acquaint You by the next Opportunity or when I see You, in the mean time I remain

Dear Sir Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humb<sup>e</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>  
John Hackenwelder

*Addressed:* Mr John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Huron River April 17<sup>h</sup> 1786 Mr Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> April 21<sup>st</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 8

FROM JOHN CORNWALL TO JOHN ASKIN<sup>33</sup>

River Huron the 27 april 1786

Mr John Askin

Sir I have put Amos Weston & Grubb and the two Dowlers<sup>34</sup> in prosession of the houses And Cornfields Acording to Your agreement With them be You ashured that I shall follow your Directions in Every Respect Without

<sup>33</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

<sup>34</sup> One of these men was Robert Dowler, for whom see *ante*, 229.



listning or Consulting any other person but Your Self I expect to begin planting Corn nex Weake if the wether holds moderate I exspect that I Shall be able to Git all the hole field planted in Good Season if You Could Send me Six or Eight Bushels of protaters I will plant them on the peace of Ground that lys Back of the Indian howses Near Conners<sup>35</sup> as It Will anser beter for that Use than to put any kind of Grain their on account of fowls and pigs if M<sup>r</sup> Smith<sup>36</sup> wants a cornfield their is Some Small fields lying up in the forks of the River that is Verry good tho Not So Conveniant as perhaps he Would Wish the land is as Good as any of the rest I am Informed that he is Coming up with a view of Carrying on the Indian trade and is Going to Bring up lickers I would wish that none mite have privolidge to Sell any Rum to Indians as it will be Verry likely to hurt us that are hear they will be killing fowls and hogs and Carrying away Corn these from Yours & C

John Cornwall

P. S. I Shall take it as a great favour if You Would Sind me five or Six Yardes of Stripe Cotton and five Yardes of Callico if You have not Sent it by [the] Petaugre as I am much in Want of it.

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Recv<sup>d</sup> April the 29<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> 30<sup>th</sup>

River Huron April the 27<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup> Cornwell 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> 30 April N<sup>o</sup> 1

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Connor, for whom see *ante*, 228.

<sup>36</sup> This may refer to Thomas Smith of Detroit, for whom see *post*, 287.

## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

### ORDER IN FAVOR OF MORAVIANS

Detroit April the 27<sup>h</sup> 1786

Mr David Duncan<sup>37</sup>

Sir Please pay to Mr Bull<sup>38</sup> for the Use of the Christian Indians the Sum of Two hundred Dollars being for their Improvements at the Huron River which Place to Account of

Sir your most obedient Humble Servant

John Askin

200 Dollars

*Endorsed:* Pittsburgh June 27<sup>th</sup> 1786 Rec<sup>d</sup> of Duncan & Wilson the Contents of the with[in] Bill in full

John Bull

Mr John Askins Draft for 200 Dollars

<sup>37</sup> David Duncan of the firm of Duncan and Wilson of Pittsburgh. They were engaged extensively in trade, their operations extending to Detroit, Vincennes, and other places. When Caldwell and Elliot failed at Detroit in 1787 they assigned their available assets to local creditors, leaving Duncan and Wilson, from whom they seem to have procured large numbers of cattle and considerable quantities of goods, wholly unsecured. In this connection Duncan charged Caldwell with having sent Indians to steal horses of the former, in order to avoid the necessity of paying for them. In 1787 Duncan reported that he was engaged in supplying all the U. S. posts and offered to assist John Askin in collecting debts due him by persons living at Vincennes. A copy of Duncan's will, made in Pittsburgh, Dec. 20, 1791, is in the Burton Hist. Coll. Besides his widow, Margaret, he left two sons (Samuel and David) and three daughters (Hanna[h], Mary and Margaret). In addition to considerable personal property, the will disposed of his residence in Pittsburgh and a plantation "on the hill," apparently in this vicinity. Information from manuscript letters of Duncan and others in Burton Hist. Coll.

<sup>38</sup> John Bull was a Moravian who in 1783 was delegated by General Benjamin Lincoln to proceed to Oswego and Niagara to inform the Indians that peace had been concluded between Great Britain and the American States, and to urge the natives to cease hostilities. At the same time Ephraim Douglass was sent on a similar mission to the Indians of the Ohio and Detroit areas. Both missions were largely frustrated through the action of the British commandants at Detroit and Niagara, who took the peace commissioners into custody and prevented them from delivering their messages. Douglass was brought in to Detroit, and from there forwarded, under custody, to Niagara and Albany. Bull, on the contrary, was forwarded from Niagara to Detroit, at which place he is stated, by the only authority we have found on the subject, to have been permitted to join the colony of his fellow religionists on Huron River (near Mount Clemens). It seems evident from Askin's letter to Duncan that he was still with them (now in Ohio) in 1786. See C. M. Burton, "Ephraim Douglass and His Times," in *Magazine of History*, Extra No. 10 (New York, 1910), 34; and Howard L. Osgood, "Indian Affairs in Western New York at Close of Revolution," ms. in Burton Hist. Coll.

## JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

### FROM JOHN ASKIN TO DAVID DUNCAN

Detroit April 28<sup>h</sup> 1786

Sir Agreeable to what we Settled between Us I now send the Vessell to fetch the Pork &<sup>ca</sup>. I also send an Other Vessell to Assist in taking the Moravians to their former Place of Aboad. I had Some Intentions of Sending some Goods and Establishing a House at the Cayagen [Cuyahoga] but as reports have prevailed here that you were going to Send Goods Into the part of the Country where we Trade and Carry off[f] some of Our Traders best furs least I might be Suspected to have a Hand in any Contraband or Underhand Trade is the reason why I have not sent Anything. for My part I am convinced you would not Undertake a Bussiness that would hurt your in the Oppinion of the Commanding Officer here who Appears desirious to Serve you & to Whom I Mentioned that I couled not think you wouled Engage in any Bussiness that wouled draw on you his displeasure. I forsee that you may do a great deal of Bussiness in the Provisiion way here. the Settlem<sup>t</sup> is quite out of Cattle & M<sup>r</sup> Caldwell<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Captain William Caldwell was born at Castle Caldwell, Fermanagh County, Ireland. He migrated to America and shortly prior to the Revolution was living in western Pennsylvania. He remained loyal to the Crown, joined Bird's Rangers under Lord Dunmore in 1775, and served in Butler's Rangers from May, 1776, until July, 1784. He was an active and able partisan leader and over the western Indians he acquired an influence which remained unshaken until his death. He led the Indians in many battles with the Americans along the western frontier, two of his more notable exploits being the defeat of Colonel Crawford and the Battle of the Blue Licks, both in 1782. At the close of the Revolution, Caldwell located at Detroit where, in partnership with Matthew Elliot he engaged in trade. In 1787 the firm failed, having liabilities of £18,000 and assets of only about one-tenth this sum. In 1784, Caldwell and a group of associates procured from the natives a grant of land seven miles square at the mouth of Detroit River, on the northern portion of which they founded the town which was subsequently named Amherstburg. The same year, Caldwell obtained a grant beginning some four miles east of the river's mouth and extending about fifteen miles along the north shore of Lake Erie, which was settled by loyalists and disbanded soldiers; it was known as New Settlement, and was the nucleus of the subsequent townships of Colchester and Gosfield. In 1783 Caldwell married Susanne, daughter of Jacques Duperon Baby; to them five sons and three daughters were born. Caldwell and several of his sons bore prominent parts in the War of 1812. The father was captain of Caldwell's Rangers from 1812 until May 8, 1814, when he was transferred to the Indian Department with the rank of deputy-superintendent. He died at Amherstburg about the year 1820. Besides his regular family, Caldwell had a son whose mother was a Potawatomi woman. This son, known in history as Billy Caldwell, also bore an active part in the War



## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

pays very Dear for Indiferent Ones & no More is to be got. As to Pork there is not a Single Barrell for Sale at this Post. I believe I shall want a larger Supply from you soon than I Expected when you were here but as its not yet a fixed Matter I will lett you know in time whether or not.

His Excellency General Carleton our Vice Roi is to be out this Spring at New York to settle its said a Trade between the Colonies & us, you no doubt being on the Spott will take care to get Possession of the best Plans to Carry it on with Advantage & I will on my Part do all in my power lies.

I have given the following Orders on you which please discharge.

Favour M <sup>r</sup> Edwards for	15 <sup>n</sup> 13 <sup>n</sup> —
favour M <sup>r</sup> Zeisberger for	19 <sup>n</sup> 19 <sup>n</sup> 6
favour of the Indians 200 dollars	80 —————
fav <sup>r</sup> of M <sup>r</sup> Bull 20 dollars	8 —————

all New York Cur    £123<sup>n</sup> 12<sup>n</sup> 6

I have Only to Add that I wish you health & Happiness  
& Am

Sir your Most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Askin

M<sup>r</sup> David Duncan.

### AFFAIRS AT HURON RIVER<sup>40</sup>

River Huron 28<sup>th</sup> April 1786

M<sup>r</sup> Askin

Sir I have let Amos Weston have Six Bags of Corn & Grubb and Dowlers Six they Tell Me that they have Made an agreement With You for it I have Charg<sup>d</sup> them with it

of 1812 on the western frontier. He was recognized as a chief of the Potawatomi tribe, and figures prominently in the history of early Chicago, where he lived for many years. See, among other sources of information Philippe Baby Casgrain, *Memorial des Familles Casgrain, Baby, et Perrault du Canada* (Quebec, 1898); Denissen, *op. cit.*; Mich. Pio. Colls., *passim*, especially sketch in Vol. XVI, 724; Butterfield, *History of the Girtys*; and L. H. Irving (ed.), *Officers of the British Forces in Canada during the War of 1812-15*.

<sup>40</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

## JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

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I have Sent the Iron Chain Don that Mr Edwards Left in his house Mr Dolson hes Got a Sow and & four pigs hear that he Bought from Mr Sisoburger [Zeisberger] for four Ginneys last Winter perhaps he Would Sell them and if You Dont by them Soon [some] of the people that is har Will they are Verry fine ones and it Wont take much of any thing to feed them and they Will make fine hogs Next Winter Mr M<sup>c</sup> Crey<sup>41</sup> hes One mor Sow and four pigs that he Gave two half Joes and one Ginney for they mite be Yours as Well as any other persons Conner and Grubb and Dowlers Intend bying them if You Intend to by them You must Go as Soon as posable for Dowler Will Git them Befor he Cums up if the people Should Want to be firnished With anything hear marchantdisse or What Ever Send it har and I will Serve it out to them for You acording to Your Direction With pleashure

I am Sir Yours & C

John Cornwall

*Addressed:* Mr John Askin, at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Recv<sup>d</sup> April the 29<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> River Huron April 28<sup>h</sup> 1786 Mr Jn<sup>o</sup> Cornwall to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> the 29<sup>th</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 3

## VOYAGE OF THE MORAVIANS TO OHIO

Hoper Cove, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir, About a half hour [ago] Your Barge arived safe in this Cove where they found both Your Vessels and ourselves lying yet on account of Contrary Winds. We had but once since our first arrival a midling fair Wind with which we made an attempt for the Grand River, but by the time we had sailed 30 Miles, the Wind turned right ahead again, and we were obliged to run back again to the Islands. We are indeed impatient to get to the main shore where our Inds. may get [some] hunting for a great many of them has been out of provision this good while, and had it

<sup>41</sup> Possibly Thomas McCrae of Detroit, for whom see *post*, 304.

not been for Capt<sup>n</sup> Underston and Guthrie<sup>42</sup> supplying Us in a great measure with Fish, we would have been certainly in a bad Condition, there being more of Us in Number than 100 who all want Victuals, and the Children in particular are most troublesome in that respect. I have proposed to both Cap<sup>ts</sup> wheither the Macinaw Sloop could not set part of Us on Shore at the Mouth of Sandusky, thinking it will speed the Voyage in a great measure, and only carry our Baggage with a few hands to the Grand River. I hope it will meet your aprobation. I thank You a thousand times for Your kindness in sending Us some provision. I had already served what I had of my own out to the hungry Indians. I think it would be to[o] much to agree to Your kind offer in sending us more provision, have consulted M<sup>r</sup> Zeisberger, Edwards and Bull about it, but we are of different opinions concerning this matter. I should indeed be very sorry, should all this be at Your own expence, but should Goverment, who indeed has always been very kind and acted as a father to Us do as much more for Us as to send the boat with a little more Provision, we being in a desert place on an Island and not knowing when we shall be off, at least the whole of Us, we shall indeed be very thankful and acknowledging for it. Capt<sup>n</sup> Understan has had great patience with Us, and deserves much praise, for I asure You so many Indians of all Sizes are no agreeable Cargo in the whole. Your Boat will wait no longer, and the Vessel is getting Clear as quick as possible to return to Detroit. We thank You again, for Your indeed parental Care for Us and I am and remain

Dear Sir Your most Obd<sup>nt</sup> Humble Servt  
John Heckenwelder

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Mercht Detroit  
p favour M<sup>r</sup> Miller

*Endorsed:* Sandusky Islande May 28, 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> June the 5<sup>th</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 9

<sup>42</sup> Captain James [?] Guthrie was engaged in the naval service on the upper lakes as early as 1780, when he was directed by Governor Patrick Sinclair to assume command of the *Welcome* in the place of Captain Harrow, whom Sinclair had placed under arrest. It was Guthrie, therefore, who commanded the vessel which brought the



## MORAVIANS REACH CUYAHOGA RIVER

Gajahoga River June 9<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir I can now inform You that We all arived safe at this place Yesterday, and the Vessel the Day before. It was indeed lu[c]ky for Us, that We were sot ashore by Stony Point and did not attempt to go with so many People on Board for this River, which yet, if a Wind had been but favourable while we were at the Islands; We being Ignorent of the difficulty and Danger, would have gone, and most probably been knocked to pieces, M<sup>r</sup> Guthrie indeed deserves much praise for the trouble and care he took, first in making 2 trip's, to the above mentioned Point, and lastly at this place. He will be able to give You the best Discription of this River and the Danger in attempting to get in, there being not quite 3 feet Water on the Bar ect: I'm sorry to find that nobody from Fort Pitt is on this River, and that it seems M<sup>r</sup> Duncan has not fulfilled his promise as yet, but for what reason I know not. There is a House with about 230 or 40 baggs Flower in it 7 Miles up the River, but neither White person nor Indian to be found about the place, I understand the Flower belongs to M<sup>r</sup> Elliot and Colwell. We think of sending M<sup>r</sup> Bull off to Fort Pitt to enquire for M<sup>r</sup> Duncan and how matters are, since We have also a gread deal of Cloathing lodged by our Society at Bethlehem in his hands. You will hear afterwards farther by the first Opportunity. In the mean time I and we all acknowledge all your kind favours to Us, and shall always pray to God to bless You abundantly.

I am Dear sir  
Your most Obedient Humble Servant  
John Heckenwelder

Recv<sup>d</sup> June 21<sup>th</sup>*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit*Endorsed:* Gajahoga June 9<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Hackenwelder  
to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> the 21<sup>st</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 11

family of John Askin to Detroit on its removal from Mackinac to this place. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, IX, 605. A letter written by Askin, Sept. 11, 1799, notes that Guthrie was then about to leave Detroit for Canada and Scotland.

BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

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FROM JOHN CORNWALL TO JOHN ASKIN<sup>43</sup>

River Huron 9<sup>th</sup> June 1786

Mr Askin

Sir I am Verry glad to har that You have got the hors  
I was afeard that he was Stoal you had better keep him  
at Detroit I fear he Will not Stay hear my Neighbours  
Since their return from Detroit Will not Speake to me  
You had No great ocation to Say much to them for they  
have bin Verry Shy this long time. I must put you In  
mind of your promis of assisting me in howing if you  
Can Sind a hand With Clearwarters I Shall be Verry glad.  
We have as Good a prospect of a crop of Corn as Ever I  
Saw In this Cuntry and the Sooner it is hoad out the  
Sooner We may Discharge the men from that bisnes if  
you Can Sind a little pork up with Clearwater it Will be  
Verry Well Exsepted of as the Men begin to Grumbel at  
eating Sturgin You will let me know What you Charge a  
pound for the Candles as they are Wanted if you have No  
objecttion I will let them have them they Will pay you  
for them in the fall pleas Send me four pounds of Soape  
& let me know the price as it is not for my own use I shall  
be Verry Glad to See you hear after We have Done howing  
our Corn parhaps We may make another Bargin.

these from your most Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Cornwall

P. S. pleas Send me two puter basens that Will hold  
about one quart Each as I have Got Nothing less than a  
two two Gallon Wooden bowl to [drink] a little milk out of.

recv<sup>d</sup> June 9<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>

*Addressed:* To Mr John Askin at Detroit

*Endorsed:* river Huron June 9<sup>th</sup> 1786 Mr Jn<sup>o</sup> Cornwall to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin recv<sup>d</sup> the same day Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 8

<sup>43</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

GRANT OF LAND TO CHARLES RÉAUME

Nous les Chefs des pouteoatamis apres avoir Delibéré Sur letât actuel des terres qui nous laissons inculte depuis longtems de l'avis et Consentement de toutte La Nation antierre, avons determinées d'en donner une portion a Notre Amis Charles Reaume, Contenance Six arpents de frond Sur la Rivierre au Raisin Cituée dans la ditte rivierre A la droite en Montant la ditte Rivierre Sur Cent arpents de profondeur, ainsy que les terres ordinaire Cy devant Concedée tenant aussi la ditte terre, dun Cottée a Mons<sup>r</sup> B<sup>te</sup> Reaume Son frerre et de lautre aux terres non donnés et pour la bonne amitié que nous lui portons nous luy allumons un feux de paix et de tranquillité, en luy garantissant ainsi quelle Se poursuit avec les prairies Sus et Mouillier bois etca du apresent et a toujours Ses hoirs ayans Causes afin qu'il en jouissent enpleine propriettée Sans aucuns empechements, Cest pourquoy nous avons tous faits nos marques accoutummes. Au Detroit 10<sup>e</sup> Juin 1786.

[Totems and names of eleven Indian chiefs follow.]

*Endorsed:* June 10<sup>h</sup> 1786 Deed from Indians to Charles Reaume 6 acres by 100 A N<sup>o</sup> 18.

*Translation*

WE, the chiefs of the Potawatomi, after due deliberation on the present condition of lands which we have long left uncultivated, and by the advice and consent of the whole tribe, have decided to give a portion to our friend Charles Réaume,<sup>44</sup> to the extent of six arpents of front on the right bank of the River Raisin ascending the stream, by one hundred arpents in depth conformable to previous concessions

<sup>44</sup> Charles Réaume was the younger brother of Jean Baptiste Réaume, for whom see *ante*, 170. He was born at Detroit, Feb. 4, 1743. He married Angélique Beauchamp and passed practically his entire career in the service of the British Indian Department. A memorial of his widow to Sir George Prevost, June 5, 1814, states that her husband was "for upwards of forty-nine years" an interpreter in His Majesty's service at Detroit, from which place he was forced to flee with his family on the evacuation by General Procter in 1813. From the hardships endured on this flight he died at Kingston, Dec. 20, 1813, aged seventy years. Information adapted from Denissen, *op. cit.*, and *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XV, 585.



adjacent to the said land, adjoining land of his brother, Baptiste Réaume, on one side, and unceded lands on the other side.

And for the good fellowship which we bear to him, we light with him a pipe of peace and tranquillity, as a guaranty of possession of the entire tract, its meadows, marshes, woodland, etc., from now and forever, to him, his heirs and assigns; and that he may enter into full rights of ownership, with no hindrances whatsoever, we all now make our accustomed signs. Executed at Detroit, June 10, 1786.

#### FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN JOHN ASKIN AND JEAN BAPTISTE BARTHE

Having been requested by Mr John Askin, on the part of John Askin & C<sup>o</sup>, & by J. B. Barthe, on the part of J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> to examine the account of John Askin & C<sup>o</sup> against the said J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> as well as to settle some other points hitherto disputable; we have done so. And conformable to the articles of copartnership, which say, that J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> are to be furnished with whatever they may want at the price it cost here, if purchased on the spot; & if below, at the prime cost in Montreal with charges & risk: we find according to the tenor of these articles that the sum of Thirteen Hundred & thirty five pounds eleven shillings, must be deducted for overcharges &c: & further, that the sum of Five Hundred & twenty six [pounds] four shillings, being the *balance* of Freights received by J. Askin & C<sup>o</sup> on account of the sloop Mackinac between the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1782 & 19<sup>th</sup> June of the same year has not before been credited J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> These two sums therefore will form an additional credit to them with John Askin & C<sup>o</sup> of Eighteen Hundred & sixty two pounds five shillings New York currency. This is the result of our examination, & what, to the best of our judgment is just & right: Detroit 19<sup>th</sup> June 1786.

William Robertson  
Tho<sup>s</sup> Finchley

## JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

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After carrying the *balance* of the Mackinac's account to the credit of J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> the sum then due by them to John Askin & C<sup>o</sup> would be nearly five thousands; from which, according to the articles of their copartnership, there must be a deduction of thirteen hundred & odd pounds as above stated: in order however to bring the affairs of J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> to a final conclusion, a matter much wished for both by M<sup>r</sup> Askin & M<sup>r</sup> Barthe; M<sup>r</sup> John Askin has this day agreed before us to accept the sum of Five thousand pounds New York currency, as a full & complete payment of the debt due by J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> to John Askin & C<sup>o</sup> relinquishing all claim to any share of profits that may have arisen from the trade of J. B. Barthe & C<sup>o</sup> as if the said copartnership never had existed: and, in consideration of this M<sup>r</sup> J. B. Barthe obliges himself to pay the above sum of Five thousand pounds; one-half the 15<sup>th</sup> October next in Montreal, & the other, namely two thousand five hundred pounds, the 15<sup>th</sup> October one thousand seven hundred & eighty-seven: Detroit 22<sup>d</sup> June 1786.

William Robertson

Tho<sup>s</sup> Finchley

We agree & are fully satisfied with the foregoing mode of terminating the business hitherto in suspense.

John Askin

J. B<sup>t</sup> Barthe

*Endorsed:* June 21<sup>st</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Barthe his acknowledgem<sup>t</sup> of Owing Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin & C<sup>o</sup> £5000 „ 0 „ 0.

### TRADE CONDITIONS AT DETROIT

Detroit June 22<sup>d</sup> 1786

Dear Friends Your Sundry favours of the 30<sup>th</sup> April & 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> May came all to hand Yesterday, and what of them is not Answered by Letters wrote prior to my Receiving these I now mean to do. If none but those who pay their Freights will have a Preferance in the Kings Vessalls others will not Receive any Considerable hurt by it for my part the little I want I would wish in Bateau by

Wintering men the Advantage Arising from them is much more than the whole of the Freights up so that it might be said good[s] in that [way] are b[r]ought up for nothing.

Mr Pollard<sup>45</sup> has shewn me Coppies of the Letters that passed between General Hope<sup>46</sup> and the Gentlemen in Trade Relative to Freights, the Latter corresponds with our Sentiments of the Matter I note what you say about Collecting Proofs of Losses Sustained which shall be done but I cannot possible Conceive how any Suit as yet can be Commenced against me, as no Regular Account has ben produced against me nor a Demand made for the paym<sup>t</sup> Mr Laughton by the Vessall before this brought me what he Called an Account and asked If I would give him a Receipt for it I said I would and Accordingly got one

<sup>45</sup> Richard Pollard was in Detroit as early as 1784, in which year he bought from William Brown for £400 New York Currency a tract of land three arpents by forty at Petite Côte. Detroit Notarial Records, Vol. C, 507 (ms. copy in Burton Hist. Coll.). Apparently he soon engaged in trade, for in the Notarial Records, Vol. D, 113, is recorded a note given by Francis Vigo of Vincennes, March 17, 1787, for £652 New York Currency for "value received in Merchandize." In the same record book (Vol. D, 114) is a letter written by Laurent Durocher from the Illinois, March 20, 1787, to William St. Clair and Co. concerning a debt owed to the latter, in which incidental complaint is made of "the Mackinac Company and that young fool Pollard." In the spring of 1792 Pollard was appointed sheriff of the Western District of Upper Canada, which then included Detroit. After the American occupation of Detroit the English-speaking population of Sandwich and vicinity felt the need of a clergyman, particularly to solemnize marriages. Since none was to be had otherwise, they concluded to choose one of their own number who should secure ordination. Pollard and William Hands were deemed the two most eligible candidates, and Hands, with becoming modesty, insisted that Pollard was better qualified for the work than himself. In 1802 Pollard went down to Montreal and was there ordained. He returned to Sandwich to become the first pastor of St. John's, the first Protestant Episcopal church of Canada, west of Niagara. In addition to his local ministrations Pollard made periodical visits to Detroit to conduct mission service. The first church building (a log structure) was burned by American soldiers during the War of 1812. A second edifice, of brick, was erected in 1816-18, in which Pollard continued to serve until his death, Nov. 6, 1824. In addition to his clerical office he continued to hold until death several secular appointments, including those of probate judge and register for Essex County. Information adapted from books and ms. records in Burton Hist. Coll.

<sup>46</sup> Henry Hope was commissioned major in the Forty-fourth Regiment, May 3, 1775, and lieutenant colonel Oct. 5, 1777; later he became a brigadier general. In the summer of 1782 he was sent by General Haldimand on a tour from Quebec to Mackinac and Detroit to report on military conditions, especially on the great expenditure of government funds which was going on at Mackinac. In 1785 Hope succeeded Henry Hamilton as lieutenant-governor of Canada, serving until the arrival of Lord Dorchester in Canada in 1786. He died, April 13, 1789. Information adapted from *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, X, *passim*; Ford, *British Officers in the American Revolution*; and inscription on tombstone of Henry Hope, in St. Matthew's churchyard, Quebec.



Ready which however he did not send down as it would Expose the manner in which these Accounts are made up. I send you it Inclosed however Except necessary I would not wish to have it produced as it would hurt an Obliging man. Your Letter on the Subject of Freights I have shown to M<sup>r</sup> Robertson, M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton being gone.

The Continued Losses on Skins added to Others of an Other nature has nearly thrown me into a Stupid State from whence nothing but my Duty to Justice to those who have Supported me perhaps could Rouse me. It's impossible to get Skins Exchanged but to give Correspondents such as you are a Directional power about them I agree to with all my Heart If General however in my Oppinion If there was Leather dressers & Breeches makers here we would get Rid of a large Quantity on the Spott for Smoked Skins Sell or Exchange very fast with the Inhabitants from 12/ to 16/ There cannot be a better Remedy for the Disorder this Country is got into than few goods Coming to it in Deed there is no other that would Answer, by these Means none but the Capable of Good Characters will be Furnished 2<sup>d</sup> [illegible], & they Sparingly as they will not meett with Opposition as Usual they will get the full Value for what they May part with.

As to myself I have before Mentioned to you that the part of the Memorandum which I sent you that may be convenient for you to Compleat will answer me £250 worth of Silver works in lieu of £400 your Currency will Answer the only things then wanted to Compleat my 6<sup>th</sup> Share is the Liquor ab<sup>t</sup> 30 pieces of Calicoe 20 p<sup>s</sup> Striped Cottons 8 of Coating & as many of Ratuns with ab<sup>t</sup> 20 p<sup>s</sup> of R. Sheet-ing. If I should want a few Indian Goods M<sup>r</sup> Robertson has plenty so that the Remainder of what you send I mean for the Trade of this Place.

M<sup>r</sup> Vigoe is here & has brought about 100 Packs he would not have brought so much had he known that the Skins was so low as he Still [has] to Remain in Debt he is allowed to be the best man towards the Post we have fitted him out & have great Reason to think he will make a

great Stroke as we do not see any person who is both Capable & Inclined to Oppose us in that Quarter nor Indeed in any other [of] the dependances of this Post.

I before wrote that Barthe is going to make his Residence at St Marys for some years therefore does not want anything [sent] up this way he promised me at parting to Convert all he Could Into Remittances for this year & I dare say he will do it. I Omitted mentioning that you send off without Loss of time in Bateaux & with Wintering men all you have to send. I note what you say about the Rum Rec<sup>d</sup> of Mr Martin in paym<sup>t</sup> of a Debt due you by Mess<sup>rs</sup> Douglass & F[leming] I Realy Rec<sup>d</sup> it on that Account only & gave a Receipt Accordingly. I'm Glad there is some Pork on the Way for me as Im disappointed in what I should have got from the Colonies, the Reason of which I'm not yet Acquainted with. Im perticularly happy to learn that I may depend on Seeing one of you this Summer. No matter shall be settled with Mr Grahams before that time nor shall any Threats whatever make me deviate in the Smallest Degree from what I think Right.

Our new Concern agrees with you in Sentiment that our Outfit should not be for one half what it formerly was among us all Separately & yet we have much Reason to Expect that the Returns will be Equal if not more than formerly that most certainly is the only means to be taken of Changing our Trade for the better. Mr James Ellis is now here & does not relish the Manner in which Mr Th<sup>os</sup> Forsyth Acted for tho the Answer to the whole of us as a C<sup>o</sup> might be necessary or you & him might have had Reasons for it, yet he should like you in private Letters wrote such of his Correspondants as he mean to Continue Supplying that he would provide their 6<sup>th</sup> Share & send it Immediately forward as by our Articles Each of us are to Furnish our shares at a Certain Price those who fail will have to go out of the Concern.

I'm thankfull to you for the Advice but I asure you at same time it never was my Intentions to Engage in any Joint purchase for the Concern Unless some Perticular

Advantage derived to Myself therefore. The Felicity is now taking in Packs and the Rebecca will take in to Morrow In the Latter I will load my proportion & send you an Account of them at same time. There is many of my Customers from whom I have not any perticular Account of what they have made & are sending me. I fear many of them will fall short but I hear of only one that I'm doubtfull of his having gone off, but M<sup>r</sup> Vigoe says he will see him this Winter & does not dispear of geting some paym<sup>t</sup> from him. I shall End this long Letter with Asurances of Strict friendship on the part of Yours &c

*Endorsed:* Detroit June 24<sup>th</sup> 1786 From Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Todd & M<sup>c</sup>Gill Coppy

## NEWS FROM SANDUSKY

St Dosquiette Le 22 Juin 1786

Monsieur voyant que vos voiture tardai J'ai fait partir St Jan avec trante trois paquette Sela Sera un voyage des parnies pour moy Il Luy a encore trante paquette faite Et presé pour La Charge dune voiture Je pare pour Les Chaouainon voir mes Creancie quila mon Bien promet de payer Cette Était Sille Ne mon pas doive davantage Cais quille Le Luy a pas us de traite Il ont de La marchandi Et Bien des Gage Il me doive En Core £317 pau de Chevreu Siau Cas que vos voiture arrive Il prendront Ce quile Luy a mon pere Leur Remaitra Les trante paquette qui Sont faite Si Javais Etait asorti Comme Je voi apparce que Je Serai ou que Je Neus pas us Le malleure de donné mon Butin a Ses Gens La Jaurai faite deux Sen paquette pas[s]é parce que Jai Bien Envoyé de La pelterie pour a Seul fin de vous payer mais Ses Gens La mon faite un Gran tore Les deux premiere voiture que vous mave Envoyé Il Les ont us mai Jait prit une Résolution de Ne pas faire Craidi Ni au Blan Ni au Noire Je vous drai vous prié de mavoir une ordre pour faire payer Le Sieur Charle droulliare Il me doit Encore 177 pau de Chevreu Il Ne veus pas donné Ni pelterie Ni Cheveu Ni pourseau



Je vous dirai que Le Sieure Coune a Ecri au Sauvage de Ne pas Lesai faire de Batise au Blan Je Ne Sai pas Si Sait de La pare de Monsieu Le majore ou de La Siene Si Les Sauvage on demandé quille Ne vain plus des Romme a St Dosquiete Cait de La pare de Monsieur Élaite Et monsieur Coune Sela Nait faite que pare Rapore a vous Et a moy Et monsieur asique Et Jane Élaite qui doit Boucoup a monsieur Cornouelle Sont allé a La Grand Riviere Charche de La Boison Le Rome ait farine pour moy au détroit Et Il ait ouvaire pour Euse a La Grand Riviere Les Sauvage ont tenu Consaile on dit quille Ne falli pas prendre Le Romme daucun Blanc Selon Lordre de monsieur Coune qui veus Se faire Chefe parmit Euse.

point dautre Chose a vous marque Sinont que jait prie une Bonne arrangement pour La traite que Je pourai faire plus que pas un Sille Navoit pas de Boison adieu monsieur Je Suis votre tres humble Et obeisan Sairveteur

Joseph guilbau

Si St Jan a Besoin de quele que peu darjan Comme Il ma mandé pour faire monté un fusi Je vous prie de Luy fournire ou de marchandise pour Jirou[?] Il Ne Luy Revient Rien

### *Translation*

Sandusky, June 22, 1786

Sir: As your carts are delayed I have sent St. John on with thirty-three packs so as to make the best use of our time [?]. He has a cartload more of thirty packs ready. I am leaving for the Shawnee country to see my creditors. They promised to pay me this summer, if they do not owe me anything more, it will be because there has not been any trade. They were to have some goods and, of course, their wages. They owe me 317 pounds more of roe-buck skins. If your carts come they can take whatever there is. My father will attend to the thirty packs that are made up. If I had had a better assortment of goods, as I see now was necessary, or if I had not had the misfortune to give my merchandise to those people out there, I would have made two hundred

packs the past [winter] which I fully intended to send you in payment of what I owe, but those people did me a great wrong. They got the first two cartloads that you sent. But I have sworn never again to trust any man, white or black. Will you kindly send an order for payment from Charles Drouillard?<sup>47</sup> He owes me yet 177 [pounds] of roe-buck skins, and will not pay, neither in peltrie, nor skins, nor pork.

I should tell you that Mr. Coon<sup>48</sup> has written to the savages not to let any white man put up buildings. I do not know if that is by the major's order, or just his own. If the savages have asked that no more rum be sold at Sandusky then it is Mr. Elliot's<sup>49</sup> orders and Mr. Coon has done it only

<sup>47</sup> On the Drouillard family see *ante*, 183. Charles Bonaventure Drouillard was born at Detroit, Aug. 11, 1756, son of Jean Baptiste Drouillard and Charlotte Bigres *dit* Fauvel, and grandson of Jean Drouillard and Elizabeth Rapin. Charles married at Sandwich, Oct. 19, 1778, Mary Louisa Quesnel, daughter of James Quesnel and Margaret Morel de la Durantaye. He was engaged in trade at Sandusky as early as 1782, as evidenced by the fact that his second son, Alexis, was born there March 5, 1782 and not baptized until July 14, 1784. Charles Drouillard married (second) Mary Langlois, widow of Stephen Robidou, at Detroit, May 4, 1818. Denissen, *op. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> Abraham Coon, or Kuhn, was a white captive who lived among the Wyandot of Sandusky, and according to some statements became a war chief. However this may be, he exercised considerable influence over his associates, and if not formally attached to the British Indian Department, was evidently subject to its control. According to Gov. William Walker of Kansas, Coon was taken captive in western Pennsylvania about the year 1770. He is said to have exerted his influence over the Wyandot in favor of making peace with General Wayne in 1795. A descendant of Coon, John Coon, was the first person to be legally executed in what is now the state of Kansas, being convicted of murder by the Wyandot council and shot on the present site of Kansas City, Kansas. See Heckenwelder's *Narrative*, 368-69.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew Elliot was a native of Ireland who came to America as a young man in 1761. He served in Bouquet's expedition for the relief of Fort Pitt in 1763. For many years thereafter he was engaged in the Indian trade or the government service, or both, with headquarters at Pittsburgh. By the opening of the Revolution he was conducting rather extensive trading operations, and had acquired much influence over the Indians of the Ohio Valley. Probably by reason of his government employment, Elliot remained loyal to the king, and in the autumn of 1776 set out with two or three followers and a considerable train of goods for Detroit. En route his goods and slave were seized by the Indians, but Elliot himself reached Detroit in safety. There, however, he incurred the suspicion of disloyalty and was arrested and sent down to Quebec by Governor Hamilton. On being released, he made his way back to Pittsburgh, where he associated with other loyalists and became known as a dangerous character. On March 28, 1778, Elliot again sought refuge at Detroit, in company with Alexander McKee and Simon Girty. This time he won the confidence of the British authorities and was soon employed in the Indian Department. Throughout the remainder of the Revolution he was an active leader of Indians in the warfare in the West, participating in almost every important expedition in the Ohio region during the war. He led 300 Indians in the defeat of Colonel Crawford's expedition, aided in the slaughter of the Kentuckians at the Blue Licks, served with Hamilton

with respect to you and to me. Both Mr. Isaac [Williams?]<sup>50</sup> and John Elliott,<sup>51</sup> who owe much to Mr. Cornwall, have gone to the Grand River<sup>52</sup> to try to get liquor. My rum and flour comes from Detroit and is opened for them at Grand River. The savages have held a council. It is reported that they must not take rum from any white man except on the order of Mr. Coon who wants to be a chief among them. I have nothing more to say except that if I could only make good arrangements for trade, I could do more than anyone if there was no liquor. I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

Joseph Guilbaut

on the Vincennes campaign, and with Bird on his invasion of Kentucky in 1780. In 1781 he conducted the Moravian Indians from Sandusky to Detroit, and in 1783 conducted the American peace commissioners, Douglass and McCully, to the same place. Prior to the American occupation of Detroit, Elliot withdrew to the vicinity of Amherstburg, where he conducted a farm and continued his service in the British Indian Department. He effectively served his country in the operations in western Ohio from 1790 to 1794, and in July, 1796, was promoted to the superintendency of Indian Affairs. By reason of a garrison intrigue, he was dismissed a year and a half later, and for several years he vainly sought vindication of his conduct at the hands of the authorities. Ten years after his dismissal, when war with the United States seemed again impending, the government found that no one else could control the western Indians, and Elliot was reappointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Although now an old man, he served zealously and effectively until his death, May 7, 1814. He led the Indian contingent when Brock captured Detroit in August, 1812, and as much as any one man was responsible for the River Raisin massacre. On Procter's withdrawal from Detroit in 1813, Elliot accompanied him. One of his last exploits was to lead the savages in the assault on Fort Niagara in December, 1813. Few men have known how to control the American Indian as successfully as did Elliot, and none have been bitterer foes of the United States. He died at Burlington Heights, May 7, 1814, a fugitive from his home, which had been ravaged by the victorious Americans. Elliot married Sarah Donovan, daughter of Matthew Donovan, one of Detroit's early schoolmasters. The outward shell of his home still stands on the shore of the Detroit River, a short distance below Amherstburg. Information adapted from biographical sketch (ms.) by C. M. Burton in Burton Hist. Coll.

<sup>50</sup> Isaac Williams was one of the early British traders at Detroit, being here prior to 1777. He befriended the Moravians and is frequently mentioned in Zeisberger's *Diary*. In 1793 he is described by the Quaker peace delegation, then at Detroit, as "an old noted Indian trader . . . well acquainted with the Indian affairs and their dispositions." *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XVII, 584. According to Zeisberger he was very influential with the Wyandot, his brother-in-law (white) being a chief among them. He later removed to Harwish Township, Kent County, Ontario, where he died in 1806.

<sup>51</sup> John Elliott was a private in Butler's Rangers during the Revolution and came to Detroit at the conclusion of that struggle. His name is in Major Mathews' list of loyalists and disbanded soldiers to whom grants of land were to be made on the north side of Lake Erie in 1787.

<sup>52</sup> The Cuyahoga, which was sometimes named Grand River.



JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

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If St. John needs a little money, as he told me, to rig up a gun, kindly let him have it, or some goods for Jirou [?]. There is nothing coming to him.

FROM JOHN CORNWALL TO JOHN ASKIN<sup>53</sup>

River Huron 24<sup>th</sup> June 1786

Mr Askin

Sir I Exspect to have all the Corn & protaters howed in about twelve Days time if the wether is Good then I Shall not Want any person With me till the burds begin to Eate Corn yo[u] Can Set them abou any bisnes that you Chuse or Discharge them I thought parhaps You mite Set them Sawing som plank or b[o]ards I hear that Some of my old Creaditers are Wanting to Cum at my Shair of the Crop I hope that You Will be so good as to befriend me so far as to put it out of any ones power at present for if I had but twenty pounds no one Shall have more in proportion that an other if I Can help it I Shall not forgit to Do as much for you if it lys in my power at any tim—for it mite be Some hurt to you as Well as a di[s]apointment to me I believe that My Neighbours hes bin adviseing with Som of them about the mater I would not Wish that they Should be so Well pleased I hope that You Will Be abel to make a ginnoral Remooval of them Before an other year Coms about as it Will be much against your Intrust to have any Such people hear for I know tho they Dair not Say any thing they try to Stiffel and put Every thing back from your Intrust that they possabely Can.

these from your most obedient Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Cornwall

P.S. Sir pleas Send Som blew Cloath for one pair of Indian leging and you Will oblige yours

yow Will Send Sheet Back Sunday morning as their is no time to be lost at present.

*Endorsed:* recv<sup>d</sup> June 22<sup>d</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>

<sup>53</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

FROM JOHN HECKENWELDER TO JOHN ASKIN

Gajahaga River July y<sup>e</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir I suppose You have heard already, that We have settled, and planted a little Corn on this River, and as matters seem as yet not to be cleaverly [clearly] at Rights in the Indian Country, We, I suppose may stay here some time, perhaps at least a Year or two. At present We are pretty much pinched in the Way of Provision, but I hope we will be able to surmount this and other difficulties. We understand, that 2 paquets of Letters for Us, were sent to Detroit by People that took Cattle in for M<sup>r</sup> Duncan, and it is likely they are left with Capt<sup>n</sup> Caldwell or at M<sup>e</sup>Kee. I must beg of You to enquire for them, and send them by the first Opportunity to the Mouth of this River, (where M<sup>r</sup> Neil who has the Care of Flower and Your Pork lives). It was not M<sup>r</sup> Duncans fault that the Pork was not out in the right time. I suppose he has mentioned all about it to You already. Perhaps I may go in the Fall down in the Country to see my Relations, but am not as yet fully determined on it.<sup>54</sup>

I am Dear Sir, Your most Obed<sup>t</sup> Humb<sup>e</sup> Servt

John Heckenwelder

recv<sup>d</sup> July 26<sup>th</sup>

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Askin Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Gayahaga July 14<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> the 26<sup>h</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>h</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 12

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN WILLIAM ROBERTSON  
AND JOHN ASKIN

Memorandum

1. William Robertson agrees that half the profits that may arise from the business transacted in his name during the term of three years, reckoning from the first of July 1784

<sup>54</sup> Heckenwelder returned to Bethlehem in September, 1786, remaining there until 1801, when he removed to Gnadenhutten.

to the first of July 1787, shall belong to John Askin, at which period the said copartnership shall terminate & cease.

2. John Askin obliges himself to sustain half the expenses that may be incurred, & half the losses should there be any, as also to render the copartnership every service in his power in the way of trade &c.

3. The said copartnership is to pay William Robertson six hundred pounds a year as an equivalent for his conducting the business & for his being publicly responsible for whatever the company does; as also, an equitable rent for such places as he may judge necessary for carrying on the trade; the mode of doing which he reserves entirely to himself without any restriction whatsoever: Detroit, 22<sup>d</sup> July 1784.

William Robertson  
John Askin

[Note by J. A.]

Signed the 28<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 1786

*Appended* [writing of W. R.]: Received of M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Robertson the sum of Three Thousand pounds New York currency: namely Five hundred pounds in goods as per Account; & Two Thousand five hundred pounds by bill on Mess<sup>rs</sup> Todd & M<sup>c</sup>Gill: which sum of Three Thousand pounds I do accept & acknowledge to be a full & final consideration for all profits claims or demands of what nature soever that could have arisen or in any wise belonged to me in consequence of the above agreement, & am equally clear from every demand & claim whatever that M<sup>r</sup> Robertson could or ever can make against me in consequence of the above articles. We therefore mutually acquit, & hereby stand mutually acquitted to all intents & purposes as if the above copartnership never had existed as witness our hands & seals at Detroit, this 22<sup>d</sup> August 1787.

John Askin (L. S.)  
William Robertson (L. S.)

*Witness:*

Isaac Todd



## BURTON HISTORICAL RECORDS

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### PROTECTION OF CROPS AT HURON RIVER<sup>55</sup>

River Huron 25<sup>th</sup> August 1786

Sir I have only to let You know that we have plenty of birds, and Squorrels hear at present which Give us a constant Imploy from Morning to night tho We have but Verry little Damage Done With them as yet much less than in any of my Neighbours fields, be so Good as to Send me a carrot of tobacco and let me know the price of it as it is for Slaidd and a few small Shot the Smallest that You have as the Shot that I have hear is two large for the Use if You have opertunity to Send up Some flower by Som person that is Cuming this Way it Will not be amis as We have not much at present if I Should Want more help to keep the Burds off[f] the Corn I Will let You know by the first opertunity I Did Exspect You hear before this I think if You Was to Com up hear You had beter take all on Your own hands and then their Will be no Cation of a division I will give you a Good bargin

I am Sir Your friend and Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Cornwall

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

*Endorsed:* Huron River Aug<sup>t</sup> 25<sup>h</sup> 1786 Jn<sup>o</sup> Cornwall to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Recv<sup>d</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 13

### FROM DAVID ZEISBERGER TO JOHN ASKIN

Cayahaga River Octobr the 11<sup>th</sup> 1786

Dear Sir I received your Letter of Septemb<sup>r</sup> the 16<sup>th</sup> yesterday & am much obliged to you for it. M<sup>r</sup> Heckenwelder was gone to Bethlehem just a Day before your Letter arrived with his family. The Packet of Letters which Cap<sup>t</sup> Caldwell had, we received, it was opened & an Almanack & some Newspapers was wanting, which however Signifieth nothing, if we had all the Letters I cannot tell. I had a very bad hot fever, so as many of our people—thank God I am much better now, though hardly able to write. Only

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<sup>55</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

JOHN ASKIN PAPERS

I & Mr. Edward who has the same fever, are now here. There is much Talk among the Indians about War of which they are in Apprehension. May God prevent it & give us peace.

Wishing you health & the Blessing of God I am

Dear Sir your most obd<sup>t</sup> & humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

DAV. ZEISBERGER

(Mr. John Asking Merch<sup>t</sup>)

*Addressed:* M<sup>r</sup> John Asking Merch<sup>t</sup> at Detroit

*Endorsed:* Cayahaga Oct<sup>r</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 1786 M<sup>r</sup> Zeisberger to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin rec<sup>d</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> Answ<sup>d</sup>

FROM JOHN CORNWALL TO JOHN ASKIN<sup>56</sup>

River Huron 18<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1786

Sir I have Delivered M<sup>r</sup> Gutrey<sup>57</sup> as much Corn as he thinks is Surficiant to loade the petiauger the next trip She makes I shall loade her With protaters if You think proper as I have Got the Corn Where it Receives no Damage till Wee Can husk it out please let me know What quantaty of protaters you think proper to leave hear it Will be nessary to have some hear if You mean to plant har the nex year if I Should Stay har I Will plant Double the quantaty as I have this I Will Shell out all my Corn as Soon as it is Dry You Shall have it at the market price as I have nothing to Dispose of to any other person I have Som oake plank and Boards har and timbers that I Got out for a perryauger last Winter it Will make one about the Sise of Dowlers if You Will Buy it I will sell it Verry Reasnable if I Build her I fear I Cant Sell her and I Cant Build her Without I run into Debt for Nails and other artickels Nessary to Build her I Dair Say If You Will You Can have her built hear Cheeper than any Craft of the Sise hes Bin Built at Detroit this Some time past if You Will Want any large Cannows Built this Winter if You Should

<sup>56</sup> From the original manuscript in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa.

<sup>57</sup> Probably Captain James Guthrie, for whom see *ante*, 246.

Want any thing of that kind Pleas let us know it in Season  
and you Will Git What You Want of that kind Done hear.

I am Sir Your most obediant Humble Servant

John Cornwall

Do pleas let me have Some Rattean or Coating to Make a  
Wescoate and trowser one hat & Silk handerchieff & Some  
thread.

its for Slaid pleas let Me know the price of them By Dow-  
ler as he Will bring them up. Excuse Blunders.

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

*Endorsed:* River Huron Oct<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>h</sup> 1786 John Cornwall to  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin Answ<sup>d</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>d</sup>

### MISCONDUCT OF JOSEPH REAH

R<sup>re</sup> Blanche Le 24<sup>e</sup> Novembre 1786

Monsieur Ne pouvant pour le present me transporter au  
Detroit etant le fort de la traitte d'automne; Je vous ad-  
resse les Comptes de Joseph Reah qui doit y aller se plain-  
dre d'une violence Soit disant que Je lui ait fait; pour vous  
mettre offet de cette affaire Je vais vous la detailler; cet  
homme apres plusieurs prieres et employé meme un de mes  
commis pour que Je vint a Lequiper me fit déterminer,  
malgré quelque repugnances, a lui donner des marchandise  
a commission, a raison de Dix castor pour Cent Castor,  
et de traitter sur les prix que Je lui feroit et deprendre les  
peaux mal comme femelle, a deux pour un Castor commes  
étoit L'usage dans ce temps; ainsi que de toutes les autres  
peltries, aux quels ils devoit se conformer; il étoit pour lors  
a la R<sup>re</sup> Blanche éloigner de moy denviron 25 Lieux, et s'obli-  
geoit de m'apporter les peltries chez moy, toutes ces con-  
ventions verbal presence de M<sup>r</sup> Largeau et promettant de  
les excuter. Quelques temps apres il vint m'apporter des  
peltries et me dit qu'il ne pouvoit gagner sa vie au prix  
de Dix p<sup>r</sup> cent et quil y avoit quelques Articles de trop  
chere; Je consentie a Luy donner 12 Castor pour cent castors  
quil vendroit et rabattre sur ces Articles quil trouvoit



trop chere; il a continué a travailler assez bien pend<sup>t</sup> le restant de L'été et une partie de L'automne, apres ce temps Je recue avis qu'il detournois de mes peltries et en avoit même vendue au Sieur Lafontaine; Je lui en fit reproche et me l'avoûa mais non pas une si grande quantité comme il avoit fait Et Voyant quil n'avoit plus d'envie de continuer, et quil cherchoit des moyens de s'équiper allieur, Je lui dit en fevrier 1785 quil vint aranger ses comptes avec moy il me le promit mais s'en vouloir l'executer car depuis ce temps M<sup>r</sup> Largeau a été plusieurs fois pour cela, il n'a Jamais dit non mais eludez Le temps. Je mi Suis transportez moi même avec Le S<sup>r</sup> Saffray qui me Servit d'Interprete, Je trouvois plusieurs charges de peltries Lier qui etoit du provenû de ma Marchandises et quil Se disposoit a comporter aux Miamis (comme il avoit deja fait cidevant) Je lui ait demandé a me Les donner il me dit que Si Je vouloit prendre Les peaux de mal a un Castor (ce qui n'etoit point nos conventions) Je n'avois qua les prendre mais que Si Je vouloit Luy quitter elever un commerce Avec ces peltries qil me payeroit sous deux mois, Jai cru Sa promesse Sincere Et Le lui accordée; Le terme s'est ecoulée et un Lapse de Temps tres considerable sans Le voir; Je l'ai fait prier par Autrui Et par M<sup>r</sup> Largeau et ce inutilement. Ayant pour reponce ordinaire dans les conversations quil tenoit avec d'autres personnes *No Law here* qui a passé en proverbe dans ces endroits ici, ou Londit (comme Le vieux Jos.[D]) point de Loix ici, il en a donné une marque assez convinquante Lorsqu'un nommé Charley Luy demandoit Son payement, il Luy a repondre d'un coup de fusil dans le coté avec plomb en grain et une balle.

Le Bruit publique etoit que Le dit Joseph Reah Se determinoit a partir sous peu avec des charges de peltrie, pour aller chez les Ameriquains, d'autres quil S'en alloit a la Roche de Bout, cette derniere place me fut confirmé par Lavertissement qui vint me faire la S<sup>r</sup> Saffray Je me determinai a Lui aller otter les peltries qu'il devoit emporter, et voyant que cet homme n'avoit plus de commerce et quil ne cherchoit qu'une occasion de sevader Je partie le 29 Septembre avec un de mes hommes pour ce Sujet et trouvant

quil etoit deja partie p<sup>r</sup> la Roche debout Je fut a Sa poursuite et le S<sup>r</sup> Rivet vint avec moy pour lui faire rendre ou payer un cheval qui lui appartenoit. Je le rejoignit a quelques Lieues de la R<sup>re</sup> Blanche Sur le chemin, Je lui ait Ottez toutes ces peltries et un cheval comme vous voirez par le proces verbal ci Joint sans faire aucune insulte a Sa personne comme il en a fait courir Le bruit (il est vrai que Javois ma carabine mais tout Le monde scait que Je ne marche Jamais sans L'avoir et que ces avec elle que Je vis et fait vivre mon monde p<sup>r</sup> mon homme il n'avoit ni verge ni baton) main en lui disant que Si Je le Retrouvois encore avec des peltries a lui, Je lui en feroit autant Jusqu'a La conqurance de mon payement, puis quil ne vouloit point venir me Satisfaire. C'est un homme que J'ai arretée dans le chemin et qui emportoit mon bien par Le chemin; la Sagesse des Legislatteur ont infligé des peines pour Le Larcin, Je regarde La facon de Joseph Reah en enlevant mes peltries comme Telle Je le Payoit pour me vendre mes marchandises Je reprenoit ce qui restoit (vous envoieez La preuve par L'Etat de marchandise remise) Les ventes quil en a fait hors ma Connôissance son telle, les personnes qui les achetoit avec connoissance du fait sont reputez receleur. C'etoit Les Loix de notre Ancien Gouvernement. M<sup>r</sup> Gray qui paroît comme Avocat et parti n'apoint eu de repugnance de les acheter de mon commis (Je puis le ratifie tel puisque Je lui payoit commission) et de Lui avancer des marchandises Je crois parfaitement quil n'en etoit point instruit mais il ne doit point trouver Mauvais que Je reprenne ce qui etoit a moy. Enoutre Les propres discours du dit Reah qui disoit qu'il n'avoit point de Loix ici et que Je voyois clairement quil vouloit S'evader, mon fait agir envers lui de la façon que Jai fait sa mauvaise conduite Envers moy m'en a persuadez Et vous allez le voir en ce Trait. dans L'automne de 1784 Je lui dit de m'acheter du Bled pour ma provision, il le fit au nombre de 6 a 700 Tresses, et me dit quil avoit eû 7 Tresse pour un Castor Je fut comptant de Son achat mais Lorsque Je voulû avoir du Bled il ne voulut me donner Le meme nombre de Tresse qu'il avoit

eu p<sup>r</sup> un Castor et auroit Comme voulu m'en faire une vente; C'etoit cependant Avec ma marchandises qu'il l'achetoit, et que Je lui payoit Commission apres plusieurs demande il ne m'a point donné de Bled. La vendu allieurs et n'en ait point eu le produit. voici de La façon que Jai été traité. Je ne finirai point Si Je vous disoit totalement Les manques quil ma fait et Je vous prie instament de le faire arreter si il va au Detroit et de le pour suivre partoutes Les voies de La Justice, pour mon entier payement, Vous m'obligerez Beaucoup.

Soyez toujours persuadez que Je vais faire le plus quil me Sera possible a satisfaire a mes dettes tant passives qu'Actives; le derangement ou sont les Sauvages les empeches de Chasser et l'incertitude ou ils sont d'aller se fixer un azile, me fait être de même, Les menaces continuelles que font les Americains qui doivent venir en gros dans ces endroit ici Le printemps prochain m'engage aussi a aller enChoisir une pour eviter le pillage quil se proposent de faire a tous les Marchants qui traite avec les Sauvages, ce ne sont que des bruits qui pourroit s'effectuer et Je vais tacher de les prevenir en meretirant. Je croyois cependant que nous étions en paix et que Suivant les traittés que le commerce etoit libre; mais en quelques Endroits que Je le fixe Je me ferai lhonneur de vous en instruire et de vous faire parvenir ce que Je me propose de vous envoyer

Jespere que vous vous interessez pour moy dans mes petites affaires et particulierement dans celle que Je vous adresse, de mon coté Je m'employerez a vous être toujours agreable et conserver votre confiance.

Je suis Monsieur Votre Tres humble Serviteur

Lorimier

P.S. Je vous observe que Les Marchandises que Jai donnée a vendre a Joseph Reah étoit a moy, que Je lui payoit commission Et que Je lui avoit Expresement Defendû de faire aucuns credits aux Sauvages avec Les ditte Marchandises.

Jenvoye Ma procuration a M<sup>r</sup> George Sharp qui vous La communiquera.



*Translation*

White River, November 24, 1786

Sir: I cannot come to Detroit at this time as it is the rush of the autumn trade, so I am sending you my accounts against Joseph Reah.<sup>58</sup> He goes up to complain of an alleged assault by me, and that you may know the truth of the matter I give you the facts in detail.

That man kept begging me to set him up in trade and even employed one of my clerks to intercede for him. Against my will, I let him have merchandise on commission at 10% in beavers, with an agreement that he was to trade according to my prices, and that bad skins and female, should be graded at half value, as the custom was then, and the same for all other peltries, to which he agreed. He was then at White River, about 25 leagues distant from me, and he was to bring the peltries in to me. This was all by verbal contract, in the presence of Mr. Largeau,<sup>59</sup> Reah promising to do everything according to this agreement.

Some time later, he brought in peltries and told me he could not make his living on the 10% contract, and that the goods were too high priced. I consented to allow him 12%

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Reah (variously spelled) was employed in the Indian Department at Detroit prior to Feb., 1783, when on the approach of peace he was discharged. See *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XI, 345. It seems likely that this was the person here mentioned. One Rhé or Ray from the Illinois country (characterized by Richard McCarty as "our little Doctor Ray" (*Ill. Hist. Colls.*, II, 620) volunteered for La Balme's expedition against Detroit in 1780, and on its destruction in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, Indiana, was taken captive and sent in to Detroit. He is said to have been the only prisoner taken alive. Whether he was identical with the individual here mentioned we are uninformed.

<sup>59</sup> Francis Largeau, a native of France, married Mary Debouter. The couple lived in the parish of St. Pierre-le-Vieu, in the diocese of La Rochelle. Their son, Jacques Largeau *dit* St. Jacques, born at the parental home in 1700, migrated to Canada and married at Montreal, April 26, 1735, Mary Ann Gastinon *dit* Duchêne, born at Montreal, Feb. 24, 1704. A son of this union, Louis Francis Largeau, born at Montreal, Sept. 1, 1736, came to Detroit, where on Jan. 30, 1779, he stood as godfather for Julia Duchêne. Data derived from Denissen, *op. cit.* It seems apparent from this document and subsequent ones that Largeau was later employed by, or at least intimate with, Louis Lorimier, and that he accompanied the latter when he fled to Spanish Illinois in 1787. There is considerable interesting information in Louis Houck's *History of Missouri* . . . II, *passim*, concerning Largeau's subsequent career in Spanish Louisiana, where he became secretary of Don Thomas Portelle, commandant of New Madrid from 1791 to 1796, and where he also continued on terms of intimate relationship with Lorimier.

in beavers on what he sold, and to make a reduction in the price of those articles he thought were too dear. He worked fairly well all that summer and part of the fall, but after that I heard that he was diverting my peltries to his own profit and had even sold some to Mr. Lafontaine.<sup>60</sup> I accused him of this, and he admitted doing something of the kind, but not as much as he had done. Seeing that he did not wish to continue, but was seeking some excuse to get his goods elsewhere, I asked him in February, 1785, to come in and settle his accounts with me. He said he would, but evidently had his own plans about doing it, for since then Mr. Largeau has been several times for a settlement and though Reah has not said anything he just kept putting it off. I then went myself, with Mr. Saffray as interpreter, and found several loads of peltries made up which had been procured by my goods and that he was preparing to take them to the Miamis (as he had done before). I asked for them. He said that if I would take the bad skins at full value (which was not our agreement), I had only to do so, but that if I would leave them with him for the purchase of goods he would surely pay me within two months' time. I took him at his word and let him have the peltries. This time has elapsed and much more, without seeing him. By Mr. Largeau, and others, I have demanded payment, but with no effect, his usual response in conversation being "No law here," and this has become proverbial in these parts, where they say

<sup>60</sup> Francis Lafontaine was engaged in the fur trade at Miamitown (modern Fort Wayne) as early as 1780. He was a great-grandson of Guillaume Dubord *dit* Lafontaine, born in France in 1625, who married there Catherine Guerard in 1670 and about ten years later migrated to Canada and settled at Champlain, where he was buried April 2, 1705. His descendant, the subject of this sketch, was born at Lanoraie, Feb. 23, 1757, and spent most of his active life in the fur trade of the Wabash Valley. There he consorted with a Miami woman and their son became a chief of the tribe. An interesting picture of Lafontaine's fur trade activities is given in the Journal of Henry Hay. It would seem from the information recorded in Denissen that later in life Lafontaine returned to civilization, making his home at Detroit. On Nov. 17, 1807, he married here Catherine Chabert, daughter of Francis de Joncaire de Chabert and Josette Chêne, and to them in the next few years five children were born. In 1802 Lafontaine had made a will giving his property to a son named therein; this instrument he subsequently revoked. He was buried at Detroit, Jan. 31, 1815. His widow afterwards married Ezra Younglove. Lafontaine was one of the men chiefly instrumental in stirring up the Indians to attack and destroy La Balme's expedition at Miamitown in 1780.

(like this old Joe), "*Point de Loix ici!*" He even gave proof of this to one named Charley who asked for his pay, and got for answer a gun shot in his side with powder and ball.

There was a report that this Joseph Reah intended to set out with his loads of peltries, either for the Americans, or, as some said, for Roche de Bout.<sup>61</sup> This last place was confirmed to me by a warning from Mr. Saffray, so I decided to go and seize the peltries that he was planning to carry off, seeing that the rascal was not trading with me any more, but was seeking only the chance to evade me. I left on September 29 with one of my men for that purpose, but found that he had already started for Roche de Bout. So I set myself in pursuit. Mr. Rivet went with me to recover a horse which belonged to him, or make Reah pay for it. I came up with him on the road some leagues from White River and seized all his peltries and a horse, as you will see by the certified statement, but with no personal injury to himself despite his assertions to the contrary (it is true I had my carbine with me but everyone knows that I never go out without it, as I depend on it for game for myself and my people, but my man had neither cane nor cudgel). I told him that if I found him with any more peltries I would do the same up to the amount of what he owed me, since he would not settle with me.

He is a scamp whom I have waylaid on the highway when he was carrying off my property on that highway. The legislature has justly imposed a punishment for larceny. I regard as such the action of Joseph Reah in taking my peltries. I was paying him to sell my merchandise, and I seized what was left (you can prove this by the statement of goods returned). The sales he made without my knowledge constitute the same crime and those who bought the things, knowing this, may be called receivers of stolen goods. That was the law under the French régime. Mr. Gray,<sup>62</sup> who ap-

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<sup>61</sup> Roche de Bout is a rocky point on the Maumee River about a mile above modern Waterville, Lucas County, Ohio. Nearby was fought the Battle of Fallen Timbers by General Wayne in August, 1794.

<sup>62</sup> Probably David Gray, a trader who was operating in the Maumee and Wabash



pears in his interest as a lawyer, did not hesitate to buy from my clerk (I can prove that he is so since I paid him commission), and advanced him goods. I am persuaded that Mr. Gray did not know the circumstances, but he should not blame me for seizing my own property. Besides, Reah's own words, when he said that there was "No Law here," convinced me that he meant to evade payment and prompted me to action. It was his own bad conduct that influenced me, as you will see from the following transaction.

In the autumn of 1784 I asked him to buy corn for me for fodder. He got about 6 or 7 hundred tresses<sup>63</sup> and told me that he had bargained for them at the rate of 7 tresses for 1 beaver. I was depending on his purchase but when I needed the corn he would not let me have it for the same number of tresses for a beaver as he had got it, but wanted to sell it to me, though he had even bought it with my merchandise and I had already paid him a commission. After several demands he would not let me have any corn at all, but sold it to others without any profit.

That is the way I have been treated. I could not begin to tell you all I have lost through him, and I beg you to have him arrested as soon as he reaches Detroit, and to prosecute him to the full extent of the law to the amount of my debt. I will be greatly obliged to you.

Be assured that I intend to do all possible to pay my obligations, both active and passive. The troubles in the Indian country, and the uncertainty where they will go for shelter, prevent them from hunting, and disturb me also. The persistent menace of an influx of Americans here in the spring induces me to think of going elsewhere, and thus avoid the pillage they threaten to all engaged in the Indian trade. These are only rumors which might, however, become facts,

regions at this period. In 1785-86 he was at Miamitown, where George Leith wrote him a letter advising him not to visit Detroit since William Robertson (to whom Gray was indebted) would do everything in his power to make trouble for him. See *Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History*, V, 142 ff. His name occurs frequently in the manuscript account books of the Miamis Company, preserved in the Burton Hist. Coll.

<sup>63</sup> Braids of corn, i.e., corn braided together by the husks.

and I shall try to prevent it in my own case by changing my location. It is my belief that we shall have peace, and free trade, according to the treaties. But wherever I go I shall do myself the honor of telling you, and of arranging so that what I send you shall be certain of delivery.

I hope that you will interest yourself in my affairs, trifling though they be, and especially in that which I have now narrated. For my part, I shall be diligent in serving you and in retaining your confidence.

I remain, Sir, Your very humble servant,

Lorimier<sup>64</sup>

P.S. Allow me to add that the merchandise I gave Joseph Reah to sell was my own, that I paid him a commission, and that I had expressly forbidden him to give credit to the Indians for the said merchandise.

<sup>64</sup> Louis Lorimier was a notable figure in the West for almost half a century ending with his death in 1812. He was born at Lachine in 1748, and about the year 1769 accompanied his father to the Ohio country, where the two engaged in trade at the portage of the Miami and Maumee rivers. Here (at Pickawillany) had been struck, in 1752, the blow against the English traders and their red supporters which marks the prelude to the Seven Years' War. During the Revolution Lorimier was an active British partisan and his place, known as Lorimier's Station, became noted as a center of British-Indian activity. Lorimier married a Shawnee woman and acquired great influence over her tribe, as well as over the Delaware. In 1778 he and another Frenchman led a Shawnee war-party on a raid into Kentucky, when the exploit was performed of carrying Daniel Boone into captivity. In 1782 George Rogers Clark organized an expedition against the Shawnee which captured and razed Lorimier's storehouse, after which he seems to have established himself on a tributary of the Glauze. As a consequence of difficulties which are in part described in this letter, in the spring of 1787 he fled from his creditors, finding refuge in Spanish Louisiana. It will be seen by a subsequent document (*post*, 288-90) that Hugh Heward, acting as agent of the Miamis Company, followed him and seized the goods which he had carried to the Illinois country. For this act, Lorimier, in 1787, sued Heward for damages in the court of Cahokia. See *Ill. Hist. Colls.*, II, 298-99.

In Spanish Louisiana Lorimier embarked upon a new career of success and prosperity. He acquired much influence with the Spanish authorities, was made commandant of the Cape Girardeau district, and was instrumental in inducing many of the Shawnee and Delaware to remove from Ohio and Indiana to Spanish territory. Lorimier was twice married. His first wife, a half-blood Shawnee woman, bore the name Charlotte Pemanpieh Bougainville, from which fact the surmise seems permissible that she was a natural relative of Louis de Bougainville, Montcalm's chief of staff. She died March 23, 1808, and Lorimier subsequently married Marie Berthiaume, whose father was a gunsmith for the Shawnee and whose mother was a Shawnee woman. After the death of Lorimier his widow married an American settler, John Logan, who subsequently removed to Illinois and became the father (by another marriage) of General John A. Logan of Civil War fame. An extensive account of Lorimier's career is given by Houck in his *History of Missouri and Spanish Régime in Missouri*.

I am sending my power of attorney to Mr. George Sharp.<sup>65</sup> He will communicate with you.

INDEBTEDNESS OF JOHN ASKIN

Montreal 20 December 1786

Mr John Askin

Dear Sir Our last Respects were of the 29 October and by the Express for Niagara which will leave this in a few days we are to answer your favors as well to the House as to either of us individually on business, of the 27 Sept<sup>r</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> of October and of the 3<sup>d</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> November. After what we have so often wrote you on the Subject of our distresses occasioned largely by our heavy, very heavy advances to you, we had not the slightest Idea that we were still to go on increasing your Account; it would seem however that our expectations were not well grounded and we now see it increased above that of last year altho' we have only supplied you this last Season with Goods to half the amount of the preceeding year. For once more we have nevertheless resorted to honor your different drafts or requests of transfering over the Accounts of others who

<sup>65</sup> George Sharp was a prominent trader of Detroit and the Northwest in the period subsequent to the Revolution. In 1784-85 he traveled as far as Nashville, Tenn., and on his return to Detroit made a report of his observations to Governor Hay. In 1786 he was in the South West Company. About this time he became agent for the Miamis Company and centered his activities on the Maumec-Wabash region. In 1789 he was at Miamitown and when in the autumn of 1790 Harmar's army destroyed the place, he withdrew to the mouth of the Glaize (modern Defiance, Ohio), where he was in 1792. Probably on account of General Wayne's advance, he was located at Detroit two years later, where in 1795 he was serving as justice of the peace. He was a friend of Askin, who desired him to locate near him on the British side, but Sharp seems to have gone abroad in search of more attractive surroundings. On Jan. 1, 1799, he writes from Montreal that since leaving Detroit he has visited most of both provinces (Upper and Lower Canada) but has found no situation superior to Detroit, and few equal to it. About this time the new North West Company was being formed and letters of Sharp and Alexander Henry to Askin disclose that Sharp was to act as its principal representative at Grand Portage, for which place he was to depart in the spring of 1799. Whether he did so or not has not been learned. He was at Montreal again the following winter, where he died, Jan. 17, 1800, after a brief illness. In reporting the event to Solomon Sibley, Jonathan Schieffelin writes: "I need not expatiate on his merits. They were too well known to need any encomiums. Suffice that all who knew his virtues lament his loss!" Information compiled from mss. in Burton Hist. Coll., *passim*. Some of Sharp's letters are printed in the *Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History*, V, 137 ff. See, also, *Mich. Pio. Colls.* XIX, 280, 291, and Journal of Henry Hay.



owed us to yours, and as we fully relied on this trial of our ability & friendship being the last of the kind, so we hope your uneasiness will be removed and that having now nearly [merely?] but one Creditor to satisfy, your exertions and punctuality will be such as to never make us repent the unbounded confidence we have placed in you. Inclosed you will receive your Account Current till this date, also that of the late firm,<sup>66</sup> balance of the former £15059.5.10¾ and of the later £9261.2.2¼ both Currency & exclusive of Interest which as usual will be brought into Account on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, to them we shall refer you for all outlays or payments since 10 of April last, which should you find right we wish you to confirm or if any Errors or omissions that you will be good enough to note them that they may be rectified and the Account approved. The magnitude of the two Balances is such as we presume will plead our cause with you fully as well as if we were to write Pages on the Subject, but there is a circumstance attending that of your own, which may not perhaps strike you and we shall therefore mention. It is that the whole of the Goods & Liquors supplied you since 1784 inclusive do not come to so much as the Balance of the Account, consequently we have as yet received no payment whatever, except to replace your drafts—you will allow this to be a singular hardship on us, especially when it is considered that you have paid all others of whom you have bought anything during that period (H & G excepted) and perhaps to a greater amount than all our supplies—we are willing to believe that in future things will go on very differently and that at last our Turn has come to be considered as not only being in want but fully entitled to your utmost exertions in respect to our demand. It is in this hope & confidence that we have undertaken supplying your part of Goods for next year and that we mean in conformity to your desire to send you a Bateau Load of Rum early in the Spring.

We observe by your Letter of the 11 Nov<sup>r</sup> that your

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<sup>66</sup> Presumably this alludes to the partnership between Askin and the firm of Hamilton and Cartwright, concerning which see *ante*, 188-92.

Share in the Miamis Company<sup>67</sup> was near to £10,000 yk—we most heartily wish you may have returns for it—this perhaps cannot be expected the year ensuing, but we have strong hopes that with your other affairs the least we shall receive of nett payment will be £15000 yk. In looking over the State of them brought down by our I.T. [Isaac Todd] we observe a Sum of £3000 supposed with W.R. [William Robertson]. As this is an object of considerable consequence and as it is probable that next year we may fall into his debt we should be happy that matters could be so settled as to transfer so much from your to his Account in our Books not only as it would Accomodate all Parties, but because we think it highly necessary in justice to yourself to your Family and Connections that your Concerns with him should be well & clearly understood—we have no reason to suppose there will be any difficulty in settling them, but be assured, we know from experience that a time of success is the best in the world to bring to certainty any matters which are in suspense and that the longer they are put off the more unwilling to speak of them, till, finally circumstances are forgot & disputes arise to the disquiet of all & probably the loss of Friendship & Confidence as well as property. In offering you this advice you cannot suppose us as other [than] disinterested, you know we have too much at Stake, we feel that we do not think it improper to urge the matter and we trust that you may lose no time in getting the business fixed so as to admitt of no doubts or difficulties.

Another matter we must take the liberty of recommending to your most serious consideration & that is the large

67 The Miamis Company, organized in 1786, was composed of six leading Detroit merchants or firms: John Askin, Leith and Shepherd, James Abbott, Angus McIntosh, Meldrum and Park, and Sharp and Wallace. Its field of operations was the Maumee and Wabash river regions. Askin kept the accounts and made up the outfits for the individual traders at the different settlements. These included Joseph Guilbaut at Sandusky, Adhémar St. Martin at Miamitown, and Paul Gamelin at Vincennes; subagents who fitted out minor equipments for small traders were Francis Vigo, Gabriel Hunot, and Louis Lorimier. The ventures of the company proved unprofitable, and its operations continued for only a few years. There remained an inheritance of conflicting claims and legal proceedings which lasted many years and which fill a considerable part of the Askin Papers. Many of the records of the Miamis Company are preserved in the Burton Hist. Coll.

Sum of £8000 yk real property. It is much more than we have—it is more than any man in business should keep from the circulation of his Trade and in the part of the Country where yours is placed the tenure of it is but uncertain—these Causes should induce you to part with at least one-half of it as soon as possible, not only as a relief to yourself & your Friends, but as a means of affording you the more time to attend to your mercantile pursuits.

We come now to speak of M<sup>r</sup> Barthe, whose affairs are in a miserable situation indeed—we mentioned in a former Letter that we had got from him this year no other returns whatever than the Furrs made at the Sault & his part of the general Store which it would seem satisfies you that we were not wrong in declining to answer for him to you the sum of £1100 yk which you wanted us to assume—had he sent us as you expected a Sum in Bills we should not have hesitated but the Case was otherwise & if he got paid of any Provisions you trusted him he employed the money to some other purpose. He indeed sent us a State of his affairs but it is by no means a clear one, all that we can gather from it is that he has put into the general Store about 42,000 [livres] which is entirly of Goods he has had from us which surely (exclusive of your recommendations) entitles us to their produce, and when we do get it, he will still remain largely our Debtor, yet we do not mean to drive him to despair, it is necessary to make a small Outfitt this year for the general Concern and we will not allow him to incur a penalty or be turned out of it with disgrace—we have even paid for him here more than 2000<sup>l</sup> which he fell indebted as one of the general Concern. We consider him as unfortunate in having embarked in a business he was unequal to manage & having met also several untoward accidents in the prosecution of it. He may nevertheless do well in a smaller line & as our I.T. may probably see him at Mich-ncke next Season we shall be glad to learn from him that he merits further support.

In writing to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton & Cartwright it is our fixed intention to desire that one of them shall go to Detroit next



Summer for the purpose of settling the late Concerns which were under their & your management and for that purpose we shall send them copy of J. A & C<sup>os</sup> a/C—we would for the same end forward you copy of their late firms, but from the State of their affairs we consider the balance as assumed by their present concern, it appearing that they have received nearly if not altogether as much as to satisfy that demand—what we wish for is that each of the Parties should take upon them a proper Part of J. A & C<sup>os</sup> Balance & that some Person should be employed to collect the debts; indeed we heard from our M<sup>r</sup> Todd on his return that he had engaged M<sup>r</sup> Heward<sup>68</sup> for that purpose, but we are since told that you had sent him to Saguinaw; if that is the Case you must no doubt have had strong reasons to alter the object of his business, which in our opinion was of much consequence.

As you do not in any of your Letters make mention of Government buying Flour from the Settlement we are somewhat surprised at it, for General Hope told our M<sup>r</sup> Todd that he had given orders to buy at your post at four dollars p C<sup>wt</sup>; either his Letters must have miscarried or the Commandant must have reasons we do not comprehend for withholding the information, for the order must have arrived in October; we are employing means to [ms. torn] a Sale to the Inhabitants of all their Surplus Flour which we have no doubt will prove succesful and of course enable them to pay part of the heavy debts they are owing.

<sup>68</sup> Hugh Heward was engaged in the fur trade in the Detroit and Wabash regions as early as 1782. In 1786, he was given power of attorney to represent the Miamis Company in French Illinois, and in 1787 he sojourned for a time at Cahokia. In the same year, an account among the Askin Papers shows, Francis Vigo of Vincennes was indebted to him in the sum of £900. In 1790 Heward made a journey from Detroit to the Illinois, keeping a journal of the trip, which is printed *post*, 337-60. At this time he was serving as clerk and bookkeeper for William and David Robertson, in which employment he continued until 1796. In the autumn of 1800 he left Detroit for York, where he was employed by the Governor in the capacity of clerk or secretary. There he died in June, 1803. His relations with Askin were intimate over a long period of time, and upon his death Askin was named as one of the executors of his estate; he did not serve, however, in this capacity. Heward was a man of considerable education, and it is a matter for regret that more of the journals of his wilderness life, which there is reason to suppose he kept, have not come down to us. Information adapted from manuscripts in the Burton Hist. Coll. and *Ill. Hist. Colls.*, II, 283, 509-11.

We cannot yet say whither Government will admitt of private Vessells but we may venture to assure you that the Transport will be put on a better footing than at present. Committees of the Council have been appointed by Lord Dorchester<sup>69</sup> to enquire into the Laws, Commerce, Police & Population of the Country & they are endeavouring to obtain information on these subjects so as to form a report for his Lordships perusal, you will readily judge that with respect to the upper Country Trade we shall not fail to lay every thing before them in the clearest & fullest manner.

We sincerely hope that the disturbance raised in the Indian Country by the Americans may be at an end, but we fear there will for many years to come be frequent interruptions to the quiet of the Indians which must constantly affect the Trade of your place, and we confess to you that with respect to the Wabash Trade we do not entertain favorable Sentiments were Peace even assured, the easy communication with new orleans & the proximity to the Americans are strong temptations to people of loose Principles when in debt to defraud their Creditors, and if prudence would permitt that Trade being given up, at least as to giving Credit, perhaps the general Returns would not be much inferior to what they now are, or if they were, better prices might be obtained for Peltries. The Subject merits consideration and from your knowledge & Interest therein we leave you to determine the result.

The bad Success of the Mich-ncke Company<sup>70</sup> this last year & the large quantities of Goods which will remain has brought the Interested to a determination of sending up few or any Dry Goods, but as Canoes must be sent up to

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<sup>69</sup> Lord Dorchester (Sir Guy Carleton) had but recently returned from England to Canada to take over from General Hope the governorship of Canada. For sketch of his career see *ante*, 83.

<sup>70</sup> The Michilimackinac Company seems to have been organized about the same time as the North West Company, and to have numbered among its partners many of the members of the latter firm. Unlike the North West Company, however, it operated almost wholly within territory belonging either then or subsequently to the United States, in the regions of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, and the upper Missouri. It continued in existence until 1811, when John Jacob Astor, founder of the American Fur Company, bought its interests and organized in its stead the South West Company. The latter, in turn, was reorganized in 1816 as the American Fur Company.

bring down the Furr's there will be a great deal of Rum & Flour [to] be sent up in them—it is not therefore to be expected that the demand on your place from that Post will be so much as usual, a circumstance that may be of use for you to know early that you may act accordingly.

We inclose you a note of M<sup>r</sup> Vigos Furr's as accurate as could be kept with the prices we think them worth, had they been of equal quality with your other Furr's we should perhaps have advised your waiting for the Sales from England, but as we are of opinion that the average prices there would be more than their worth, we think you had better settle with him at those we have fixed.

As nothing of moment occurs to us further to mention at present we shall finish this long Letter with requesting our best Respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Askin & your Family in which M<sup>rs</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Gill desires us to join us; and with assurances of being in truth

Dear Friend Your sincere Friends

Todd & M<sup>c</sup>Gill

[per James McGill]

P.S. Pothiers Bill is protested & he promised us a draft on a Person whose name we have forgot, but who he told us was employed conducting Goods for your Company to the Miamis, if through his means you can get paid, do it, as we see no great prospect of obtaining it here.

*Endorsed:* Montreal Dec<sup>r</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1786 Mess<sup>r</sup> T & M<sup>c</sup>Gill to Jn<sup>o</sup> Askin rec<sup>d</sup> the 1<sup>st</sup> & Answ<sup>d</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> March