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Nichol, Robert

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## Some Letters of Robert Nichol

BY

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## SOME LETTERS OF ROBERT NICHOL

BY BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK.

Since my sketch of the life of Robert Nichol was published in Volume XIX of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society, Mr. C. M. Burton of Detroit has kindly called my attention to many letters from Nichol contained in Mr. Burton's valuable collection of historical manuscripts, now deposited in the Public Library of the city of Detroit. I have been most courteously permitted to examine and make transcripts of these and such other documents as throw additional light on his life.

A volume, originally a blank book, bound in pigskin, contains the inscription in his handwriting: "Robert Nichol,

"His Book,  
"1791."

The inside of the cover bears the advertisement of "Foudrinier, Stationer and Copper-plate Printer, No. 20, the corner of Craig's Court, Charing Cross, London."

Nichol had partially filled it with "Definitions and Problems of Geometry," and at a later date with "Cases and Examples" in "Plain Sailing" and navigation, followed by a log of events in a voyage beginning on Thursday, February 9, 1792, taking "The Start" as his point of departure, and ending abruptly on Thursday, February 22, 1792, in Latitude 39°57' North and Longitude 45°57' West.

John Askin had used the numerous blank leaves remaining for keeping a journal, commencing on 23rd July, 1812, and ending on May 18, 1815, extracts from which have been published by Mr. Burton in Volume 32 of the "Historical Collections" of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, pp. 468-74.

The period and terms of Nichol's employment by John Askin, then, and for many years before and after, a leading merchant in the town of Detroit, are shown by the following document:

"Articles of Agreement, indented and concluded on the Eighteenth of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five Between John Askin, Esquire, of Detroit, Merchant, of the one party, and Robert Nichol of the same place, Gentleman of the other part. The said Robert Nichol for the consideration hereafter mentioned, doth hereby for himself, his executors and administrators, covenant, promise and agree to and with the said John Askin, his executors and administors, that the said Robert Nichol shall and will, during the space of three years, to commence from the date

hereof and to finish on the eighteenth day of September, which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight, dwell, continue, and abide with the said John Askin and him diligently and faithfully serve, during the said term in keeping the Books of accounts of him, the said John Askin, and in such other business and affairs as he, the said John Askin, shall think proper to employ him; and therein from time to time and at all times during the said term, do, observe, and fulfil the lawful and reasonable commands of the said John Askin, without disclosing the same, or the secrets of his employment business, or dealings, to any person or persons, whatsoever, nor shall nor will embezzle, purloin, or wilfully waste any of the goods, wares, monies, or merchandise of the said John Askin that may be intrusted to the care of the said Robert Nichol as his Clerk, in consideration of which true and faithful service on the part and behalf of the said Robert Nichol to be done and performed, the said John Askin, does for himself, his executors and administrators, covenant, promise, & agree to and with the said Robert Nichol, his executors and administrators, that he the said John Askin shall and will pay and allow him, the said Robert Nichol, the sum of Fifty Pounds, New York Currency, for each year's service, and shall and will find and provide for the said Robert Nichol, good and sufficient diet, washing, and lodging. In Testimony whereof, the said parties have to these presents, interchangeably set their hands and affixed their Seals at Detroit, aforesaid in the Western District and Province of Upper Canada, the day, month, and year first above written.

"Robt. Nichol. (Seal.)

"John Askin. (Seal.)

"Signed, sealed, and delivered  
in the presence of  
"Alexis Maisenville.  
"W. Roe."

During the above named period of three years the headings and many of the entries in Askin's ledgers and other books of account are in the bold, round, legible handwriting of Nichol.

In the blotter, under date of April 7th, 1796, there is an entry in his own hand of sundry articles of merchandise taken by Robert Nichol "on adventure" to the River Thames, amounting in all to £112.16.3.

His name appears as witness to a deed of a large tract of land from the Chippewa nation of Indians to John Cornwall, John Askin, and John Askin, jr., dated April 3, 1797.

In September of the same year, Nichol appears to have been sent to Cincinnati, to obtain the advice of Arthur St. Clair and retain him as counsel for Askin in some obscure dispute with the civil officials of the United States at Detroit. St. Clair wrote as follows:

"Cincinnati, September 23rd, 1797.

"Dear Sir,

"I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 29th ultimo by Mr. Nichol. I am extremely sorry for the want of harmony which is but too evident amongst you, but I flatter myself that all will yet be right. I have refused your retainer, fearful that the business to which it relates may oblige me to act in my official capacity, at the same time I would observe that you need not give yourself any uneasiness about the affair. Mr. Nichol had instructions to retain Mr. Burnett, he has accordingly left a fee with me for that purpose, as he is not at present here. If I shall be able to and there is any necessity, I will assist him with pleasure, tho' if the paper alluded to is that containing the declaration of your intentions of remaining British subjects (as at present advised) there will be little occasion.

"John Askin, Esquire,

"Detroit.

"P. Mr. Nichol."

The first letter from Nichol, himself, among these papers, reads as follows:

"Sandwich, March 9th, 1798.

"John Askin, Esq.

"Sir,

"As the time is drawing nigh that I must go to the River Thames, I should be glad to hear from you when you intend sending that I may arrange matters here previous to my departure—When I am at Detroit I will clear up Capt'n. Nelson's matter & am in the mean time, &c."

In August, 1798, the sloop *Annette*, owned by John Askin, and navigated by a certain Captain Timothy Grummett, was chartered by Captain Ernest, the collector of customs for the port of Detroit, to convey property of the Government of the United States from that place to Presqu'Isle, or Erie in Pennsylvania. After a very stormy voyage in which the vessel was driven off the coast and forced to take shelter in Long Point Bay, she sank in shoal water and finally went to pieces. The cargo was pillaged by some of the residents of the neighbourhood. When the term of Nichol's agreement with Askin expired in the following September he seems to have entered into the service of Hon. Robert Hamilton, at Queenston. On October 12, 1798, Hamilton wrote to Askin:

"Since my last of this day fortnight when I sent Mr. Nichol to Long Point on the business of your little Vessel, I have not heard a word from him—He must certainly Return soon—When I shall be able to give you further particulars—I have lately heard that the vagabond who sailed her has, with his wife, made their escape to the States by the Rout of Fort Erie—This augurs badly for the Cargo under his care . . . ."

On October 28, he wrote again:

"Mr. Nichol got back from the Grand River early on the day the *Saguinaw* sailed, I could not therefore benefit by her to send you any Information respecting the unfortunate business at Long Point. I now enclose Mr. N's Report & List of his expenditures which were, as you see, defrayed by the sale of some of the Articles

more exposed to damage than the others. I have Received from him 15 dollars, being the balance of sales over his charges, as you will observe by the Statement, in which, however, nothing is charged for his personal trouble and Excertion—What may be proper to allow in this case you must judge and also inform me how to dispose of a balance of £4 in my hands, as out of the £6 received I had advanced Mr. Nichol 40s on setting out—I think you will do well to present the Conduct of the Magistrates in that Quarter to the President—& if you thought proper the purchasers of Goods so well known to be stolen deserve prosecution. I only fear the distance will cause more trouble than can well be given. You will observe that all the articles saved have been sent to Presqu'Isle except the few (illegible) belonging to the Sloop. This I hope you have Received in the *Saguinaw*. Mr. Daly, who has visited you, is, I believe, very little better than Captain Grummett. Mr. Nichol could find no remains of the Wreck of the Vessell except what have been sent you."

Soon afterwards Captain Edward McMichael, a well-known resident of the Long Point settlement, who was a Justice of the Peace, made some complaint to Askin about Nichol's behavior to him, which was communicated to Hamilton, who remarked in reply:

"Did I not know Mr. McMichael's Character at Long Point, a copy of whose letter your last covered, I should have been tempted to suspect that Mr. Nichol had not exactly fulfilled our expectations in his Journey to that place after the wreck & you now have before you his account of the transaction there—and must judge between them—My Share in the Business is the Loss of a mare worth 100 dollars lent to Mr. Nichol for the Journey, which came home only to die." (Hamilton to Askin, Queenston, Decr. 15. 1798.)

On the 29th of December, 1798, Askin replied to Hamilton:

"I am well pleased and satisfied with Mr. Nichol's conduct at Long Point and the American Gentlemen, who are interested, seem to be so likewise, but as they are great sufferers, I can't say how far they may be disposed either for themselves or their Government to reward Mr. Nichol, tho' the advantages were purely theirs and little or none mine—I do not like to urge this Business but at a proper time will bring forward a settlement and let you know what's done. If they make no allowance for him it must fall on me as well as the rest, for rewarded he must be, and in this case do what you think right. I know he was more disposed to go to render service than seek recompense, for I never found him avaricious."

On 16 January, 1799, Askin wrote again to Hamilton:

"I am happy to say that the American Gentlemen seem to think Mr. Nichol acted with propriety, however, before his Letter & the vouchers arrived, I am not sure that was the case, no settlement has yet taken place. I am really ashamed to make a demand, that Rogue Government has made away with near £100 worth of Capt. Ernest's Stores, please allow Mr. Nichol what you think right. I must pay him at any rate. I am sorry for the loss of your mare. A curse seems to have attended that Business . . ."

On 21 February, 1799, Nichol wrote from "Queenstown" to Askin:

"It is with the utmost satisfaction that I observe that you are pleased with my

conduct at Long Point, it was an unfortunate Business & attended with much expense, yet I believe none but what was necessary originated with me, the People in general in that quarter are a mere Banditti & took advantage of the necessity I was in by making me pay exorbitant wages—everything considered I really wonder that so much was saved. Dolsen (the vagabond) has absconded to avoid prosecution. I am no stranger to the good Character given of me by Mr. McMichael—I have reason to believe he wrote that letter in consequence of some words between us on board of Captain Lee's vessel—however as his *Character* for traduction is well known I shall not dwell longer on the subject being convinced that you paid no attention to his insinuations. I shall have the pleasure of paying my respects to you in the spring when on my way to Mackinack & shall then give you an ample detail of everything relative to the Business.

"Feeling myself deeply interested in the happiness of Captain McKee's family from whom I have received many Obligations, I have heard with the utmost distress the melancholy account of the Colonel's death. I know from Experience what it is to loose the best of Fathers. I can easily conceive the distress which both Captain McKee's family & yours must suffer on this occasion & I sympathize & condole with you on this melancholy event."

Colonel Alexander McKee, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, had died, it is stated of lock-jaw, at his residence near Chatham on the Thames, on January 15, 1799. His son, Captain Thomas McKee, also an officer of the Indian Department, had been married to Therese, a daughter of John Askin in April, 1797, and was living at Petite Cote.

On May 4, 1799, Askin wrote from Detroit to John Wilkins, Jr., Quartermaster General of the United States at Pittsburg, calling attention to Nichol's services.

"On Mr. Hamilton at Queenston hearing of the Vessel being cast away, he sent a young man who had formerly been my Clerk to collect the property—the report of what he did with every other paper that might give information I delivered to Capt. Ernest & I believe that they will shew that thro' his means much of the Publick property was saved. I therefore hope that you will direct that a fair allowance may be made him for his services, otherwise that charge will fall on who to my knowledge has not been benefited by what he did, having no property on Board."

Nichol's next letter to Askin is dated at Queenston on May 28.

"When I wrote you last," he said, "I fully expected I should have, ere this, had the pleasure of paying my respects to you at Detroit but several late occurrences favorable to me have occasioned me to give up my intention of going to Mich.—I make no doubt but you will think me *very, very* fickle but as I do this by advice of all my friends I trust it is more to my advantage, what my plans and intentions are you shall know in due time, being convinced you will be well pleased to hear of my fixing myself advantageously. I now enclose by this opportunity an account of a Barrel of Pork of *my* own curing, which I can recommend as good . . . . I also beg Mrs. Askin's acceptance of a few seed Potatoes

of a particular kind, they go up herewith, and the directions for planting them are on the annexed page.

"The Ice is not yet entirely out of the River here, and it was only yesterday the Nancy got in having laid upwards of a fortnight at Point Ebena. However although the Spring has been so long in coming, Vegetation has been remarkably quick and I can safely say I never saw more flattering appearances of good Crops than there is in every part of this Settlement . . . . ."

"directions for planting the potatoes.

"They must be planted in the old of the moon as soon after you receive them as possible—put straw dung over but none under them—& the soil should be sandy—they will not be fit to dig untill October, but when dug they will keep good 12 months."

This correspondence between Nichol and Askin was thenceforth regularly maintained for some years but the latter kept copies of few of his own letters.

From Nichol to Askin.

"Queenston, June 27, 1799.

"My prospects (I am free to say) are much better since I left Mr. Innis, Though I hardly think I shall have it in my power to Commence this year.—The Forwarding Business having increased very much, Mr. Street being absent in the States for the Recovery of his health and Mr. Clark having no person to assist him but me at present I think it would be unfair to leave him until he is provided, after he has done so much for me—I shall, however, prepare every thing against the Fall for Commencing in the Spring . . . . . (here he comments at length on the late news from Europe.)

"Should you be in want of Onondago Salt I could deliver you almost any quantity at Fort Erie at Eight Dollars P. Barrel, payable in September—Barrels included."

Two days later he writes again:—

"Queenston, June 29, 1799.

"In looking over some old papers I found a memorandum from you about your Salt Spring. There are often Salt Boilers from Onondago at this place, some of whom (I am convinced) would be glad to risk it if there is a sufficiency of Water—Should you still wish to rent it out, by sending me all the information you can respecting it and the terms, I may probably find you a tenant."

Askin replied on July 20, that William Robertson owned a share in the spring and must be consulted. He had accordingly sent him Nichol's letter.

Robert Hamilton wrote from Queenston to Askin on August 4:—

"We again Attempt a Niagara newspaper—Anxious to encourage an undertaking which, if well Managed, may be usefull, I have taken the liberty to put your Name down a subscriber. Should you disapprove, it shall be discontinued the End of the first Quarter—Should any of your Neighbours wish to Join, I will be glad to Communicate their Names & forward their papers."

Nichol wrote to Askin from Queenston, on August 27:—

"While waiting at Fort Erie for a wind to carry me to Presqu'Isle, (Erie, Pa.) from whence I returned yesterday, I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 27th ulto. That part of it respecting News Papers has in part been answered pr. the Thames, those received for you during my absence now go forward, hurry prevents my being more particular at present. Captn. Lee positively denies having picked up your Anchor and I have no means of proving that he has. Any directions respecting it I shall be happy to Execute. By desire of Captn. Lyman, I have drawn on Mr. Ernest for my Services at Long Point, this I did on the presumption that it would not fall upon you, for should that be the Case, I must insist on refunding it to you, as I went there with a determination to accept no remuneration from you, conceiving that you had sustained too much damage in loosing your Vessell. I beg you will Excuse this hurried Scrawl & present my Compts. to your family which will greatly oblige."

Askin replied to this letter from Detroit on 7 September:—

"I wrote you the 3d, since which I am favoured with your obliging letter of the 27th of last month, and am thankful for your generous intentions of not making any charge against me, however, as you will find from my former and Mr. Luckin's begging me to Inclose you his account for £9.12.6, that the United States, far from consenting to give you any thing, that they did not intend or most likely have refused paying Capt. Ernest or Lieut. Lukins for even the property you sold of theirs to defray the expenses of saving the United States property, that being the case you had better write Mr. Luckins that you have desired me to pay him which I shall most assuredly do. Capt. Ernest & him have been great sufferers. It will be necessary to go to Law with the *United States*, but perhaps a representation to Congress would have some Effect, in particular if it could go through our Ambassador. Ask Mr. Hamilton's opinion of it & let me know . . ."

Robert Hamilton wrote to Askin from Fort Erie on 20 October:—

"The number of Emigrants to this part of the Province this summer surpasses anything we have formerly known or could have expected—On the way to this place I yesterday passed Eleven Covered Waggon, mostly drawn by four stout horses & carrying families, who had Crossed the ferry at this place the day before—These people come determined to Remain & as Government has now stop(p)ed giving away Lands, they must purchase wherever they can find Land to suit them."

Nichol wrote from "Queenstown" on 4 November, 1799:

"On the 2d instant I had the pleasure of receiving your Obliging favour of the 19th Ult. I am exceedingly happy to learn that the family is all well & sincerely hope that they may long enjoy that greatest of all blessings—good health—I note what you say respecting Cyder—& should you send any down I shall assuredly do what I can to sell it to advantage for you and have to request that you will not think yourself troublesome to me—as it always gives me the greatest pleasure when I have it in my power to render you any Service in this quarter—My



disposition, though far from being *serious*, has undergone a material change since my return to this place and I mention it to you in the hope that you will Command my Services freely from a Conviction that your Commissions will not be neglected—You will receive herewith the papers which came for you per last post as also a Gazette Extra from myself—they contain a vast deal of very important Intelligence and such as must make every true friend of his Country vibrate with joy—the Consequences of these rapid & unparalleled Successes are incalculable but they certainly must be attended with the best Effects. The Continent of Europe has undergone so Rapid a Change since last Summer that even the most Sanguine could hardly have Expected such favorable prospects for bringing about what is so ardently desired by all good Men—A General Peace—On Contemplating the present happy prospects & reflecting on the Causes which have produced these Effects, I cannot, (as an Englishman), help feeling a certain pride that to the Victory gained by Admiral Nelson, it is principally to be ascribed, the destruction of the Fleet at Aboukir deranged all the plans of the Republicans and I am convinced was the mediate as well as the immediate Cause of the Brilliant Victories achieved all over the Continent of Europe since—Every thing now seems to be in so favourable a train that I anticipate the most favourable accounts from all quarters.

“I am afraid this is nearly the last opportunity I shall have by water to send forward your Papers, but I shall Embrace every good one through the Winter to make Mrs. Askin participate in the good news we may receive.”

Writing from “Queenstown” on 16 November, Nichol said:

“I have now the pleasure to forward your papers received p. last Mail & to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favour p. the Nancy.

“The Cyder has been received and will no doubt soon sell—I am also to thank you for your obliging present of a Barrel of Apples, though as yet they have got no farther than Fort Erie.

“I shall not at present descant upon politicks, (though a favorite topick), but content myself with informing you that to-morrow Evening Mr. Thos. Dickson is to be married to a young Widow (Mrs. Taylor), a Union which promises much happiness to both parties—Mr. Selby arrived here a week ago—by whom I was happy to hear that your Family were all in good health . . . . .

“P.S. Should you have occasion for any Pork in the Spring I can probably procure you some upon more reasonable terms than any you have had from this lately.”

On 23 December, Nichol wrote again from the same place:

“Captain Fearson will deliver you this & though I am at all times happy when an opportunity offers of writing to my friends in your Neighbourhood, yet I sincerely lament the Misfortune which occasions his return to Detroit by so unusual a route. I would, however, hope that the disappointment may not be of very serious importance to you, as I am informed that the greatest part of your Goods had gone forward: The last Season has proved very unpropitious to the

Navigation of both Lakes, three Vessels, one of which as large as the Charlotte, have been lost on Lake Ontario, so that though *you* have been unfortunate, the People in this quarter have been still more so.

"I had the pleasure of seeing Dr. Richardson and family (at York) on the 28th ulto., they were then all in the most perfect good health & preparing to remove into new & more commodious quarters—the little ones thrive finely and agree perfectly with that part of the Country, the Markets in that quarter are much better stocked & upon better terms than formerly, so that they live pretty Comfortable.

"I sold the two Barrels of Cyder some time ago so as to Net you Ten Dollars each, the money I have not yet received, however I shall get it in a few days & pay it to Mr. Hamilton on your account. I hope that the price may please you, as I had no directions from you respecting it—I received the Barrel of Apples which you obligingly sent me—they are remarkably fine ones—and have been carefully pick'd, not one rotten among them. I feel myself much obliged for this mark of your attention and beg your acceptance of my cordial thanks.

"We have had Mr. Selby some time at this place, he is in very good health & spirits but I believe he is not quite so fond of this place as Sandwich, he is a great acquisition to the Society here, though he goes but little abroad.

"There are no Papers of yours with me at present. I, however, send you a few that I picked up, they may probably afford some amusement to Mrs Askin."

Captain Fearson, by whom this letter was sent overland to Detroit, was master of the sloop *Saguina*, belonging to John Askin, which had been driven by a violent gale down the Niagara river below the rapids at Fort Erie, where she was obliged to unload her cargo and remain for the winter instead of returning to Detroit with merchandise, as intended. Dr. Robert Richardson, assistant surgeon of the Queen's Rangers, had married Askin's daughter Catherine.

Nichol wrote from Queenston on February 17, 1800:

"Your very obliging favor of the 24th ulto. is now before me & for the friendly Admonition it contains I beg you will accept my best thanks—God Forbid that I should ever take amiss what is evidently said to me for my Own Interest & from so pure a Motive—My respect for you, your long Experience, long personal knowledge of your disinterestedness will always lead me to appreciate your Advice & while I offer you my sincere and Grateful Acknowledgements, allow me just to say that I feel proud to receive such marks of your friendship.

"For your wishes to serve me I feel much indebted: my present Arrangements are such that I look forward with Confidence to something certain & consequently it would not be in my power to profit by your kind intentions as hinted in yours, the knowledge of this will, I am Convinced, afford you much pleasure: and while I mention it, may I at the same time request that you will take every opportunity of putting it in my power to return the Obligation in any manner, the most agreeable to yourself—The prospect of your visiting us next summer gives me much pleasure —I can venture to assure you that all your friends in this quarter will be exceedingly happy to see you & I promise none more so than myself—If you can

Conveniently leave your Business for a Couple of Months, or say one Month, your personal Attendance at York or even this place would, I am sure, further your Interests much & as the Road is now Open between this and the Thames & Houses all the way—you can come through without any risk—I have for this some time past had the sole management of Mr. Clark's business—the firm of Clark & Street being dissolved & he gone to the United States—I look for him about the 5th March though he may probably return sooner—Should you be in want of any Whisky next Season I could furnish you any quantity at 9/6 & perhaps 9/ P. Gallon, Shipp'd at Fort Erie, exclusive of Casks—payable in the Fall—Should the terms suit, I will thank you for an answer.

“I send P. this Conveyance a few of your News Papers. By them you will see the Aspect of affairs has materially changed since I last wrote you. Yet although we have experienced some severe reverses in Holland & Switzerland—I see no room for despondency, upon the whole we are Extensive Gainers by the last Campaign, which Certainly was one of the Bloodiest & most Eventful in the Annals of Europe—the recent Changes in the Government of France, it is generally believed, will bring about what we have so long laboured to obtain, viz.—Peace.

“I shall take every opportunity during the winter to inform you what is passing—to send Mrs. Askin the papers . . . .”

In a subsequent letter from Queenston, undated but endorsed by Askin as being received the 12th of May, 1800, Nichol informed him that:

“I intend settling either at or in the Neighbourhood of Fort Erie where I am in hopes I shall do well & when once I get myself properly settled I shall be better able to attend to your Commissions.”

On August 4 he wrote from Chippawa:

“I have been detained here ever since the 28th Ult., as one of the Clerks of the Poll at the General Election—which prevents me writing to you very fully—& the present is merely to say that I have this day received the inclosed letter from your Grandson for Miss Askin with positive directions to inclose it to you—It is now almost dark & I have been much harrassed during the day—you will therefor, I hope, excuse the shortness of this.

“P.S. Mr. Street will not succeed, being now the 8th day, 28 Short on the Genl. Poll.”

On August 9, he wrote from Queenston:

“I have not been favoured with any of yours Since I last wrote you—it gave me pleasure, however, to learn that you had a tolerably agreeable passage to Detroit—& upon the whole I think your journey to & from York has not been unpleasant & I must hint that you have been in a peculiar manner the favourite of Fortune in your passages over both Lakes—I hope also that travelling has not in any respect injured your health but the Contrary—

“I wrote you a hasty line from Chippawa and mentioned how I had been employed the preceding week. What I then hinted has actually happened & Mr. Street, though every Exertion was made by his friends, was on the Close of the

Poll on Monday Evening the 4th May, *Minus* 22—this is the more to be regretted as Mr. Street's long Acquaintance with the publick business & active talents would have been of great service to the Country & added respectability to the Legislature—Mr. Dickson, on the 28th Ulto., came forward on the Hustings & in one of the best Speeches (perhaps) ever delivered in Upper Canada, avowed himself a Candidate for the Suffrages of his fellow Subjects, he had the Support of all the discerning & respectable part of the Freeholders, which, however, was of little avail as the other party had a decided Superiority in point of numbers, In Consequence of which he, on the 3d day of the Poll, came forward & declined being longer considered a Candidate. Mr. Clench & Mr. Swayze have therefor been returned duly Elected—you know the first—the other, you must have heard, is accused of stealing Horses, &c., in the United States—the people of York & the District of London have made rather better Choices than us—Judge Alcock & David Smith being chosen for those places.

“My troubles are now just beginning—the English Goods Continue to arrive —& what with them and the vast quantity of Packs now upon the Communication, I have scarcely a Moment to myself.

“Our large boat on its way to Chippawa with 19 Souls on board & 200 packs was in a most violent Hurricane Swamped yesterday forenoon. Mr. Clark happened to be on the way down & endeavoured to get off to them but without effect and was obliged to ride to Chippawa, 10 miles, before he could get any assistance. The People, after sitting  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Hours up to their Chins in Water, were saved, likewise all the peltry, with the Exception of 30 or 40.—Most of which, I understand, are the property of Mr. Pattinson. Mr. Heward, Mr. Innis, Mr. Stedman, Mr. Macomb, Mrs. Bowers, & a number of other passengers were among the Sufferers.

“I now send you forward a parcel of papers rec'd p. last Mail—they contain a great deal of very interesting information, on which, however, I shall not now discant.

“I spoke to Mr. Clark respecting the Magazines, the loan of which he has accorded—I shall send them up p. Judge Powell, who goes the Western Circuit, should no safe Opportunity offer before.”

Samuel Street, whose defeat is recorded in the foregoing letter, was a partner of Thomas Clark for many years, and had a seat in the House of Assembly recently dissolved, and was its Speaker during its last session. The successful candidates for the second, third and fourth ridings of the county of Lincoln, at that election were Ralfe Clench and Isaac Swayze. Thomas McCrae was elected for Kent, and Mathew Elliott and Askin's son-in-law, Captain Thomas McKee, were elected for Essex.

Hugh Heward, Robert Innis, William Macomb, and Richard Pattinson, mentioned in connection with the accident to the boat, were well-known residents of Detroit.

On August 11, Nichol wrote again from “Queenstown”:

“Mr. Hamilton this morning handed me a parcel which he received from Mr. Heward (who said it was for me) containing the fragments of some letters he had

in charge from you. They happened to be in his pockets at the time the disaster happened to the Boat—I can just discern upon two of the pieces the names of Dr. Richardson & Jas. & A. McGill & Co.—it is principally on account of the latter that I write this as should it be on business, the sooner you know its fate the better, that you may have an opportunity to send a duplicate before it is too late.

“I have been Ever since the 9th hard at work drying packs & am like to be employed the same way for ten days to come—On making up the Account there are 27 missing.”

On August 18, he wrote from the same place:

“By Mr. Innis, who left this place this Morning, I intended to have sent you the Sporting Magazines as I some time ago promised, but Business interfering & the Books being then lent out, I could not get them prepared in time, this Evening, however, I have Managed to collect four of the Volumes (viz. 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th) which I shall send forward to-morrow in Expectation of their getting to Fort Erie before Mr. Innis sails—in which case I have beg’d of him to take them in Charge & should they be too late for him, Mr. Warren will send them up by the safest Conveyance. I hope you will receive them safe & that they will prove both amusing and instructing to my Young Friends, I know that they will be very acceptable to James from their Containing so much *Equestrian* information. I will thank you to mention to your youngsters to handle them Carefully as they are rather *frail*.

“I saw Norton on the 14th inst. I was then much hurried, but we are to meet on the 29th when I will do all I can for you, he has sent in his resignation of the Interpretership, and, should it be accepted, intends (I am told) going back to the Miamis Country, so that it is not impossible that you may see him at Detroit.

“I mentioned in my last that your letters pr. Mr. Heward had miscarried from their being so much wetted in his pocket & that I could just discern the fragments to Messrs. McGill & Dr. Richardson—I have sounded the People about the House at Chippawa—they would dispose of it but ask a good deal more than it is worth—I shall, however, be more Explicit when time will permit.”

John Warren, mentioned above, was commissary officer and collector of customs at Fort Erie. John Norton, was a young Scotsman, who had traded for some time at the Miamis River and then became considerably indebted to Askin for goods. He next became an interpreter in the Indian Department and eventually settled among the Six Nations at the Grand River and married an Indian woman. He was adopted by the Mohawks and elected their principal war-chief. In the war of 1812, he gained considerable distinction as their leader and was given a commission as captain, and granted the local rank of major in 1816.

Nichol’s next letter was dated at Queenston on August 29:

“I wrote you (I think) on the 17th instant & at the same time forwarded you the Sporting Magazines, since when I have not been favored with any of yours.

“I mentioned in my last that Norton & myself were to meet on the 29th instant for the purpose of adjusting the Accounts between you & him. I am (however) sorry to say that from the almost unparalleled hurry of business, (owing to the Arrival of two Vessells & the disaster to the Packs), I had it not in my power

to keep that Appointment—On your Account I feel the disappointment as well as my own, as I had flattered myself with the hopes of terminating the Business so long unsettled between you to *your* satisfaction—I do not, however, yet despair and I shall certainly see him on the 1st proximo, if any where in the Neighbourhood. Be assured, Sir, that I am as anxious to have it settled as you could wish me & that no opportunity which presents itself for the attainment of the Object shall be neglected by me.

“I have now to mention that I have given up my projected Establishment at Fort Erie—this will no doubt appear to those unacquainted with the reasons which induced me to Act thus, rather Extraordinary and flighty—I have, however, not altered my plan without the most mature deliberation & serious consultation with my friends here and without a certain prospect of something better—Mr. Clark, having proposed to give me a Share in his Business here is my principal Motive and I think I should have acted imprudently not to accept of it. We have not, however, as yet made our Arrangement & until we do, (of which I shall not fail to advise you), I beg that nothing which I have said on the Business may transpire.

Askin, contrary to his general practice, retained a copy of his reply, which is dated at Detroit on September 19, 1800.

“Your kind letters of the 18th and 29th of August reached me only a few days ago. I received the Sporting Magazines for which both your young friends & I am thankful, they are in constant use, therefore I mean to return them soon, I hope without Injury.

“I am sorry you give yourself so much trouble About Norton, tho’ I wish the matter to be quite settled yet I am by no means desirous you should neglect your other Affairs for a matter that I fear will turn out bad at least, for if he has no land to give, now that he is out of employ, I do not see how he can pay.

“I learn Feser sold his wife to a man at Sandusky, therefore I suppose will settle /at/ York. I believe he got more for her than she was worth.

“I thought your prospect at Fort Erie a very good one, yet As/s/uredly you must be the best Judge, Added to which Mr. Clark’s constant Friendship, and knowledge & goodness of Heart should be an inducement above all others to prefer a connection with him. I real/ly think him a most worthy man . . . .”

Nichol wrote on November 3:

“It gives me pain to inform you that all my Efforts to settle with Norton have proved ineffectual and in consequence thereof I return you the papers left in my Charge, it is with real regret that I do this but I hope that on some future occasion my Agency may prove more successful.—I hope also that my want of success in this affair will not prevent your employing me in any other Business I’m adequate to in this quarter, as I have usually done all I could for you.

“I am well pleased to find Mrs. Askin now is receiving the papers regularly— it shall be my care to have them forwarded in the same manner until the close of

the communication, and as I am on good terms with the Post-Master, I shall have a Budget sent p. the Express, all other opportunities by Land shall be attended to—and as the roads are now pretty well opened opportunities will, I imagine, be more frequent than heretofore.

"I have received two letters from my friend Charles /Askin/ though I believe I am principally indebted to you for his Correspondence, it shall be my study to cultivate it as much as possible & doubt not it will prove mutually advantageous, he has sent me four Barrels of Cyder, which I shall endeavour to turn to good account for him, indeed the prospects are very favorable to it . . ."

On November 17, he wrote:

"I yesterday had a rencontre with Norton, who with a good deal of effrontery endeavoured to persuade me that he had come down from the Grand River for the express purpose of arranging with me your Account. We had a good deal of Conversation on the Subject though little to the point, the result of the Conference, however, is a promise which he made to come down at any time during the winter when I am in possession of the papers & I think from the manner it was given, it may for this time be depended on—I am now really sorry that I should have been so precipitate in forwarding the papers but hope you may find an opportunity of sending them down without the expensive one pr. post . . ."

Writing from Niagara on January 29, 1801, Nichol said:

"I fortunately came here to-day just as the post from the United States had arrived and as Captain Claus was closing a Packet for Detroit by which Means I have an opportunity of forwarding to Mrs. Askin the papers this day received—their contents are very important, One paper has come in as late as the 16th, which contains a declaration of war against Great Britain by the Emperor of Russia and the unanimous Resolution of the Nations to support their rights or bring themselves under the Waves. Hostilities have recommenced on the Continent of Europe and important events from that quarter may be dayly looked for . . ."

On June 15th, Nichol wrote to Askin from "Queenstown".

"I am on a great many Accounts happy that you have decided to remain at Detroit as upon mature reflection I think it more to your advantage—and in coming here you would be quite at a loss from the unfortunate state of Confusion and Strife in which our little Society is at present involved and from which I see no Prospect of being soon Extricated.

"As I have been a principal (though unwillingly) in bringing matters to this Crisis, I would from a desire to Explain to you my motives and reasons, give you a detail of particulars, but as the matter has by me been laid before a Court of Justice—I defer biasing any of my friends—and trust to a Verdict of my Country for a Vindication of my Conduct—I have, however, requested Captain Gilkison, who is acquainted with the merits of the business, to give you an account of it.

"I had a Jaunt to Pittsburgh this Spring and there met a Number of your very old Acquaintances, all of whom ask'd very cordially about you—& it gave me real Pleasure to give them satisfactory Answers to their Enquiries.

"By some of the Niagara Papers now forwarded you will see the debates of the wise men at York—they are not very elegantly reported—and are only interesting from their immediate relation to Ourselves—

"Mr. Clark left this for Kingston & Montreal on the 26th ultimo—he is building a Kentucky Boat at the former place in which he intends going to Quebec with 350 Barrels of flour—it will (I imagine) be the first Boat of the kind that ever descended the Saint Lawrence and interests all the Mercantile people of this Part of the Country very much—it has, I imagine, left by this time and I think we shall have accounts of its destiny in about a fortnight.

"The quantity of Flour going down this year from the District of Niagara is immense, say upon a modest Calculation—Five thousand Barrels, which for the first year is really very great—We have taken great pains to have *ours* of good quality and I think it will command a good Price. The prospects of good Crops next Harvest are really flattering—but I sincerely hope, (though against my own interest), that the same calamity may never again happen in any Part of the Country.

"You will see by the Papers already forwarded—the glorious victory gained by the great Nelson over the Danes, an event which, though attended with the loss of many brave men, must tend much to restore to Europe that repose to which she has been so long a stranger—viewing it in that light I cannot but Congratulate you with the utmost Satisfaction on this great occasion—it appears that the Danes behaved with very great Bravery and the British Navy acquired an additional claim to the Admiration of the World.

"General Abercromby's landing in Egypt, if we may believe General Hunter's letter, has been very successful hitherto—though Mr. Buonaparte—to keep up the spirits of the People—has fabricated a report that he was ultimately defeated and obliged to reembark, a reference to the dates only will be a sufficient refutation of the Story, which is only calculated to gull the Mob in France.

"16th, I this moment learn that Doctor Richardson and his family arrived last night at Fort George on their way to St. Josephs where they are to be stationed—You will then have a Visit from them in a short time which will, I am sure, give you all great pleasure though that will receive some alloy from the dreary prospect they have before them, however, as Lieut. Cowell, the intended Commandant & Doctor Lee, the Garrison Surgeon—are both married men—the Society will be better than it has hitherto been . . . ."

Exactly a fortnight later, June 29, Nichol wrote again:

"I congratulate you on the important contents of the inclosed paper—& in addition have to say that I have seen an Official letter from Lord Hawkesbury to the Lord Mayor of London, stating that the North of Germany was open to the trade of Great Britain—Prussia and Denmark having been brought over."

On July 28, he communicated the result of Clark's venture:—

"You may perfectly rely on every exertion in my power to procure freight for any Vessel in which you may be interested—but at present there is not a



single Package of Chance freight on the Communication, nor is any expected that I know of—all that I can do shall be done and hope that something may turn up.

“Two days ago I had a letter from Mr. Clark—he arrived at Montreal with his Ark containing 340 Barrels of Flour—in ten days from Kingston—and has proceeded with it to Quebec, where I hope he will sell it to advantage.

“He is much pleased with the Mode of Conveyance and I presume from the very great Saving it will be generally adopted—You will see by the Niagara Paper that Parliament have taken the Hemp Business into consideration and have determined to give the Culture of that article every Support in their Power—for this we are much indebted to Mr. Selby’s exertions at York—for without the Steps which he took the Business would have fallen to the ground; Your Estate on the Lake St. Clair appears to me well calculated for the growth of that article—and I think you and Mr. Barthe should make an experiment with four or five Acres of it, the Expense will not be great and the profit certain.

“I have forwarded to Mrs. Askin the News Papers and the 1st Volume of the History of England to Charles, the others shall follow in a few days & I hope he will make good use of them.

“There is no prospect of getting any Price Cash for Sugar—therefore don’t think it advisable for you to send any down as the risk of its lying a long time on hand is almost certain.

“We would take a quantity of Cyder from you provided we could make Payment in any other manner than Cash, for that is not to be had—if it would suit you to Barter it for Salt or Whisky—We would take Twenty or Thirty Barrels, at all events send us two of your own making for *House Consumption* and let it, if you please, be put into *sweet Barrels*.”

In his speech to the Legislature at the opening of the session on May 29, the Lieutenant-Governor had recommended offering such encouragement as the members might think necessary and proper for the culture of hemp. A bill to empower him to grant a bounty on all hemp, the produce of the province, was introduced into the Assembly by Sheriff Alexander Macdonell and Angus Macdonell, on July 3. It was read a third time, passed, and sent up to the Legislative Council next day. On July 6 it was returned with some amendments, when it was given a three months’ hoist. Leave was refused to bring in another bill, but a motion was carried unanimously for an address to the Lieutenant-Governor praying that “a sum of money not exceeding two hundred and fifty pounds be applied out of the unappropriated funds which are now in the Provincial Treasury, or may in the course of the year be paid into the same, for the purpose of purchasing and distributing gratis among the farmers of this Province hemp seed; and a further sum of money not exceeding five hundred pounds to be laid out in premiums and bounties to the deserving cultivators and exporters of hemp.”

In a letter to Askin, dated at “Queenstown,” August 20, Nichol wrote:

“I hasten to reply to your favour of the 8th instant respecting the Culture of Hemp—as I consider it at present an object of vast magnitude to your part of the Country, Yet as my present engagements will, (for at least some time

to come), prevent me from entering so much into detail in the business as I could wish—I forward a Volume—the property of our *Agricultural Society*, (which I know you will take good care of), containing a great deal of very correct information on that very interesting subject—in addition to which I shall as often as opportunity will allow, transmit to you such further information as I may be able to procure relating to it.

“There is no prospect of procuring seed from this quarter—I therefore advise you to take immediate steps for procuring it from Kentucky where, I understand, it is very abundant—I at the same time take the liberty of suggesting the utility of instituting a Society for promoting the Culture of Hemp and obtaining a Supply of Seed, which would give the business a Stimulus superior to any to be expected from the Exertions of an Individual.

“Your Plain or Prairie Lands at the Mouths of the Thames, Ruscum, and Peches Rivers appears to me well calculated for raising Hemp and I think they might be easily brought to a proper tilth, to effect which the Grass should immediately be set fire to—and the quantity wanted for use plowed up—very deep this fall that it may be mellowed by the frost—it will require three more ploughings in the spring (for it must be very mellow) and three Bushels of Seed to the Acre, I understand, is the common allowance.

“I enclose the Resolutions of the Society of Arts and Commerce, of which I hope you may be able to avail yourself—

“The Bounty for raising and Exporting will more than pay the Charges of Cultivating, & the produce of an Acre, which you may within bounds estimate at half a Ton, will be a very handsome allowance for Curing, transporting, rent of land & risk . . .”

Ten days later, August 30, he wrote:

“The Book forwarded the other day respecting the Hemp Business will be wanted this Winter—Please therefore get one of the Young Men to Extract what may be necessary & return it as soon as possible.”

The correspondence then seems to have lagged until November 6, when Nichol wrote in an apologetic mood:

“I have this year been so bad a correspondent that I am almost ashamed to write and hardly know what to say—Should the present opportunity, (the last by water this season), slip past without your hearing from me, I know you would be as much displeased with me as I would be with myself. I cannot really conceive what can be the matter with me for formerly I was scarcely happy unless I was writing to some of my friends—now I can scarcely manage to write them about once every three or four months—Most of them, however, know me too well to suppose me capable of an abatement of esteem to them, but as appearances are often against me, I have only to say in apology—that I believe my mind is so much relaxed by the constant and delicate business I have had to transact—that I cannot collect or arrange my Ideas—in fact I am sometimes almost in a downright lethargy.

"On matters of business I have wrote Charles, of course it is unnecessary to repeat it here, but I must say that you can always depend on every attention being paid to your Commands in my power—

"I am much indebted and much obliged to you for your readiness to settle my Acct with Mr. Smith & for your kind present of the Barrel of Cyder—for the first I shall settle with Mr. Hamilton and for the latter I can only offer you my best thanks—and faithful promise to return the favour by every means in my power—

"I am always hurt when anything unfortunate happens to you and am truly sorry for the loss you sustained by the Harlequin—Will you suffer me to advise you not to embark your Capital in such speculations in future—for there are really few people in that line on the Lakes that can be depended on—that it is tantamount to throwing money away—part of the wreck has been found but none of the bodies yet cast up—

"I have sent out for some Hemp Seed but I fear much unless an opportunity offers by land this winter I shall not get any forward to you—if it remains here untill the Spring it will be too late—do not then depend upon your Supply from this quarter but endeavour to procure from Kentucky.

"I suppose I may now congratulate you upon the Marriage of Miss Askin—an union which I sincerely hope may be productive of much happiness to all concerned—I have not the pleasure of an acquaintance with the Gentleman but report speaks much in his favour—I take a lively interest in every event which may promote the felicity of a family in which I spent so great a part of my life—and viewing the present in that light I trust that my Congratulations will not be rejected—

"I have always forwarded your papers regularly and trust that they have been as regularly received. Mrs. Askin will no doubt be pleased as well as you at the Prospect of a Peace which seems to brighten up in Europe—have brought matters into a favorable situation—and the Ministry seem desirous to profit by every opportunity . . ."

The marriage referred to was probably that of Adelaide Askin to Colonel Elijah Brush, attorney-general of the United States for the north-western territories, which was solemnized about this time.

Nichol's next letter is dated at Queenston, on February 20, 1802.

"I have been this day favoured with your obliging letter of the 30th ulto., with the Postscript of the 3rd instant and am sorry that the short stay which the Express makes here (being closed this evening) will not allow me to write so lengthly a letter as I could wish—I am, however, very happy to hear that the Family continued to enjoy a good state of health—& hope that they, as well as yourself, may long continue to enjoy so great a blessing—I have taken the opinion of a Lawyer respecting the Arrest of Durant—it cannot be done upon a Warrant from this place unless he is within this District, if however, there is a Deputy Clerk of the Crown at Detroit, there can be no hesitation in arresting him. I hope, however, you may be able to settle with him without resorting to that Mode which is always disagreeable . . ."

He continued to write at intervals during the next three years and the following letters have been preserved.

“Queenstown, Oct. 15, 1802.

“I was duly favor’d with your letter of the 8th instant P. Monsr. Campeau respecting the unfortunate & very unhappy Mr. John Williams—It affords me pleasure that in this instance I had anticipated your intentions & from motives of Humanity independent of my respect for his connections—had Shewn him every attention & rendered him every service in my powers—The moment I heard of the Unfortunate accident which was the morning afterwards—I went immediately to Fort Erie & accompanied him to Niagara Gaol—I believe I was instrumental in procuring him indulgencies & accomodations which he would not otherwise have obtained—

“Notwithstanding there are very favorable prospects of Mr. Lasselles recovery—I had advised him to be prepared for the worst—& in consequence of my advice Mr. Powell was retained.—I am in hopes that from his Exertions & the favorable Situation of Lasselles, he will be admitted to Bail—which can be easily procured—

“The unfortunate Story has been variously told but my Opinion does not comport with the general one formed in this neighbourhood—& I have had a Herculean task in combatting the torrent of prejudice which broke out against poor Williams—rather undeservedly—I admit that he was much to blame in using pistols—but I cannot see any propriety in trying & convicting a Man before he has been regularly arraigned—When the matter comes properly before the Country it is my belief some who now bluster & say a great deal on the Subject—will be put to shame for the part they acted upon the occasion—but enough of this—

“I understand that the Commercial Treaty between Great Britain & France has been signed & that its provisions give great Satisfaction to the Commercial part of the Community but from the very unsettled State of affairs on the Continent, new difficulties are expected to occur.—

“The Heats & divisions in the United States have got to an alarming height & will it is thought plunge that ill fated Country into all the Horrors of Revolutionary Anarchy—virulence & Calumny are constantly employed in prostrating the most respectable Characters—& no person however innocent & obscure—is safe from the *‘Lacerations of Slander’* & the malignant & rancorous attacks of party Spirit.”

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“Queenstown, June 5, 1803.

“John Askin, Esqr.

“Inclosed you have Accounts of Pork & Flour furnished by us & forwarded P. the Saguinah, which we wish safe to hand—The Messrs. Robertsons are using every exertion to get 25 Barrels more ready—which if not in time for this trip of the Saguinah will await her return—this will make in the whole 75 Barrels—

which is all that can be furnished from hence—as we were given to understand that the Messrs. R's would furnish 50 & in consequence only made arrangements for Supplying a like quantity.

“Capt. Fearson Spoke to us about furnishing Salt. we have it now in our power to furnish a large quantity of that article upon very Moderate terms—Say 46/ York P. barrel del'd at Fort Erie—payable—1st October next—or 48/—payable on the 1st January—in Cash—Should you require any upon these terms you will of Course write us—

“We are &c.  
Thos. Clark & Co.”

“Queenstown, July 18th, 1803.

“John Askin, Esq'r.

Bo't of Thomas Clark & Co.

“A. 2 Barrels whisky 37 ea is 74 Gallons @ 5/6 Shipped at Fort Erie	£20 7 --
2 Barrels .....	16 -
a bag containing 18B Clover seed cost at Mr. Dickson's .....	2 8 -
a Keg cont'g 1 bush timothy seed .....	1 6 -
Keg .....	6 -
10 Barrels Onondago salt pay'ble 1st January next. N.Y'k Cur'y ..	24 0 9
	<hr/>
	£49 3 -”

The above letter and account are both in Nichol's handwriting. By the end of that year it would appear that he was established in business at Fort Erie.

“Fort Erie, Decem'r 28th, 1803.

“John Askin, Esq'r.

“By the Courier from Sandwich I have the pleasure of receiving your valued favor of the 18th Ulto.—I feel myself—you may be persuaded, much indebted to you for the very full & ingenious Manner in which you have answered that part of my letter respecting hulled Corn. On your information I have determined immediately to act—and am now busy purchasing Corn from the Settlement at 4/ York P. Winchester Bushel—it cannot be procured for less—I shall take particular Care that the quantity, say 300 Bushels is ready early in the Spring—& that it is properly put up—I shall also if possible add the Flour & Pork—tho' of this I am not certain as I have already offer'd my Pork to Government—& must be guided by the answer I receive to my proposals.

“Produce with us is always at Cash in May, therefore the loss of Interest between that time & September does not appear reasonable—where the Stock is all furnished by the one party. I will, if allowed Interest from the date of the Shipment, provide all I can of the Articles wanted for our joint Account & let the trouble of procuring them be Counterbalanced by the trouble of disposing of them—all Expences to be borne jointly by the Concern—

"I have Some thoughts of adding a little Whisky which Can be delivered here for 5/6 Cash (exclusive of Commission)—how would it answer at that price?"

"From every appearance there will be a load for the Saguinah early in the Spring provided that proper Exertion is used to have her here the first vessel: *you* know well from long experience the importance of even a half hour—& will I dare say act accordingly.

"I notice what you say respecting Norton; My Absence last Summer & the subsequent death of William Powell—the Attorney—prevented his matter from being brought to a close—I shall however again take it up and do whatever may Seem best—

"The Publick Prints contain all the News—& to them I must refer you—for what is passing in the busy world—Private Channels seldom Afford us any thing late or interesting—

"To Mrs. Askin and Family I offer my Sincerest & most Affectionate good wishes—the Young Men possess My Confidence & Esteem—& I am with every Sentiment of respectful Attachment, &c."

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"Fort Erie, Jan'y 18, 1804.

"My Dear Sir

"I am this Moment favored with yours of the 3rd instant—the reason I did not answer the last Sooner was my ignorance of the opportunity—your letter not having reached me untill some days after the Mail had returned—

"I shall be guided by yours in my flour purchases—& shall act as best for joint advantage—

"I have only a few Minutes & am obliged to conclude by assuring you that I am &c.

"John Askin Esq're."

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"Fort Erie, February 1st, 1804.

"John Askin Esq're

"Dear Sir

"I on the 18th Ulto wrote you a hasty letter in reply to your favor of the 3rd but as that could not be very Satisfactory—and as the time given by our immaculate Post Master—to answer letters after the Arrival of a Mail is seldom Sufficient for them to get up here—I avail myself of a little leisure and a knowledge of what will happen to reply to it more at large—

"Flour with us—owing to the great demand and a knowledge of your wants—is now high—and will I fear rise—little has yet come to Market & the farmers—in my Neighbourhood are Keeping it up—with the view of getting a higher price—it cannot be Shipt by the Merchant at less than Five Dollars P.

Barrel of 196 lbs.—at which Price I will deliver the Quantity you order for yourself—the Pork shall also be procured—tho' I fear the Price of that article will also be much increased—the Market being bare owing to the large Supply purchased by Government—

"I have endeavoured to Bargain with several of my Neighbours for flour—but they all Keep aloof so that I cannot well Say what quantity I shall be able to procure—at even Five Dollars—I am in hopes however that I shall be able to make out 100 Barrels—I shall also put up about 100 Bags of Corn—I will thank you to say what proportion the Winchester Bushel bears to the Minot—as we have no measure of that Kind here. Ashes I have in Abundance—

"I wrote you the other day Per Mr. Burns—to which refer—No European Intelligence of Importance since that time—tho' we are in dayly Expectation of something very interesting from England—

"I request the usual Compliments to the Family and am, &c."

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"Fort Erie, February 11, 1804.

"Dear Sir

"I wrote you the other day but at that time omitted to mention that I have it in my power to procure a Quantity of American Cheese, at 1/4 P. lb., as this is an Article in which I have never hitherto dealt, I am not over Anxious about taking it until I know the probability of its Selling at Detroit & Mackina—On this Subject therefore I request you to write me P. earliest Opportunity—

"A great part of the Flour which I am putting up will be at the Sugar Loaf Mill—Twenty Two Miles from hence up the Lake—as it will be directly in the way of the Vessel down—She can if the Weather is Moderate, anchor there & take it on—

"I have some thoughts of chartering the Saguinah from hence to Detroit & will thank you to let me Know what you will take for her for that Voyage with the privilege of taking her to Mackina on the same terms if I think proper—the Back freight from both places to belong to the Owners—in the event of her being charter'd to me—no time must be lost in equipping her in the Spring—so that She may be early down—

"I request the Customary Compliments to every part of your Family which always has my warmest Attachment & I am with high Consideration, &c."

"Turn Over.

"Niagara, Feby. 15, 1804.

"I am this Moment favored with yours of the 2nd & 4th & shall answer them in succession—Flour Corn & Pork shall be provided & perhaps a little Whisky—properly provided *id est* from the States—Certified &c., &c.

"I am Sorry to find that my letter by Burns did not reach you by himself both on his Lordship's Acct. & yours, his business will in time be profitable—& is most certainly respectable—Lord S/elkirk/ will however be at Detroit himself

in the Course of next Year & will be able to discriminate between Honesty—Intelligence—Plain dealing & respectability on the one Side—& Vulgarity—low Cunning—Overreaching, &c., &c., on the other—

“A Number of letters to Answer by both Mails Obliges me to Conclude briefly by saying—that neither time nor distance—shall Obliterate the Sincere & Affectionate regard felt for yourself & family by, &c.”

“Fort Erie, Aug-11-1804.

“My Dear Sir.

“I wrote you immediately on my arrival here, since when your favor Per the Saguinah has been received & the Contents duly noticed which shall be attended to—

“The Sudden departure of the Caledonia\*—in the midst of Bustle, hurry & Confusion leaves me but little time to say much—Nevertheless—I cannot let her go off without saying something—

“Mr. Clark's receipt is inclosed for £30.0.0, the balance between the boys & me we can settle ourselves hereafter—

“On my Arrival here I found it absolutely Necessary from the Magnitude of the Object & the hazard of the Communication to Send My Clerk to New York with the Packs purchased by me, he takes with him your Tea Memorandum to which every attention as to quality & Price will be paid, he has also your Gold Watch—which will receive More justice there than Could be done to it at Niagara from a want of Materials—

“I by this Opportunity forward a Number of letters & packets to your Address—Carefully sewed up in canvas—So they cannot be lost—I mean plunder'd on the way—One packet appears to be from Captn. Meredith\*\*—I sincerely hope it contains good Accounts of himself & family.

“You will See by the last papers the *denouement* of the French Revolution, which has at length terminated in a Manner, which will give a death blow to the Revolutionary Mania which had spread its baleful influence over great part of Europe; and tho' I am grieved to the heart to see a foreign Usurper on the Throne of the Bourbons—I cannot but consider it as a Cheering Circumstance & firm prop to the Surrounding Governments—The People will now see that all the Blood which has been Spilled in pursuit of a Frenetic liberty has been thrown away & that it is impossible a large Society can exist without privileged Orders—& Subordination—

“I have much to Say to you but time will not Admit of it—I must therefore Conclude with Assurance of my being always with every Consideration of Esteem & regard, &c.”

\*A brig owned by the North West Company.

\*\*Of the Royal Artillery, whose wife was Archange, a daughter of John Askin.



"Fort Erie, August 26, 1804.

"My Dear Sir

"I have written you two or three times Since my return, but have not been favored with any of yours—the purport of the present is to enclose an Account of Sundry Articles—furnished by me on joint Adventure Account—& of 4 Barrels of Pork—furnished & forwarded P your own order the first amounting to £250-6.0 & the latter to £28-18- New York Currency—both of which will I hope prove Correct—As the time is now fast approaching when my remittances must be made I trust I shall be excused for urging the propriety of Selling at any price which will Cover Cost & Charges, for I must remit—I however hope that the greatest part if not the whole has been already disposed of & to Advantage—I have been so much disappointed in the Mackina & Detroit Markets, that I shall not be very forward to try them again, thinking it better to sell at a Saving price at home, than to run great risks for the prospect of an uncertain Advantage—

"The first of the English Goods arrived the other day at Queenstown but have not yet got this length—we may now Speedily Expect to be Constantly employed in the Forwarding line which will keep us busy enough till the Close of Navigation—

"The Saguinah left this Some days ago with a load of Salt for Presqu'isle\*—by which she will not indeed gain Much, tho' it will help to pay her Current Expenses, there will be another load ready for her when She returns—which, Considering the Number of Vessels in Port—belonging to the owners of the Goods—Coming up—& the little prospect of her getting any Chance freight, is the best manner in which she can be employed—Should it be in my Power to give her any other Assistance in the freight it shall be most Cheerfully exerted—There is Some Talk of the probability of Peace Speedily taking place in Europe, tho' I fear matters are not ripe enough for that Yet—

"I request My regards to the Family—& am with the Sincerest Wishes for their joint & individual Welfare—"

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"Fort Erie, Septem-6-1804.

"My Dear Sir

"Your favors of the 22nd & 26th Ulto came duly to hand and are now before me—the first advising of your having Sent Six Dollars for the Purchase of a Lottery Ticket in the Neighbouring States—which Sum I have received—& shall dispose of as directed—

"I am Sorry to See by yours of the 26th the unfavorable Situation of the small adventure forwarded by me this Spring—particularly as I calculated on the Am't of it to add to my fall remittances—I however Still hope that Something will Come from that Quarter—If not I shall be greatly deficient—I am anxious if possible to avoid paying Interest in Montreal for it like a Cancer eats up all the profit—

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\*Erie, Pa.

"I sent up no Flour in the Saguinah—40 Barrels Per the Lark being all I forwarded; this as directed I have charged to your Account—at 50/c I have also Charged you with 6 Barrels more Pork at £7-16- del'd at Sandwich—agreeably to the inclosed Account—by which it appears you are indebted to me to the sum of £178—New York Currency—which I think you will find right—there will then remain at Mackina 14 Barrels of Pork which went forward on the Saguinah, the freight on which to Mackina must be deducted from the Sales—

"Mr. Reynolds's Bill has been received—and is at your Credit—the Tea I expect in about a fortnight—so Soon as it arrives it shall be forwarded—

"The Saguinah is now under Sailing orders Having I suppose about 100 Barrels Bulk of Merchandise on board—there is no prospect of her getting more at present, I however hope that we may be able to do something better when She returns, at all events depend on my best Services—

"I shall endeavor to do Something with Norton when more at leisure—

"I am happy to hear that Captn Meredith and Family were well—& shall always participate in the felicity of You & Yours—I beg my regards to the Family and am with the sincerest friendship, &c."

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"Fort Erie, Sept-18-1804.

"Dear Sir \*

"The Wind has unexpectedly come round & the Thames is getting under way—tho' not full & goods Coming up—Bills lading and rec'ts therefore so completely engage me that I have Scarcely time to Say that I have rec'd yours of the 15th August & most Cordially congratulate you on the good Accounts from your friends in England, which you may always & frequently hear is my sincere wish—

"I have a letter from Mackina Saying that Some Bags flour which I sent there had been sold at 5¾ Dollars—pray has what you sent up been Sold—I understand from Mr. Rocheblave that No directions respecting your Flour, Pork & Whisky had been left with any person—otherwise it might have been disposed of—& that he was obliged to purchase & forward from Detroit—"

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"Fort Erie, Septem-24-1804

"My Dear Sir

"I have received P. the Camden your favors of the 30th Ulto the 5th and 12th instant all of which have my Attention—The Bill inclosed in that of the 5th is at your Credit say £4-11-4 N.Y. Cy & you may depend on the Clover and Timothy Seed being provided—& on the very lowest terms possible—

"I am at present much harrass'd—receiving & Forwarding—& dispatching the Trade, you will therefore Excuse the Brevity of, &c."

"P.S—My Commis has had a very long passage to New York from whence he is not yet returned Consequently Tea & Watch still not arrived—"

"Sundry letters—respecting lands—in some of which I believe you are interested—they are all forwarded to your Care, for both the living & the Dead—

"Yours in great haste  
Robt Nichol."

"John Askin Esq  
Sept 21-1804"

"Dear Sir

"I have just time to say that Should an Opportunity Offer—for this place I will take Twenty Barrels of your Cyder which I hope you will send good & in good Barrels—Mr. Alexander is not yet returned with the Tea, &c., having met with great detention, &c.

"I am in great haste."

"Oct 16 1804."

"Fort Erie, October 19th, 1804.

"My dear Sir

"I wrote you a hasty letter the other day by Captain Gilkison—& have since (say this morning) rec'd your letter of the 6th—As the Saguinah is nearly full & will be ready to sail this evening I think it best to be prepared for her departure—

"I remark what you say respecting the Amount due me—the disappointment to me tho' great—will not prove So much So as I at one time expected—having fortunately been able to realize property which I did not during the Summer & first of the fall Calculate upon—the matter sooner than you should be obliged to make a Sacrifice must lie over—

"Your order for *Milk of roses* shall be attended to—but I must Candidly say that I highly disapprove of all Cosmetics—they (the most innocent) are very dangerous—ruin the Constitution & not infrequently occasion the death of those who use them—I shall apply to my Friend Dr. Walsh for a preparation which I am sure will be more Safe and equally Efficacious—

"I have forwarded by Captn Fearson\* a Barrel of Timothy seed cont'g 3¾ Bushels out of this Mr. Kelley? must have two Bushels—I shall forward on an Additional Quantity for yourself with a little for Captain McKee\*\*—& the Clover Seed—which will be taken up by Captn Mills's or some other Vessel.

"We have accounts from England to the 11th of August at which time nothing of moment had Occurred, it is however generally believed that our present Ministry will not suffer the Energies & resources of the Nation to be consumed and dissipated in Idle Pomp and Parade—Expeditions are talked of in the best informed Circles—& I think it not unlikely that we shall attempt in France what Buonaparte has long boasted he would do in England—Notwithstanding the Servility

\* Master of the Saguinah.

\*\* Thomas McKee, whose wife was Therese, daughter of John Askin.

& Abject State of the press in that Country it requires but little Sagacity to discover the general discontent & horror with which the daring Usurpation of the French Throne by a Sanguinary Tyrant is viewed by the Great Mass of the People—& although Some might Consider my Ideas Extravagant—I will insist that—if the Bourbon Princes were to land in the West of France accompanied even by Such an Army as we Could Spare—Mr. Buonaparte's power would soon totter to the foundation the great Mass of the people are from principle attached to the House of Bourbon & support them, to rally round them and assist them in driving out the Wretches who have so long disgraced France by their Enormities—

“We seem to look with great Confidence to an Offensive & Defensive Alliance with Russia & Sweden—Such a Measure by placing at our disposal a large & well disciplined Army would very Soon restore the Ancient Government of France—& Consequently Adjust the Balance of Power on the Continent—

“My time since the Arrival of the English Goods has been Constantly employed—without intermission & this is almost the only leisure day I have had these Two Months past—the season is now however fast approaching when I shall have rather more leisure than I wish for, Solitude is to me a most insupportable State—& was it not for the few Books I possess—& now and then a visit from some Friends—I should die of *Ennui*—

“It gives me great pleasure to Announce to you that Contrary to (I presume) all our most Sanguine Expectations the Saguinah sails with (or nearly) a full load—every Exertion has been used both by Mr. Clark & myself to assist her & I am happy to think we have so well succeeded. On reviewing her transactions for the Season I think you may Calculate on a profit of £500 or 400 Pounds—no bad thing in these unfortunate times—

“I rejoice to hear of the good health of your family My best wishes for a long continuance of this invaluable gift are unceasing—I request My best regards to every individual of it & am with every affectionate wish &c.

“P.S.—I have seen a rule of the Detroit Court authorizing Mr. Warren to take the Evidence of Mr. Douglas in a Cause in which Captn Lee of the Contractor is defendant by giving *me* three days notice—I have prevailed on Mr. Warren to postpone the business untill I hear from Mr. Brush\*\*\* who is his Attorney—If I should not write Mr. B I will thank you to mention my wish to have his instruction—

“R. N.”

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“Fort Erie, Novem-3rd 1804

“My Dear Sir

“I last night received your favor of the 25th? Ulto to which as the Montreal is ready to Sail I Send an immediate answer, hurry of business however obliges me to be very brief and laconic—The Cyder is just now landing & Sorry I am to say is in very bad order many of the Barrels being nearly /spoiled?/ out of the Twenty

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\*\*\* Elijah Brush of Detroit, whose wife was Adelaide, daughter of John Askin.

I don't think there will be more than Fourteen—I am Convinced that every possible attention has been Paid by you to this Commission But I fear it will be a very unprofitable one to me.

"I have look'd over all your letters in my possession but Can see nothing in them respecting William Dickson possibly the one alluded to may be mislaid—I cannot however recollect the Circumstance you allude to—

"I have rec'd Invoices of Teas &c from New York the Goods have been Six Weeks on the passage but have been detained by blustering Weather—they are now Momentarily looked for & I shall be able to send your Tea &c by Capt Mills—  
"I am always Dear Sir with the Most friendly Consideration and best wishes, &c."

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"Fort Erie, Novemr 9-1804

"My Dear Sir

"I wrote you a hurried letter by Captain Cowan\* announcing the arrival of the long expected Tea—four Pounds of which I then forwarded, and which I dare hope has ere this reached you—as I was at that time very busily engaged I had it not in my power either to get the whole pack'd or to send you an Account of it—both of these are now done & I hope that you will be well pleased with what I have effected the Account amounts to exactly \$26—by which after deducting the repairs of your Watch you will find that your Tea costs you exactly 80 cents P. lib deliver'd here, which is not—I think dear—

"I have put up inside of the Package—in papers 3 libs of Gun Powder Tea which I sell here at 20/ P lib—the quality is most Excellent—& will I am Convinced please Mrs. Askin, should you not wish to take it you will have no difficulty in getting what it cost for it—

"I wrote you lately on a Number of Subjects—but have not yet received any Answer nor do I now look for any before the first Express—I have Strong hopes of having it in my power to give the Saguinah a full load in the Spring to Mackina—respecting which I shall write you more fully hereafter—let me however earnestly recommend to you to have her ready as early as possible as every thing depends on her being early here—and Captn Fearson requires to be Stimulated.

"Our last Papers Contain European Intelligence to the beginning of Septemb'r and Announce a very important Piece of News—viz that Russia had actually declared War against France—& that a Russian Army had landed at Copenhagen to March to dispossess the French of Hanover—this Intelligence however, not being Official must tho' ardently desired & wish'd for be received with Caution but I trust that next Mail will bring us a most Complete Confirmation of it—

"The Canadian Fencibles—which was a very fine Regiment & Contained nearly 3000 Men has lately been broken for Mutiny they had been ordered to the

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\* Captain David Cowan, who commanded ships of the Provincial Marine on Lake Erie for many years, and was a member of the Legislative Assembly for the County of Essex from 1804 untill 1808.

Isle of Wight to embark for this Country—when Some Evil disposed persons persuaded them that they were to go to the West Indies—which Occasioned them to refuse obeying their orders—the Consequence of which was that three Regiments of Dragoons March'd against them—sabered down Twenty of the Unfortunate Wretches—after which the Regiment was disbanded—This is a most unlucky business for this Country—as they were enlisted for limited Service & were at the end of the War to have been disbanded here—

“I have only to add my best regards to Mrs. Askin & the family—& to assure you that I am in sincerity, &c.”

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“Niagara, Dec'r 15th, 1804

“John Askin, Esqr

“Dear Sir

“I yesterday at this place received your letters of the 25th & 28th Ulto—I shall in the Course of the day See William Dickson on the business mentioned in your letter—it is not at all unusual for Cyder to come down in bad order—the Working of the Vessels increases the fermentation of the Cyder—& very often not only lessens the Quantity but injures the Quality—Not being at home I cannot now Say how much I have Credited you with it will however Appear in Account Current—it will I am afraid be a bad Spec—not a Barrel being yet Sold—with respect to the Saguinah I have to Make you an Offer which if you Accept let me hear from you by the very first Opportunity—

“I will give for the Charter of the Saguinah\* from Fort Erie to Mackina & back with the allowance of Twenty one play days—in all—Five Hundred Pounds New York Currency—payable at F. Erie on the first of October—the Vessel to be at Fort Erie on the Twentieth of May—& to proceed with all dispatch so soon as loaded—for Mackina—& not to be detained on any Account—by the Owners or Capt'n at Detroit—should she be detained by me beyond the 21 days—demurrage at the rate of Twenty Dollars P day to be allowed. I have been Offered the Charter of a Vessel on terms equal to these—but—wishing on all occasions where I Can with propriety do it to give you a preference I have declined accepting the Offer untill I hear from you—

“I shall add what I have to say in answer from William Dickson in a Post-script—& am in the Mean time with best Compliments & wishes to the Family, &c.

“Mr. Dickson has promised to write Per the Post.”

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“Fort Erie March 5th 1805

“John Askin Esq.

“Dear Sir

“On my return from York about a fortnight ago I received your favor of the 10th of January which had been sent from thence during my Absence I am Sorry

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\* This vessel was a sloop of 36.5 tons burthen, built at Saginaw Bay, in 1787. Her full cargo was roughly estimated at about “eight batteaux loads.”

My Dear Sir for the disappointment which my not Sending the Clover Seed may occasion but Suffer me to Say that I did everything in my Power to get it.—The Man (& there is only one Man) who has it for sale promised faithfully to have it here in time to go by the last vessel—but failed in the performance—& I now cannot get any until the Month of April at which time he is to thrash it out.

“The Cyder you sent down turned out horridly bad out of the whole 20— I only got—16—which you will see by the Annexed Statement— $9\frac{1}{2}$  remain to make Vinegar—& may probably be worth to you four or five Dollars P Barrel every Care shall be taken of them & proper diligence used to get them Sold—Cyder of Niagara growth & of the very best Quality Sold here all last fall & Winter at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and 5 Dollars P Barrel it will not do to send any more this way.

“We have no News—either foreign or Domestick I beg my Sincere regards to the family & am in truth &c”

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“(Statement of Account of Cider.)

“Remaining Store from 1803 .....	2 Barrels
Sent down Early in fall—1804 .....	6 Do.
Ditto P Capt—Cowan .....	20 Do.
	28 Barrels
“Sour—& good for Nothing but Vinegar .....	$9\frac{1}{2}$
taken to fill up .....	$2\frac{1}{4}$
	12
“Credited to Mr. Askin’s Acc’t .....	16

“E/rrors/E/xcepted/ Robt Nichol.”

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“Fort Erie, July 20th 1805.

“Dear Sir

“You are too well acquainted with me to impute to want of respect the long silence which I have observed towards you & will I am convinced be readily disposed to believe that nothing but business—& that of a very troublesome nature could have prevented my writing to you oftener—I have this Spring and Summer had full occasion for the exertion of all my Philosophy—indeed for much more than I possess & to observe that plans deliberately formed & promptly executed are not always attended with the Success they deserved—Never since I have been acquainted with business—have I had to contend with such a Combination of Knavery—low Yankee Cunning—Quibbling, and difficulties of every description as within the last Four Months—My plans frustrated, my Credit bro’t into Jeopardy —& all my fair prospects likely to be blasted by the Machinations & rascality of an unprincipled Scoundrel, fortunately however for myself—& for my Connections I have by dint of Exertions almost Supernatural—been able to overcome every

difficulty and to preserve my Credit unimpaired by promptly Satisfying all demands on the day they were due—My High Wine Speculation which ought to, & which would have, had the original Contract been fulfilled, have yielded me a clear profit of £800, will barely reimburse me the Expences I was at—while the Charter of the Saguinah will sink for me at least £100 perhaps £150—nevertheless I trust that by some other means I shall make up the loss.—

“My mind has been so harrassed by the vexatious Causes above Mentioned that I could never Compose it Sufficiently to write unless strongly urged by the irresistible & indispensible Calls of business.—

“Your other Volume of Voltaire has been received—& the whole repeatedly offered for Sale—tho’ without effect—in this part of the Country there are few French Scholars—& that few not very well acquainted with the language nor disposed to lay out Money in purchasing French Books—I believe I may call myself one of the best—in this part—Yet my means are too Scanty to allow me (at present)—to purchase a Book which I so much desire to possess—In another year I hope my Ability will have increased—when I shall endeavor to Strike a bargain for them—

“The Cyder I am sorry to say turn’d out very bad, you have Credit with me for Sixteen Barrels in all—the rest was really so miserably weak that it would not make vinegar or indeed anything—& that offered for sale remain’d on hand—this is poor encouragement to send more this way indeed it will not answer, our orchards hereabouts are now so good—& the Cyder made from them so Superior in quality & low in price—that all future Importation must cease—

“The Lottery Ticket purchased for Mr. McKee I am sorry to say was drawn a Blank—it remained long on the Wheel—undrawn—& Tickets at the time were selling for fourteen Dollars each, however, bad luck attended it & it unfortunately at last—came out—Blank—

“I now seldom see a Newspaper, indeed time will not allow me to read them I however understand that a French & English Fleet has arrived in the West Indies—consequently great events may now be dayly expected—

“I inclose a list of a few Books—not returned by James, as some of them are not my own & were borrowed by me to be return’d I should like to have them sent back—

“I beg my comp’ts to Mrs. Askin & family & am with very sincere regard, &c.”

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“Aug-27-1805

“Dear Sir

“Capt’n Fearson has just notified me of his intention to depart which obliges me to be very brief—more particularly as I am & have been for some time much engaged in receiving opening & Marking my Goods; the Above order on Gowie I will thank you to present for payment—It is for money advanced last fall for duties & Shipping Charges on a parcel of Salt Consigned to him by Wilson the late Contractor—& which as the proceeds were to be remitted to me he will undoubtedly pay—when the hurry is a little over I shall write you more at length.

“Mean time I am, &c.”



The following extract of a letter from Hon. Robert Hamilton, of Queenston, who became Askin's son-in-law by his marriage with Catherine, widow of John Robertson, throws some light on the political and commercial situation:—

"From York our information has been scanty since the Change of Administration—Our present President\* is I believe wisely determined to venture on no new or untrodden paths—I understand that all goes on smoothly and quietly—Inclosed is a letter from our friend James McGill which came in mine by the last Vessel. He probably mentions the uneasy apprehensions entertained by their house\*\* in consequence of the very large and expensive speculation Robt. Dickson\*\*\* has entered into—I have long feared that this speculation was much too extensive to promise profit. They have done their best endeavour to prevent the Evil Accumulating on him by the penalty of Protested Bills Having made Arrangements with the principle Holders to accept part & wait the issue for the balance.

"We never know when we are well /off/, But at present I think, should I risk the little Capital which Patience & Industry has procured me, & with which I am perfectly contented—in any speculation on the Mississippi or on any of the waters which run that way, I would well deserve to lose the whole.

"Our crops of last year I fear will hardly prove so good as those of the preceding Season. Our summer Crops on which the Pork chiefly depends has failed much—Never has so much wheat been sown as has been done in our Settlement this fall—I fear therefore that we must draw largely on our hopes of the ensuing year . . . . ."

"R. Hamilton.

"Queenston, Nov. 8th 1805."

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The following curt letter from Nichol to Askin indicates but does not explain a definite breach in their friendly relations which then followed and ended their correspondence.

"Fort Erie July 13 1806

"Sir,

"I only yesterday received your letter of the 9th ultimo announcing your letter of the 29th May which you say will be a *full* answer to mine of the 19th of same month. I hope it will be at the same time *satisfactory*.

"& am Sir  
Robt Nichol."

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A letter from Charles Askin to his father written more than five years afterwards gives some clue to the nature of this acrimonious disagreement. Writing from Queenston on August 1st, 1811, he said:

\*Hon. Alexander Grant.

\*\*Todd, McGill & Co. Montreal.

\*\*\*Brother of William Dickson, of Niagara, and of Thomas Dickson, of Queenston. For many years an extensive trader in furs on the Upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers; afterwards distinguished in the war of 1812.

"I had some conversation with Mr. Nichol some days ago respecting the acc'ts between you & him. I then mentioned to him that soon after your misunderstanding you had given a statement of the business to Mr. Gillespie and requested him to settle the acc't for you. Mr. N. says he was not at home when Mr. G. passed, but some papers were left—not having any of the papers nor a sufficient knowledge of the transaction I could not undertake to settle it with him, but knowing that you were anxious to have it all arranged I told him that I would leave it to Mr. Clark who he is also very willing to leave it to—Mr. T. Dickson will I fancy be so obliging as to undertake it. I hope you will not be displeased with me for doing this without first writing you respecting it. I will be extremely obliged to you if you will send me the necessary papers for settling this business soon that I may have it done before I remove from this—Mr. N. thinks there is a considerable balance due him."

How the dispute terminated does not appear from the correspondence extant. On 28th February, 1812, Charles Askin wrote to his father from "40 Mile Creek";

"Mr. Nichol was committed to Gaol in York by a warrant from The Speaker of the house /of/ Commons the day before I left it, this was for writing something to Major Halton offensive to them in justification of his conduct when wrongfully accused by that House of not having accounted for Public money in his hands—it's so lengthy a business that I shall not enter more fully into it, as I should then not be able to give you all the particulars of it—and you will have the whole of it from the members when they return home which will be soon."

On 10 October, 1812, Isaac Todd wrote from Montreal to John Askin:

"This goes by Lt. Colonel Nichol who is now a *great man*."

In 1806 Thomas Clark concluded an agreement with the chiefs of the Six Nations on the Grand River for the purchase of a considerable tract of their lands containing 28,512 acres for the sum of £3,564. He then presented a petition to the Executive Council praying the ratification of this agreement, stating that "he was named by the Sachems, Principal Chiefs, and Warriors of the Mohawk or Six Nations Indians as purchaser of Block No. 4, part of their lands on the Grand River. That he has executed to the Trustees of the said Mohawk or Six Nations Indians the required Security for the purchase money of the said Block and obtained a Certificate thereof." The Council recommended that a deed should be issued to him for these lands and letters patent were accordingly prepared, bearing date 17 April, 1807. Clark transferred his title to Samuel Hatt of Ancaster on 9 December, 1808, and the latter transferred it to Reverend Robert Addison. On the organization of the County of Halton this tract of land was included in it as a township and in compliment to Lieut.-Colonel Nichol, was given his name, which it still bears, now forming part of the County of Wellington.

On August 13, 1816, a petition was presented to the Executive Council of Upper Canada from John Backhouse and Robert Nichol "stating that they with other inhabitants of the County of Norfolk have associated themselves together

for the purpose of erecting a protestant Church and Parsonage there in the Township of Charlotteville and Praying that the Clergy Reserve Lot No. 17 in the 4th Concession of the said Township be attached as a Glebe to the said Church and Parsonage at the expiration of the Lease for said Lot to Donald McCall."

It was then ordered that no renewal of the said lease should be made.

Mr. H. F. Gardiner in his volume entitled "Nothing but Names," quotes the following eulogy of Nichol from Henry J. Morgan's "Sketches of Celebrated Canadians":—"He was indeed a man of rare endowments, and in private life as amiable as his public career was brilliant" and "though frequently in opposition to the measures of the Government he never forfeited the respect and esteem of His Majesty's representative," but remarks that in 1819 Sir Peregrine Maitland inquired whether Nichol's pension was compatible with his avowed opposition to the Government. pp. 251-2.