

**EPHRAIM DOUGLASS AND HIS  
TIMES: A FRAGMENT OF  
HISTORY: WITH THE JOURNAL  
OF GEORGE MCCULLY**

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Ephraim Douglass and His Times: A Fragment of History: with the Journal of George McCully  
by Clarence M. Burton

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**CLARENCE M. BURTON**

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GEN. EPHRAIM DOUGLASS

EPHRAIM DOUGLASS AND  
HIS TIMES

A FRAGMENT OF HISTORY

WITH

THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE McCULLY  
(HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED)

AND VARIOUS LETTERS OF THE PERIOD.

BY

CLARENCE M. BURTON

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## PREFACE

**T**HE two journals that are incorporated herein were written shortly after the close of the war of the American Revolution, and narrate in homely style the events of a trip to Detroit, the object of which was to notify the Indians of the terms of peace.

The narrators tramped many miles through an almost pathless wilderness on a fruitless errand. Their lives were constantly in danger from many sources. Their most dangerous enemy was the savage, for he was on the lookout for scalps and could not know that the errand of the travelers was one of peace. The two men were not impelled by the love of adventure or the excitement of ordinary travelers in undertaking this expedition. Nor were they actuated by any promises of pay for their troubles and trials, for it was many years before Congress authorized the payment for their services, and the men had both passed from among the living when a pittance was finally doled out to their descendants. They were going in order to perform a duty imposed upon them by Congress. That they were unsuccessful is not greatly to be wondered at, for the British officers in Canada were much disconcerted to find that peace had been declared, and did not propose to admit of defeat by the Americans until compelled to do so. The greater wonder is that Douglass and McCully traveled through the northwestern wilderness and met the various Indians and Indian tribes, and returned unharmed to their eastern homes.

The early history of the Northwest Territory is not well known. But few travelers have left a record of their journeys through its woods, and a hearty welcome is always extended to any new document that is found on the subject.

The journals are therefore of more than ordinary historical importance as they add a little to the scanty documentary records of that time and locality.

C. M. BURTON.

DETROIT, MICH.





## EPHRAIM DOUGLASS AND HIS TIMES

**N**EGOTIATIONS for peace between the United States and England had been in progress during the early part of 1782 and the preliminaries were settled in the latter part of the same year. Although these negotiations were not officially made known to the contestants in America, there was a general idea that the war was about to close, hostilities were lessening, and even preparations for future hostilities were being quietly abandoned or held in abeyance to await future events.

The western Indians had long been taught by the British that the war was carried on partly for their benefit, and that if the Americans succeeded, the savages would soon be driven from their hunting grounds to make way for the advancing army of American colonists.

Now that peace was about to come, the British authorities saw the difficulties that would ensue when the Indians were informed of it. They would feel that the English had deserted their interests and had abandoned their cause. The influence exerted by the British over the Indians was never stronger than just at this time, when the war was about to close. They had used every argument in their power to prove that they were the friends and the Americans the enemies, of the Indians. They had led the Indians on their murderous incursions into the settlements of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. They had made presents to the Indian warriors and had assisted in providing for their families in their absence on these incursions; they had gathered the warriors in council many times at Detroit, Sandusky and other places, and had treated them as equals and as a part of the military force of the British Army.

It was not a difficult matter, at this time, to collect a numerous body of Indians to swoop down on some frontier settlement, murder or carry off the inhabitants, plunder the farms and burn the houses. The Indians were more than willing to assist in conducting this sort of warfare, and made many of these incursions on their own account and without asking the consent of the military officers at Niagara or Detroit.

In 1782 the great rendezvous for the Indians, and the *depôt* for the distribution of the Indians' presents, was Detroit. Next in importance in this work was Niagara, while Michilimackinac followed, and places of lesser size and importance were frequently used as distributing points and places for holding Indian councils.

Major Arent Schuyler DePeyster was in command at Detroit and Major Allan MacLean had charge of Fort Niagara. There were British soldiers stationed at both of these posts, and there were from time to time many American prisoners brought in by the Indians, and by the British soldiers or rangers. Where prisoners were held by the Indians they were sometimes bought by the English, and were then conveyed, with other prisoners, to Quebec, to be liberated or exchanged.

Sometimes the prisoners preferred to remain at Detroit, rather than return to their former homes, and some of the present people of that city are descendants of these prisoners ransomed from the Indians. The news of the pending settlement of the difficulties between America and England was known to the Indians early in 1788, and the depredations in the western settlements seemed to increase both in number and virulence.

The attention of Congress was called to these troubles by the frequent pleadings, petitions and recitals of Indian murders, from people in Pennsylvania and New York.

It was the opinion of some members of Congress that the Indians would cease their depredations as soon as they were in-